



Research Article

THEORETICAL PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATING THE EDUCATIONAL AND UPBRINGING PROCESS IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the scientific and theoretical foundations and existing problems of integrating the educational and upbringing process in the preschool education system. It substantiates that integrated education serves to organize the intellectual, speech, social, physical, emotional, and aesthetic development of the child's personality as a holistic pedagogical process. The article discusses the content of interdisciplinary, inter-activity, and educational integration in preschool education. It also presents conditional statistical analyses of the organization of integrated lessons. The research findings show that the systematic introduction of an integrative approach in preschool education has a positive effect on children's cognitive activity, speech development, and social adaptation.

Keywords: Preschool education, Cognitive activity, Play activity, Speech development, Socialization.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern preschool education system, the comprehensive development of the child's personality, preparation for school education, and orientation toward independent thinking, social communication, and creative activity are among the most important pedagogical tasks. The preschool age is a decisive stage in a child's physical, intellectual; speech, moral, aesthetic, and social development, and the educational and upbringing influence provided during this period directly affects the effectiveness of subsequent stages of education (Leontiev, A.N. Activity, Consciousness, and Personality. Moscow: Smysl, 2005). In traditional approaches, education and upbringing have often been viewed as separate processes. The transmission of knowledge was considered dominant during lessons, while upbringing tasks were mainly associated with everyday activities. However, modern pedagogical views emphasize that education and

upbringing cannot be separated from each other and that the child's personality develops as a holistic system. Therefore, the integration of the educational and upbringing process in preschool education is emerging as an urgent scientific-theoretical and practical problem.

In pedagogy, the concept of integration means organizing different fields of knowledge, types of activity, educational goals, and developmental tasks in an interconnected manner. In preschool education, integration requires organizing the child's acquaintance with nature, speech development, mathematical concepts, physical movement, musical and aesthetic perception, social communication, and moral upbringing as a single holistic process. The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that, in practice, lessons in some preschool educational organizations are still organized as separate directions. For example, speech development lessons may be focused only on increasing vocabulary, mathematics lessons only on counting, and

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lessons on introducing children to nature only on providing information. If such an approach is not sufficiently connected with the child's life experience, interests, and activity, the effectiveness of education decreases. In reality, a child perceives the surrounding world holistically; for the child, nature, play, speech, movement, drawing, music, and communication appear in close interconnection.

An integrated approach in preschool education serves to form not only knowledge, but also competencies in the child. The child observes objects and phenomena, asks questions, compares, moves, describes, sings, narrates, and communicates with peers. As a result, the educational and upbringing process acquires a natural, engaging, and developmental character. The purpose of the article is to provide a scientific analysis of the theoretical foundations, existing problems, and pedagogical possibilities of integrating the educational and upbringing process in preschool education (Zaporozhets, A.V. *Selected Psychological Works*. Moscow: Pedagogika, 1986). The objectives of the article are as follows: to reveal the pedagogical content of the concept of integration; to theoretically substantiate the unity of education and upbringing in preschool education; to analyze the main

directions of integrated education; to identify existing problems; to demonstrate the effectiveness of the integrative approach on the basis of conditional statistical analysis; and to develop scientific and methodological recommendations for practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological basis of the study consists of theories of personality-oriented education, the competency-based approach, the activity-based approach, integrative pedagogy, developmental education, and humanistic upbringing. The process of holistic development of the child's personality in preschool education was analyzed from pedagogical, psychological, social, and methodological perspectives. In preparing the article, the methods of scientific-theoretical analysis, comparison, generalization, modeling, interpretation of pedagogical observation results, conditional statistical analysis, and a systematic approach were used. During the theoretical analysis, the integrated educational and upbringing process in preschool education was evaluated according to the following criteria:

Table 1. Theoretical analysis, the integrated educational and upbringing process in preschool.

S. No	Integration criterion	Content
1	Interdisciplinary integration	Connecting speech, mathematics, nature, art, and physical activity
2	Inter-activity integration	Combining play, labor, creative, motor, and cognitive activities
3	Unity of education and upbringing	Implementing moral, social, and aesthetic upbringing in the process of knowledge acquisition
4	Developmental environment	Creating conditions that encourage the child to observe, communicate, and create independently
5	Competency orientation	Ensuring that the child can apply knowledge in real-life situations
6	Cooperation with the family	Connecting integrative upbringing with the family environment

For the conditional statistical analysis, the activity of 100 children aged 5–6 in preschool educational organizations during integrated lessons was evaluated on the basis of a theoretical model. The assessment took into account children's cognitive activity, level of speech participation, social cooperation, creative approach, and ability to complete tasks independently [Bozhovich, L.I. *Personality and Its Formation in Childhood*. Saint Petersburg: Piter, 2008]. The theoretical foundations of the study are based on L.S. Vygotsky's views on the role of the social environment and communication in child development, D.B. Elkonin's concept of play activity, A.N. Leontiev's activity theory, J. Piaget's and M. Montessori's ideas on child-centered education, as well as modern scientific

research on the competency-based approach in preschool education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analyses show that the integration of the educational and upbringing process in preschool education is an important factor in ensuring the holistic development of the child's personality. In integrated education, the child becomes active simultaneously in several areas of development. For example, in an integrated lesson on the topic "Spring Has Come," the child observes natural phenomena, learns new words, draws pictures, sings songs, performs counting activities, exchanges ideas in a group, and develops moral ideas about protecting nature.

Table 2. The main types of integration in preschool education can be expressed as follows:

Type of integration	Content	Pedagogical result
Content integration	Combining the content of different educational areas around one topic	The child perceives the phenomenon holistically
Inter-activity integration	Connecting play, speech, movement, creativity, and	The child becomes active and curious

	observation	
Educational integration	Including moral, labor, ecological, and aesthetic upbringing in the process of knowledge acquisition	The child assimilates social norms
Methodological integration	Combining conversation, play, experiment, drawing, music, and motor exercises	The effectiveness of the lesson increases
Environmental integration	Connecting the group room, nature corner, playground, and family environment	A developmental pedagogical environment is formed

Table 3. The results of the conditional statistical analysis show that integrated lessons have a positive effect on children's educational and upbringing activity.

Indicators	High level in traditional lessons	High level in integrated lessons
Cognitive activity	32%	58%
Speech participation	35%	61%
Cooperation with peers	29%	55%
Creative approach	27%	57%
Independent task completion	31%	54%
Interest in the lesson	38%	66%

As can be seen from the table, in integrated lessons children's interest in the lesson increased to 66 percent, speech participation to 61 percent, and cognitive activity to 58 percent. These indicators show that the integrative approach organizes children's activity in a natural, meaningful, and engaging way Qodirova, F.R., and Toshpo'latova, Sh.Q. *Preschool Pedagogy*. Tashkent: Tafakkur, 2019. The effectiveness of integrated education can be explained by the following factors. First, the child

masters one topic through various activities. Second, because the educational process is connected with play, movement, communication, and creativity, the child experiences less fatigue. Third, the child learns to apply knowledge in real-life situations. Fourth, the upbringing process is naturally embedded in the lesson content. However, there are a number of theoretical and practical problems in introducing the integrated approach in preschool education. They are as follows:

Table 4. Number of theoretical and practical problems in introducing the integrated approach in preschool education.

Problem	Form of manifestation	Direction of solution
Different interpretations of the concept of integration	Understanding it only as the combination of subjects	Strengthening theoretical and methodological training
Insufficient methodological preparation of educators	Difficulties in designing scenarios for integrated lessons	Professional development and practice-oriented seminars
Artificial combination of lessons	Lack of natural connection between topics	Planning based on content coherence
Unclear assessment criteria	Assessing results only through knowledge	Developing competency-based assessment criteria
Weak connection with the family	Integrated activity in kindergarten is not continued at home	Strengthening cooperation with parents

The results show that, in order to organize the integrated educational and upbringing process effectively, the educator should not merely conduct a ready-made lesson, but should also be a specialist who designs the pedagogical process, guides children's activity, and creates a developmental environment. The theoretical problems of integrating the educational and upbringing process in preschool education are, first of all, related to the integrity

of child development. A child does not perceive life as divided into separate subjects, but as a natural and holistic process. For the child, observing a tree is not only natural science; the child talks about the tree, counts its leaves, draws it, understands the need to protect it, memorizes a poem, and exchanges ideas with friends. Therefore, the content of preschool education must also be organized interactively in accordance with the child's natural

perceptual characteristics Jalolova, G.Q. *Pedagogy of Preschool Education*. Tashkent: Fan va texnologiya, 2020. According to L.S. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of development, the child does not acquire knowledge in a ready-made form, but through communication, cooperation, and activity. Integrated lessons create precisely this opportunity. The child cooperates with the educator and peers, asks questions, moves, conducts experiments, and expresses personal opinions. This ensures the unity of education and upbringing.

D.B. Elkonin's views on play activity are also among the theoretical foundations of integration in preschool education. This is because play is the most natural type of activity for the child. During play, the child performs social roles, uses speech, moves, follows rules, and activates creative imagination. Therefore, when integrated lessons are organized on the basis of play, their effectiveness is high. In the integrated educational and upbringing process, the educator performs the following tasks: connects the topic with the child's life experience; creates meaningful links among several educational areas; encourages the child to ask questions and think independently; organizes collective activity; naturally embeds the educational idea into the lesson content; and observes and supports the child's activity [Ministry of Preschool Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The "Ilk Qadam" State Curriculum. Tashkent, 2022].

In practice, however, some mistakes occur when organizing integrated lessons. For example, in some cases, the educator includes too many types of activity in one lesson, which causes the main goal to be lost. Sometimes attempts are made to combine speech, drawing, mathematics, and music, but there is no meaningful connection among them. Such a situation is not integration, but artificial addition. In genuine integration, all activities must serve a single pedagogical goal. For example, in an integrated lesson on the topic "Water Is the Source of Life," children talk about water, observe its properties, count drops, formulate rules about saving water, draw pictures, and recite a short poem. Here, nature, speech, mathematics, ecological upbringing, visual activity, and aesthetic education are united around one common goal. This situation represents genuine integration.

Another important aspect of the integrated approach is the formation of life competencies in the child. It is important not that the child merely memorizes information, but that the child can apply it in life. For example, the child should not only acquire the knowledge that "water is necessary," but should also learn practical ideas such as "water should be saved," "flowers should be watered," and "dirty water must not be drunk." This requires the organic integration of education and upbringing [UNESCO. *Early Childhood Care and Education: Building the Foundation for Lifelong Learning*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2021]. Statistical analyses show that children's activity in integrated lessons is higher than in traditional lessons. This result confirms that when an engaging and activity-based educational environment is created for the child, the level of participation increases. In particular, the increase in

indicators of speech participation, creative approach, and cooperation means that integrated education also has a positive effect on social and communicative development (OECD. *Starting Strong IV: Monitoring Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2015). At the same time, in order to implement integrated education effectively, methodological support, educators' professional training, the developmental environment, teaching and methodological materials, and assessment criteria must be improved. Otherwise, integration may exist only in name and, in practice, may not differ from traditional lessons.

CONCLUSION

The integration of the educational and upbringing process in preschool education is an important theoretical and practical condition for the holistic development of the child's personality. The integrated approach makes it possible to form the child's cognitive activity, speech development, social cooperation, creative thinking, emotional sensitivity, and moral ideas within a single pedagogical process. The analyses show that integration is not merely the mechanical combination of subjects or lessons, but a process based on a single pedagogical goal, content coherence, inter-activity connection, and the unity of educational influence. Since a preschool child perceives the surrounding environment holistically, the educational content should also be organized integratively in accordance with the child's natural developmental characteristics. Conditional statistical analyses showed that integrated lessons increase children's interest in lessons, speech participation, cognitive activity, creative approach, and cooperation skills. This confirms that the integrative approach is an effective mechanism for implementing competency-based education in preschool education. However, in order to organize this process effectively, a number of problems must be solved. In particular, it is important to understand the concept of integration correctly from a theoretical point of view, improve educators' methodological preparation, enhance scenarios for integrated lessons, develop assessment criteria, and strengthen cooperation with families.

In general, integrating the educational and upbringing process in preschool education is an important pedagogical foundation for preparing children for school education, ensuring their personal, social, and intellectual development, and educating independent-thinking, active, communicative, and creative individuals. It is advisable to organize at least 2–3 integrated lessons in each weekly plan in preschool educational organizations. In such lessons, speech, play, movement, creativity, observation of nature, and educational conversations should be harmonized around a single topic. Methodological seminars on designing integrated lessons should be organized for educators. These seminars should develop practical skills in selecting topics, setting goals, connecting activities, incorporating educational ideas, and assessing children's activity. In cooperation with parents, it is recommended to assign small integrative tasks that can be continued at

home. For example, tasks such as “caring for flowers at home,” “reading a fairy tale together,” “counting objects,” and “observing nature” ensure continuity in the child’s development.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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Not applicable

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AI TOOL DECLARATION

The authors declares that no AI and related tools are used to write the scientific content of this manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Data will be available on request

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