

HISTORICAL MEMORY AND YOUTH EDUCATION: SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONAL SELF-AWARENESS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the role of historical memory in youth education, its spiritual and educational significance in the process of forming national self-awareness, and the influence of historical heritage on shaping the worldview of the younger generation. In the context of today's globalization and the intensification of digital information exchange, developing the historical consciousness of young people and educating them in the spirit of national values, ancestral heritage, patriotism, and civic responsibility is becoming an important socio-pedagogical task.

Keywords

historical memory, youth education, national identity, historical consciousness, spirituality, patriotism, national values, civic position, history education, ancestral heritage.

Introduction. Today, the issue of youth education is one of the most urgent problems directly connected with the strategic development, spiritual stability, and national security of any society. In particular, globalization, the acceleration of information flows, the intensification of various ideological influences, and the deep penetration of digital culture into everyday life make the issues of historical memory, national values, and self-awareness even more important in the minds of young people. This is because in a society where historical memory is not strong, the spiritual immunity of the younger generation weakens, the process of national self-awareness becomes superficial, and the possibility of being influenced by external ideological forces increases. Historical memory is the ability of a nation to understand, evaluate, and transmit to future generations its past, historical experience, the difficult path traveled by its ancestors, national values, and cultural heritage. It is not merely the act of remembering historical events, but the process of perceiving them through spiritual, social, political, and educational criteria. From

this perspective, historical memory is not simply an additional factor in youth education; rather, it is one of the main spiritual foundations in the formation of young people as individuals, in their understanding of civic responsibility, and in their sense of involvement in the fate of the Motherland.

In the historical development of Uzbekistan, youth education has always evolved in connection with the principles of spirituality, knowledge, morality, patriotism, and humanity. The Zoroastrian idea of “good thoughts, good words, and good deeds,” the harmony of knowledge and morality during the period of Islamic civilization, the views of Jadid enlighteners on national awakening, and the policy aimed at restoring historical justice during the years of independence serve as rich theoretical and practical sources for youth education. For example, A. Avloniy interpreted education as a key condition for human perfection and emphasized that the future of the nation depends on the upbringing of the younger generation [1]. This approach has not lost its relevance today; on the contrary, it has become even more important in modern conditions. National self-awareness is closely connected with historical memory. The more deeply a young person knows the history of his or her people, great scholars, traditions of statehood, national liberation struggles, cultural heritage, and spiritual values, the more national pride, love for the Motherland, social responsibility, and a sense of belonging are formed within them. I.A. Karimov emphasized that there is no future without historical memory and argued that a people’s awareness of their identity, knowledge of their historical roots, and ability to draw strength from ancestral heritage are important conditions for national development [2]. This idea shows that historical memory has not only scientific and theoretical significance, but also direct educational importance.

In today’s educational process, the task of history as a subject is not limited to providing information about dates, events, and historical figures. History education should teach young people to think independently, analyze historical events, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and draw conclusions from the lessons of the past. In this respect, historical memory appears as a methodological basis of the spiritual education of young people. Historical knowledge produces an educational result only when it turns into thinking, and thinking turns into belief and life position.

The main purpose of this article is to analyze, from a scientific and theoretical perspective, the role of historical memory in youth education and the spiritual foundations of national self-awareness. Based on this purpose, the article studies the essence of the concept of historical memory, its functions in youth education, its

connection with national self-awareness, and the educational potential of history teaching.

Methods. The study used the methods of historicity, systematic analysis, comparative analysis, logical generalization, socio-pedagogical analysis, and the axiological approach. Through the method of historicity, the issue of historical memory and youth education was studied in connection with different periods, including ancient spiritual heritage, the scientific and cultural rise of the Middle Ages, the Jadid movement, and the processes of spiritual revival during the years of independence. This method made it possible to determine that historical memory is not a random phenomenon in social life, but a continuous spiritual and educational phenomenon. Based on the systematic approach, historical memory, national identity, spiritual education, patriotism, civic responsibility, and history education were analyzed as an interconnected socio-pedagogical system. This is because in youth education, historical memory does not function separately; rather, it influences young people in close connection with the family, educational institutions, the mahalla, mass media, cultural heritage sites, museums, the legacy of historical figures, and state youth policy.

Using the comparative-analytical method, various scholarly views related to historical memory and youth education were compared. In particular, the topic was analyzed on the basis of national pedagogical heritage, approaches related to spirituality studies, theoretical views on historical consciousness, and modern educational concepts. The axiological approach served to reveal the essence of historical memory as a value. Indeed, historical memory is not only a collection of scientific knowledge, but also a complex phenomenon that embodies national values, moral criteria, social experience, and spiritual ideals.

In addition, the article relies on the views of Uzbek thinkers and enlighteners on education, national awakening, historical consciousness, and spirituality. The scientific and theoretical ideas found in the works of A. Avloniy, M. Behbudiy, Fitrat, I.A. Karimov, Sh. Mirziyoyev, and other sources served as methodological foundations for explaining the historical and spiritual basis of youth education [3].

Results. The results of the study show that historical memory performs several important functions in youth education. First, it shapes the process of national self-awareness among young people. National self-awareness is defined by a person's sense of belonging to their people and their conscious appreciation of its history, language, culture, customs, and values. Through historical memory, young people understand who their people are, what historical path they have gone through, what trials they have experienced, and what spiritual heritage they possess. This strengthens feelings of national pride and honor in their

consciousness. Second, historical memory is an important means of educating young people in the spirit of patriotism. Patriotism is not merely an emotional slogan or an external expression; rather, it is a spiritual quality based on deep historical consciousness, civic responsibility, and an understanding of national interests. If young people have deep knowledge of the ancient traditions of statehood, great scholars, historical figures, and ancestors who fought for freedom, they develop a responsible attitude toward the Motherland. Sh. Mirziyoyev has paid special attention to spirituality, reading culture, historical heritage, and patriotism in youth education and emphasized that educating the younger generation in the spirit of national and universal values is one of the priority directions of state policy [4].

Third, historical memory strengthens the spiritual immunity of young people. In today's information space, young people face various ideological, cultural, and worldview-related influences. Different types of information spread through the Internet and social networks may have either positive or negative effects on their consciousness. In such conditions, young people who possess historical memory are able to critically evaluate different ideas, protect themselves from views contrary to national interests, and preserve their spiritual position. Thus, historical memory forms a stable system of values in the minds of young people.

Fourth, historical memory increases the social activity of young people. Young people who know their history and are inspired by the heritage of their ancestors strive to be active in social life. They do not remain indifferent to social processes and consider contributing to the development of the country as their civic duty. In this respect, historical memory appears as a spiritual factor that transforms young people from passive observers into active participants. Fifth, historical memory increases the educational effectiveness of history teaching. History as a subject is not merely a discipline that delivers information to young people; it is also an educational tool that teaches them analytical thinking, drawing conclusions from the past, understanding national values, and approaching modern processes through historical criteria. If history lessons are based only on memorizing facts, they will not produce the expected educational result. On the contrary, if historical events are taught in connection with life lessons, spiritual conclusions, and civic responsibility, historical memory will take a firm place in the consciousness of young people.

During the research, the relationship between historical memory and youth education was identified in the following main directions:

1. historical knowledge serves the development of national self-awareness among young people;

2. ancestral heritage shapes the spiritual ideals of young people;
3. the lives of historical figures serve as a school of example for young people;
4. historical lessons teach young people to make responsible decisions;
5. historical memory strengthens the patriotic and civic position of young people.

These results show the necessity of evaluating historical memory as a special pedagogical resource in youth education.

Discussion. A deeper analysis of the issue of historical memory and youth education shows that the future of any society is closely connected with young people's attitude toward their own history. A younger generation that does not know its history cannot deeply understand the idea of national development. This is because national development is not only economic or technological progress, but also a process of spiritual growth based on historical roots. Therefore, a formal approach to the issue of historical memory in youth education is unacceptable.

The educational power of historical memory lies in the fact that it connects young people with the past, helps them understand the present, and makes them feel responsibility for the future. For example, the legacy of historical figures such as Amir Temur, Mirzo Ulugbek, Alisher Navoi, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Jaloliddin Manguberdi, Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, and Fitrat serves not only as historical information for young people, but also as an example of strong will, aspiration for knowledge, devotion to the Motherland, justice, enlightenment, and courage. By studying the lives of these figures, young people begin to perceive history as a living process. The views of Jadid enlighteners on youth education are especially important for the present day. The Jadids connected the future of the nation with school, knowledge, education, the press, and enlightenment. While M. Behbudiy particularly emphasized the role of school and enlightenment in awakening the nation, A. Avloniy evaluated education as a "matter of life and death" [5]. These views demonstrate that through historical memory it is possible to form national awakening, social responsibility, and spiritual activity in the minds of young people.

At present, there are also a number of problems in integrating historical memory into youth education. First, in some cases, historical knowledge is delivered in a superficial, fact-based, and memorization-oriented form. This prevents young people from deeply analyzing historical events. Second, because interest in social networks and short information formats is increasing among young people, attention to historical topics sometimes decreases. Third, if cooperation between the family, school, higher education institution, mahalla, and

mass media is not organized systematically in the formation of historical memory, the educational influence will not be consistent.

From this point of view, the use of modern pedagogical technologies is important in integrating historical memory into youth education. In history lessons, the use of interactive methods, work with historical documents, museum lessons, excursions to historical sites, biographical analysis, debates on historical events, project work, digital maps, multimedia materials, and historical reconstruction methods increases young people's interest in the subject. Such an approach helps young people perceive historical memory not as dry information, but as personal life experience and spiritual value. Another important aspect of historical memory in youth education is that it ensures the harmony of national and universal values. National self-awareness is not narrow nationalism or a claim of superiority over others. On the contrary, it means knowing the history of one's own people deeply while respecting the culture of other peoples, understanding universal values in human development, and approaching the world with an open mind. In this sense, historical memory educates young people to be loyal to both national and universal values.

The family also plays a major role in strengthening historical memory. A child receives the first historical impressions in the family through stories, the memories of grandparents, traditions, holidays, and family values. Later, school and higher education enrich these impressions with scientific knowledge. Thus, historical memory is formed through intergenerational spiritual continuity. In this process, family education, the education system, and the cultural institutions of society must complement one another. Historical memory helps young people find answers to questions such as: "Who am I?", "Which nation do I belong to?", "What heritage did my ancestors leave behind?", and "What is my duty to my Motherland?" These questions form the internal content of national self-awareness. As young people answer these questions on the basis of historical knowledge and spiritual thinking, their life position becomes stronger.

In our opinion, historical memory should be regarded as one of the central factors of youth education. In the modern world, it is not enough to equip young people only with professional knowledge or technological skills. They must be formed as individuals who know their history, understand national values, think critically, feel civic duty, and recognize their involvement in the development of society. Historical memory is an important spiritual foundation that serves to form these qualities.

Conclusion. In conclusion, historical memory is an important factor in youth education that forms national self-awareness, patriotism, civic responsibility,

spiritual immunity, and social activity. It helps young people understand the historical path of their people, draw spiritual strength from ancestral heritage, value national traditions, and take a conscious position in modern life. Based on the analysis conducted in the article, the following scientific conclusions can be drawn. First, historical memory is a basic system of values that influences the spiritual formation of the individual in youth education. Second, national self-awareness cannot be fully formed without historical memory. Third, history education is not merely a discipline that provides knowledge in youth education, but also a powerful pedagogical tool that carries out spiritual and civic education. Fourth, cooperation among the family, educational institutions, mahalla, museums, cultural heritage sites, and mass media is of great importance in developing historical memory.

In the context of today's globalization, educating young people on the basis of historical memory is one of the important conditions of national development. This is because a younger generation with strong historical memory does not lose its identity, does not submit to various ideological threats, does not remain indifferent to the fate of the Motherland, and actively contributes to the development of society. Therefore, developing historical memory as an integral part of youth education, expanding the educational potential of history teaching, and harmonizing national heritage with modern pedagogical approaches are important scientific and practical tasks of the present day.

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