

**THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL GAMES SUCH AS “CHO’PON”, “QIZ-QOVOQ”,
AND “KO’R-KO’RGA AYLANDI” IN DEVELOPING PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS’
MORAL AND ETHICAL THINKING**

Erdonov Rustam Usmanovich

Physical education teacher at Shorchi district preschool and school school No. 34, independent researcher

Аннотация

В этой статье рассматривается образовательный потенциал традиционных узбекских игр, в частности «Чупон», «Киз-ковок» и «Кур-курда айланди», в развитии морального и этического мышления у учеников начальной школы. Укорененные в многовековых культурных практиках, эти игры являются не только развлекательными мероприятиями, но и моральными рамками, которые учат детей сотрудничеству, справедливости, сочувствию, честности и уважению. В статье утверждается, что включение таких традиционных игр в учебную программу начального образования, особенно во время уроков физкультуры, может значительно повысить моральное развитие учеников. С помощью этих игр дети учатся следовать правилам, разрешать конфликты мирным путем, разделять обязанности и уважать других. На основе как качественного, так и количественного анализа, включая наблюдения за классом, структурированные интервью с учителями и тематический анализ рефлексивных ответов учащихся, исследование представляет убедительные доказательства того, что участие в культурно значимых традиционных играх приводит к большей этической осведомленности и просоциальному поведению среди молодых учащихся. В статье также представлены методологические идеи о том, как учителя могут систематически внедрять эти игры для укрепления воспитания характера. Результаты подтверждают мнение о том, что образовательная политика должна включать инструменты культурного наследия, такие как традиционные игры, в качестве неотъемлемой части морального обучения в начальных школах.

Ключевые слова. Традиционные игры, нравственное воспитание, этическое мышление, начальная школа, культурное наследие, развитие ребенка, узбекские народные игры, Cho’pon, Qiz-qovoq, Ko’r-ko’rga aylandi.

Abstract

This article explores the educational potential of traditional Uzbek games—specifically "Cho’pon," "Qiz-qovoq," and "Ko’r-ko’rga aylandi"—in cultivating moral and ethical thinking among primary school pupils. Rooted in centuries-old cultural practices, these games are not only recreational activities but also moral frameworks that teach children about cooperation, fairness, empathy, honesty, and respect. The article argues that integrating such traditional games into the primary education curriculum, especially during physical education lessons, can significantly enhance pupils’ moral development. Through these games, children learn to follow rules, resolve conflicts peacefully, share responsibilities, and respect others. Based on both qualitative and quantitative analyses, including classroom observations, structured interviews with teachers, and a thematic analysis of students' reflective responses, the study presents compelling evidence that participation in culturally relevant traditional games leads to greater ethical awareness and pro-social behavior among young learners. The article also provides methodological insights into how

teachers can systematically implement these games to reinforce character education. The findings support the view that educational policies should incorporate cultural heritage tools like traditional games as an integral part of moral instruction in primary schools.

Keywords. Traditional games, moral education, ethical thinking, primary school, cultural heritage, child development, Uzbek folk games, Cho'pon, Qiz-qovoq, Ko'r-ko'rga aylandi.

Introduction. In the rapidly globalizing world of the 21st century, the moral development of children remains a foundational concern of every national education system. While schools have traditionally focused on imparting knowledge and cognitive skills, educators are increasingly acknowledging the need to develop the moral and ethical capacities of students. This focus is particularly urgent in primary education, where pupils are at a crucial stage of identity formation and value acquisition. In this context, the use of traditional cultural elements—especially games—offers a promising and contextually relevant strategy for instilling foundational moral values.

Traditional games, embedded deeply in the social and cultural fabric of a nation, are more than mere leisure activities. They encode a community's understanding of justice, respect, cooperation, discipline, and mutual responsibility. In Uzbekistan, games such as "Chupon" (The Shepherd), "Qiz-qovoq" (Pumpkin Catch), and "Ko'r-ko'rga aylandi" (Blindfold Circle Game) have long served as informal mechanisms of child development and moral instruction. Passed down through generations, these games offer a rich pedagogical reservoir that is yet to be fully integrated into formal educational settings.

This article investigates the potential of these traditional games to cultivate moral and ethical thinking in primary school pupils. The central hypothesis is that participation in these games fosters moral awareness, empathy, responsibility, and fair play, thereby supporting the broader goals of character education. The paper also examines how these games provide opportunities for children to practice real-world moral decision-making in a safe and structured environment.

Moreover, the study highlights how cultural heritage tools can be instrumental in making moral education more engaging, relatable, and effective. It provides both theoretical grounding and practical recommendations for teachers and curriculum developers. By focusing on three specific games and analyzing their moral content and pedagogical applications, the article fills an important gap in the current literature on moral education in primary schools.

Main part. The main argument of this study revolves around the pedagogical value of three specific traditional Uzbek games: "Chupon," "Qiz-qovoq," and "Ko'r-ko'rga aylandi." These games, while simple in design, embody rich moral and ethical concepts that are naturally transmitted to children during play.

1. Chupon ("The Shepherd")

This game involves one player taking the role of the shepherd while others act as sheep. The shepherd must protect the sheep from a designated "wolf" and keep the flock together. The game emphasizes leadership, responsibility, and protection of others. Children playing Chupon internalize the importance of collective safety, vigilance, and teamwork. It also subtly teaches fairness—players must take turns in different roles, promoting empathy and understanding from multiple perspectives.

2. Qiz-qovoq ("Pumpkin Catch")

Qiz-qovoq is a game that involves careful coordination and passing an object (traditionally a small pumpkin or similar item) while singing or chanting. The game encourages rhythm, attention, and rule-following. More importantly, it highlights values such as honesty (not hiding the object unfairly), cooperation (successful passing requires teamwork), and emotional intelligence (responding to the reactions of peers). It creates a social learning environment where players support each other and hold one another accountable.

3. Ko'r-ko'rga aylandi ("Blindfold Circle")

This is perhaps one of the most morally engaging traditional games. A child is blindfolded and placed in the center of a circle formed by other players who sing and move around. The blindfolded player must guess who is closest based on auditory cues. This game develops trust, patience, and respect for others. It also teaches children to navigate unfamiliar situations—an important moral lesson about handling uncertainty and relying on communal support.

These games, when incorporated into physical education lessons, provide experiential moral instruction. Unlike abstract ethical discussions, traditional games require active participation, offering children immediate feedback on their behavior. For example, a child who refuses to share or cheats during the game quickly receives peer disapproval, learning that fair play and mutual respect are rewarded.

Educators reported that students who regularly participated in such games exhibited increased moral awareness and social cohesion. Teachers also noted improved classroom behavior, stronger peer relationships, and better emotional regulation. One teacher observed: "After introducing these games, students were more inclined to settle disputes on their own and showed greater sensitivity to each other's feelings."

The study supports the theory that moral education is most effective when it is woven into interactive and culturally meaningful experiences. These traditional games create a microcosm of society where children explore justice, fairness, trust, and responsibility—essential elements of ethical thinking.

Conclusion. This article underscores the powerful potential of traditional games like "Chupon," "Qiz-qovoq," and "Ko'r-ko'rga aylandi" in fostering moral and ethical development among primary school pupils. Through immersive and socially rich play, these games promote essential virtues such as honesty, empathy, fairness, cooperation, and responsibility. Unlike conventional moral instruction that often relies on abstract lectures, traditional games provide a tangible and emotionally engaging context in which children can practice and internalize ethical behaviors.

The integration of these games into physical education classes offers a dual benefit: they develop physical coordination while simultaneously strengthening moral character. Furthermore, these games encourage peer interaction and emotional intelligence, essential skills in the 21st century educational landscape. Their cultural specificity makes them especially resonant for children in Uzbekistan, providing a strong foundation for moral education grounded in national identity.

The findings of this study carry practical implications for educators, curriculum designers, and policy-makers. Schools should consider formalizing the inclusion of traditional games within their character education programs. Teacher training institutions must also equip future educators with the tools to effectively implement these games as part of moral instruction. Moreover, further

interdisciplinary research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of traditional games on character formation across various age groups and sociocultural contexts.

In conclusion, preserving and utilizing traditional games in educational settings is not just about honoring cultural heritage—it is an evidence-based strategy for nurturing the next generation of ethical, empathetic, and socially responsible citizens. By fostering moral growth through culturally embedded practices, education becomes not only effective but also deeply meaningful.

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