

Teachers Communicate Values to Preschool Children: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Values education in preschool is a formative activity that significantly impacts children's moral development. This study analyses scientific production from 2014 to 2024 on how preschool teachers communicate values and the values they prioritise in educating children. The methodological design consists of a systematic literature review, adopting the preferred data elements for PRISMA systematic reviews in the EBSCO, Web of Science, and Scopus databases. The sample considers 19 articles reviewed through thematic content analysis. The results show that preschool teachers communicate values through didactic activities included in curricular plans and in everyday teaching practices. The values they most frequently communicate are democracy, morality, and society. Preschool teachers communicate values in line with the political, social, and cultural context in which children live.

Keywords: preschool, teachers, communication, values education, axiology

1. Introduction

Values can be considered in the field of intelligence, human action, individual persons, and in collectives, conceived as universal values and linked to the environment (Johansson et al., 2018; Johansson, 2018). They are defined as "fundamental principles and convictions that act as general guides to behaviour" and at the same time "standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable" (Halstead & Taylor, 2000, p.169). Regardless of the different definitions, values have a direct or indirect impact on people's social integration and daily actions. However, they cannot be learned solely as an individual task (Siddiqui & Soomro, 2022; Spitsyn et al., 2024).

Values education in preschool is a formative activity that aims to foster specific values and morals among students (Lovat, 2021). It aims to foster children's understanding of values so that they can act in ways that take them into account within the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded (Thornberg, 2008a; Thornberg, 2008b). These two dimensions, on the one hand, promote people's aspiration for a good moral life and, on the other hand, have a positive effect on the social environment. Broadly, it includes concepts such as moral, character, and citizenship education (Taylor, 2006). Consequently, preschool teachers should make every effort to communicate values so that children have the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and act appropriately in their daily lives.

Values education can be both explicit and implicit. Explicit values education refers to the official preschool curriculum, including the values to be communicated and how they are taught through educational practices. Implicit values education is linked to a hidden curriculum that is tacitly part of classroom practices (Abroampa, 2020). Preschool teachers often communicate values to children through their pedagogical actions, spontaneously. Thornberg (2009) states that the guidelines that teachers determine in their practices are part of the hidden curriculum: "with rules, teachers try to create and maintain social order, regulate pupils' behaviour and make lessons, breaks and other school activities work" (p. 249).

Preschool children learn values within the educational context, and this in turn reflects the values of the society to which they belong, the personal and professional values of the educators, and the values of their peers in the educational group (Danylchenko et al., 2023). Values are communicated both explicitly and implicitly through

preschool teachers' pedagogical actions. From a socio-cultural perspective, human learning is inseparable from the context in which it takes place, as it is shaped by culture and history (Vygotsky, 1978). The learning of values takes place in the environment one lives in. In the words of Vygotsky (1978), "in the cultural development of the child, every function appears twice: first, in the social domain, and later, in the individual domain; first between people (interpsychological) and then within the child (intrapsychological)" (p. 94). Values are communicated within a socio-cultural, historical, and determined context (Scholz-Kuhn et al., 2023). Children learn values from teachers' responses to their questions about learning and holistic education; therefore, the educator's role is essential for values education. The preschool teacher is responsible for mediating for children to reflect on values within the early education context (Johansson, 2018). Preschools generate learning strategies that are familiar to children, with a special focus on play, social relationships, enquiry, the use of artefacts and visual tools that enhance value learning. Consequently, this article aims to analyse how preschool teachers communicate values and the values they prioritise in educating children.

2. Method

The method used in this research was a systematic review conducted according to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. Its design presents a four-level flow chart: identification, selection, eligibility, and included studies (Moher et al., 2009). Systematic reviews draw on previous studies on a given topic, so a set of selection criteria must be established to shape a transparent and rigorous review (Zawacki et al., 2020). The literature indicates that systematic reviews advance knowledge on a specific topic and build a theoretical basis for further studies (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

2.1 Databases and Search Strategies

Article searches for this study were conducted in the Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and EBSCO databases. These databases were selected based on the overall research quality framework in education, the social sciences, and psychology, disciplines related to the communication of values. The research was conducted between April and June 2025. All results were filtered by publication year 2014-2024 to gain a thorough understanding of the current state of the art in this area. The following descriptors were used in the search: "preschool", "teachers", "values education", "morals education", "teaching practices". The use of the three databases and search strategies ensured the collection of a broad set of studies relevant to the analysis. Only articles in the social sciences were selected. The search equation, using the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR", returned 14 articles in WoS, 20 in Scopus, and 20 in EBSCO, for a total of 54.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

First, inclusion criteria were established: studies published between 2014 and 2024; studies published in peer-reviewed academic journals; studies related to value communication by preschool teachers; studies available in full text; and studies published in English. Second, exclusion criteria were established: studies outside the preschool context; studies that did not involve educators; and studies that did not focus on the communication of values between preschool teachers and children.

2.3 Data Extraction

First, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to exclude duplicate and systematic review articles. Then we read the article abstracts to analyse their content. Under the exclusion criteria, articles on basic education, secondary education, university education, administration, and curriculum were excluded, as were essays and systematic reviews. Finally, a complete review of the documents was conducted, which facilitated the selection of a final sample of 19 articles. To carry out a transparent and rigorous extraction process, an Excel file template was created, with the data organised to meet the research objective in accordance with the proposal by Carl et al. (2022). The following specific features were identified: fundamental data (year of publication, author), study description (contexts), and methodology (strategies used to communicate values).

2.4 Data Analysis

To realise the meanings in the selected texts, a thematic analysis was used that involved monitoring, improvement, and consensus among the coders, resulting in an inductive and exhaustive verification of the research content (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Figure 1 presents the four stages of the article selection process, highlighting the most significant data for each level of the PRISMA scheme.

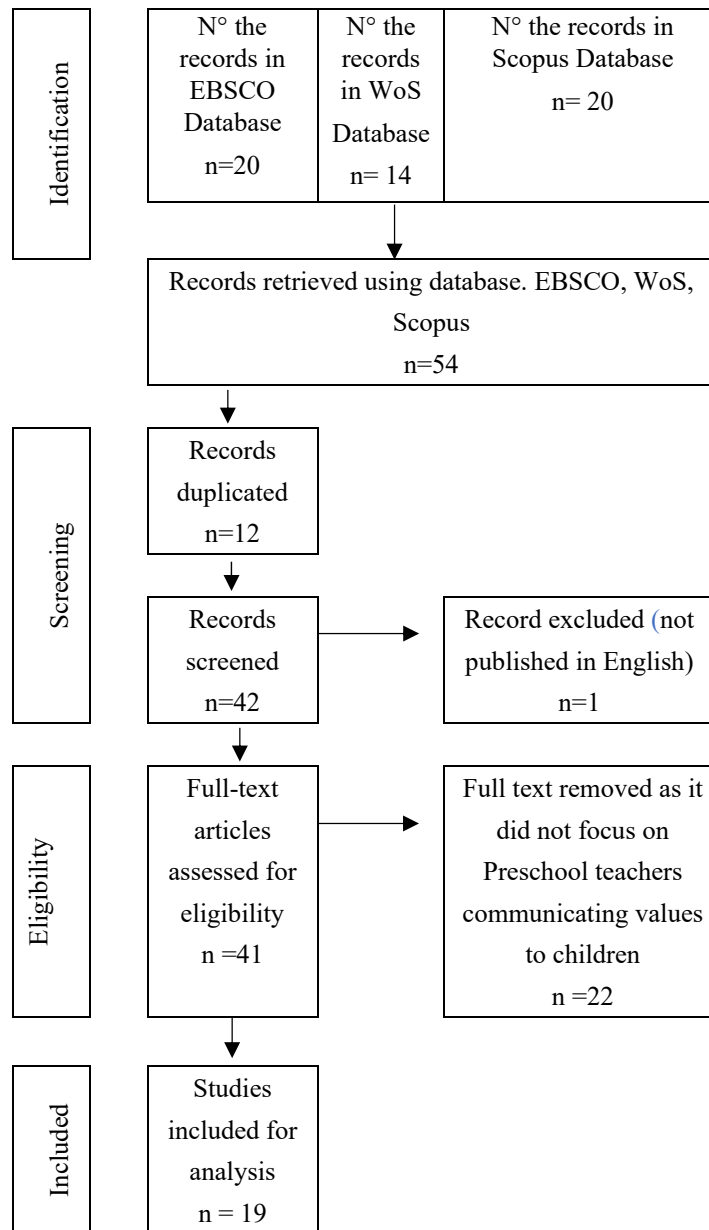


Figure 1. Diagram of the Process of Information Flow Through the Different Phases of the Systematic Review

3. Results

Table 1. Results Found in the Systematic Review

N°	Article	Research method	Description of the study	Study findings
1	Amollo, O. P., & Lilian, G. K. (2017). Teacher Position in Spurring Value Based Education in Early Learning in Nairobi County, Kenya: Addressing Support of Values in School Environment. <i>Journal of Education and Learning</i> , 6(3), 194-203.	a) Quantitative b) Survey	This study explored the role of teachers in developing values-based education among preschool children in Nairobi.	Teachers convey values to children both explicitly and implicitly. Values are communicated to encourage the building of positive relationships and to cope with the difficulties of life in the modern world. The methodology used to teach values is problem confrontation in the classroom, which fosters intercultural understanding.
2	Zdanevych, L. V., Syrova, Y. V., Kolosova, S. V., Pyvovarenko, M. S., & Kurhannikova, O. O. (2020). Instilling the System of Values in Preschool Children in the Cultural and Educational Space.	a) Quantitative b) Interview/ Value lists	The purpose of the study was to develop methods for teaching values to preschool children to help them better understand the basic moral principles of humanity.	As a result of the study, the universal values a child needs to acquire in preschool are communicated through picture books, story texts, and fairy tales. As well as through seminars and printed booklets. The most prominent values are happiness, peace, co-operation, and honesty.
3	Ülavere, P., & Tammik, A. (2017). Value Education in Estonian Preschool Child Care Institutions. <i>Journal of teacher education for sustainability</i> , 19(1), 129-146.	a) Qualitative b) Semi-structured interview.	The purpose of this study was to determine the values of head teachers, teachers, and parents, as well as their conception of value education in Estonian society.	Values form the basis for the planning of schooling and education in a kindergarten. One in particular is the methodology of values education, which is realised by the teacher's example, in communication and everyday activities. The most frequently mentioned values are honesty, respect, care, trust, health, family, and traditions.
4	Kiliñ, H. H., & Andas, T. (2022). Values Education and Evaluation of Activities in Preschool Education Program in Turkey. <i>Open Journal for Educational Research</i> , 6(2).	a) Qualitative. b) Semi structured interview.	The purpose of this study was to assess Turkish preschool teachers' opinions on value education and activities in the preschool education programme.	Preschool teachers evaluate value education in five main categories: "creating the foundation", "educational process", "behaviour", "responsibility", and "rules". Everyday practice is the setting for values education, which is done through activities such as drama, art, field trips, language games, and family involvement. The values that children learn most easily are: love, respect, responsibility, tolerance, sharing, honesty, and cooperation.

Table 1. Results Found in the Systematic Review(continued)

Nº	Article	Research method	Description of the study	Study findings
5	Yenen, E. T., & Ulucan, P. (2021). Values education practices in preschool: The case of Turkey and the United States. <i>Participatory Educational Research</i> , 8(4), 385-408	a) Qualitative b) Interview	The study aims to examine the values in preschool curricula in Turkey and Ohio, as well as how teachers transmit these values.	There are similarities and differences in the methods and techniques used by teachers in values education practices, reflecting differences in educational understanding. In Turkey, there are teacher-centred techniques. In Ohio, there is an active, learning-based approach that includes discourse, discussion, case studies, demonstrations, problem-solving, and out-of-class teaching activities. In Turkey, it is based on preschool education programmes. Ohio relies on standards set by the state. In Turkey, they prioritise: patriotism, national unity and solidarity, Kemalism, and cultural values. In Ohio, they prioritise: autonomy, social norms, respect, and kindness.
6	Puroila, A. M., Johansson, E., Estola, E., Emilson, A., Einarsdóttir, J., & Broström, S. (2016). Interpreting values in the daily practices of Nordic preschoolers: A cross-cultural analysis. <i>International Journal of Early Childhood</i> , 48, 141-159.	a) Qualitative b) Group interview.	The purpose of the study was to deepen cross-cultural understanding of how educators interpret early childhood practices through the lens of values in Nordic preschools.	The study shows that values do not exist as distinct elements but rather as interwoven elements in the educational work. Preschool teachers preferably use indirect means in everyday practice to communicate and interpret values. They address the values of care, discipline, competence, and democracy.
7	Van Krieken Robson, J. (2019). Participatory pedagogy for values education in early childhood education. <i>European Early Childhood Education Research Journal</i> , 27(3)	a) Qualitative b) Semi-structured structured	The purpose of the study is to explore the pedagogy used by early childhood teachers in implementing British Core values.	Early childhood teachers communicate values through contextual moral pedagogy. They deploy a strong participatory and critical pedagogy. Through their daily practice, they incorporate the silenced voices and perspectives of children through problem solving, reflexivity, and self-advocacy that support children's rights. They communicate values such as joy, respect for cultural customs, empathy, democracy, solidarity, justice, and care.

Table 1. Results Found in the Systematic Review(continued)

N°	Article	Research method	Description of the study	Study findings
8	Sigurdardottir, I., Williams, P., & Einarsdottir, J. (2019). Preschool teachers communicating values to children. <i>International Journal of Early Years Education</i> , 27(2), 170–183.	a) Qualitative b) Observational	The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers communicate values to young children in preschools.	Preschool teachers communicated values to children both communicatively and strategically. Care and respect were communicated through communicative actions, incorporating all opinions to reach a mutual understanding. Discipline was mainly communicated strategically with strict rules set by the preschool teachers. Children are socialised into values, education, and rules explicitly and more often implicitly.
9.	Duran, M. (2024). Attitudes of preschool teachers towards values education. <i>International Online Journal of Educational Sciences</i> , 12(5), 271-286.	a) Qualitative. b) Interview	The purpose of this study is to determine preschool teachers' expectations and attitudes towards values education.	Teachers implemented a values education programme through the monthly preparation plan, tailored to the children's age, developmental level, readiness, and needs. The theatre method was the most used: storytelling, games, projects, painting, talk, art, play, music, cartoons, and questions/answers. Values communicated: respect, love, solidarity, honesty, and patience.
10	Baig, S., & Begum, A. (2023). The Role of Teachers in Values Education in Pakistan: A Case of Early Childhood Education and Development from Pakistan. <i>The Journal of Values-Based Leadership</i> , 16(2), 20.	a) Qualitative b) Interview-Observation	The purpose of the paper was to explore the priority values of early childhood teachers and their ways of teaching values in a school in Northern Pakistan.	Teachers play a dominant role in children's value education through role models, practices, daily routines, and interactions with parents. Values such as morality, trust, following rules, good behaviour, taking turns, respect, patience, gratitude, role modeling, sense of responsibility, helping others, and sharing and caring are communicated.
11	Ülavere, P., & Veisson, M. (2015). Values and Values Education in Estonian Preschool Child Care Institutions. <i>Journal of teacher education for sustainability</i> , 17(2), 108-124.	a) Qualitative b) Interview	The study aimed to provide an outline of the values principals, teachers, and parents consider important for children in Estonian child care institutions to learn, and of the activities, in their opinion, that should be used to implement values education in these institutions.	Values education is realised through compliance with group rules and good manners in communication and everyday activities. Methods and activities: traditional events, children's literature, activities in nature, language and speech activities, learning games, and joint events with the family. Values communicated: honesty, health, helpfulness, cooperative skills, tolerance, trust, sense of duty, and independence.

Table 1. Results Found in the Systematic Review(continued)

N°	Article	Research method	Description of the study	Study findings
12	Sakti, S. A., Endraswara, S., & Rohman, A. (2024). Revitalizing local wisdom within character education through ethnopedagogy approach: A case study on a preschool in Yogyakarta. <i>Heliyon</i> , 10(10)	a) Qualitative b) Interview	This study explored the potential of ethnopedagogy to enhance the visibility of local wisdom in early childhood character education in Indonesia.	The use of the ethnopedagogical approach enhanced children's awareness of local culture and fostered character development by integrating local wisdom values. Activities such as playing, singing, and storytelling foster children's core character values, including honesty, diligence, cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect. Cultivating character builds well-rounded citizens who are connected to their cultural environment.
13	Halimah, L., Arifin, R. R., Yuliariatiningsih, M. S., Abdillah, F., & Sutini, A. (2020). Storytelling through "Wayang Golek" puppet show: Practical ways in incorporating character education in early childhood. <i>Cogent Education</i> , 7(1), 1794495	a) Participatory action research b) Narrative	The study aims to develop practical steps for teaching values to support children's character education in Indonesian early childhood education through storytelling using the "Wayang Golek" puppet show.	Character education for children by instilling the value of caring through interactive puppet storytelling. Outdoor activities were conducted to inculcate values related to the environment. Encourage students to practice character education through virtues and moral values such as environmental sensitivity, social awareness, kindness, responsibility, and cultural identity.
14	Sigurdardottir, I., & Einarsdottir, J. (2016). An action research study in an Icelandic preschool: Developing consensus about values and values education. <i>International Journal of Early Childhood</i> , 48, 161-177.	a) Action research b) Interview - Diaries	The study focused on the values that preschool teachers considered important to communicate to children and on how they saw their role in values education.	Preschool teachers set out to communicate three significant values to children: care, respect, and discipline. Daily practice is the setting for teaching values. Five actions for children to adopt values: being a good role model, using understandable words, discussing to resolve conflicts, guiding children by respecting autonomy, and giving direction through rules to act peacefully.
15	Juutinen, J. & Viljamaa, E. A (2016) Narrative Inquiry about Values in a Finnish Preschool: The Case of Traffic Lights. <i>IJEC</i> 48, 193-207	a) Action research b) Observation	This research explored how values are transmitted through the use of a material artefact, a chart with traffic lights, as a communicative and pedagogical tool.	The findings highlight that the traffic lights served as a tool for transmitting values to control and guide children's behaviour. The game can be seen as a place for children's multimodal and embodied storytelling. Values are communicated through collective practices linked to the social, cultural, and material environment. The research uncovers interesting insights into the value of belonging, well-being, and democracy.

Table 1. Results Found in the Systematic Review(continued)

Nº	Article	Research method	Description of the study	Study findings
16	Zachrisen, B. (2016). The Contribution of Different Patterns of Teachers' Interactions to Young Children's Experiences of Democratic Values During Play. <i>IJEC</i> 48, 179-192	a) Action research b) Video observation	The study aimed to investigate children's and practitioners' interactions regarding democratic practices in preschool.	Values are communicated to children in the context of dyadic (paired) and group interaction situations. Group interactions provide children with opportunities to experience democratic practices more fully than dyadic interactions do. Democratic values education requires preschool teachers to be aware of how values are communicated in everyday interactions with younger children.
17	Hansen, O. H., Jensen, A. S., & Broström, S. (2020). Democratic, caring and disciplinary values in Danish preschools: Bringing values together. <i>Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood</i> , 21(4), 340-355.	a) Action research b) Video observation	The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the values communicated in preschool children's everyday lives.	The communication of democratic, supportive, and disciplinary values to children expresses the teacher's conviction in participating in the social order and in developing skills to change it through enriching dialogues, circle time, the circle-time suitcase, and a shared buffet. "Caring" values are communicated mainly through a variety of emotional gestures, mimicry, and eye and body contact. Discipline maintains social order and shared morals.
18	Puroila, A. M., & Haho, A. (2016). Moral Functioning: Navigating the Messy Landscape of Values in Finnish Preschools. <i>Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research</i> , 61(5), 540-554.	a) Action research. b) Interview	The purpose of the study is to answer the question: What kind of moral functioning emerges from educators' narratives in a Finnish preschool context?	Educators' decisions about their everyday actions involve values. Values are practised and lived as moral behaviour, linking their moral thinking and actions to the situation and cultural context. Moral functioning is experienced: in what works in a preschool context, what provides suitable conditions for people, what the rules say, and what is possible to achieve in the position of an educator. Values and morals as determinants of everyday educational practice provide an ideal way to understand moral functioning in preschool.

Table 1. Results Found in the Systematic Review(continued)

N°	Article	Research method	Description of the study	Study findings
19	Kayıran, D. (2023). Need assessment for early childhood values education program Examining views of preschool teachers on values. <i>Türk Akademik Yayınlar Dergisi (TAY Journal)</i> , 7(1), 61-79.	a) Quantitative. b) Questionnaire.	The purpose of this study is to examine preschool teachers' opinions on values education and to provide evidence for the need for a values education programme during the preschool period.	Preschool value education should be developed and updated in line with society's values. It is considered important to communicate values that govern inter-human relations to prevent moral corruption. They are taught through drama, Turkish language, art activities, and visual presentations. They rarely use group activities such as story reading, excursions, cartoons, projects, and parental involvement practices. The most preferred values transmitted to the children are: respect, love, and honesty.

3.1 Teaching Strategies and Everyday Practices for Communicating Values

The studies present two ways to educate preschool children about values. The first way preschool teachers communicate values is through specific didactic activities that are part of a curricular teaching plan (Amollo & Lilian, 2017). The second way is through everyday practice in teacher-student interaction (Baig & Begum, 2023). In the latter, studies show that values are not communicated as a distinct element, but as an intrinsic aspect of the educational task (Puroila et al., 2016).

Authors point to the use of problem solving as a value transfer strategy (Amollo & Lilian, 2017; Yenen & Ulucan, 2021) (Van Krieken Robson, 2019; Sigurdardottir & Einarsdottir, 2016; Ülaver & Tammik, 2017). Storytelling activities are also carried out in the field of children's literature (Zdanevych et al., 2020; Ülaver & Tammik, 2017; Ülaver & Veisson, 2015; Sakti et al., 2024; Halimah et al., 2020). Also, theatrical performances (Ülaver & Tammik, 2017; Kiliç & Andas, 2022; Kayıran, 2023) and artistic events (Ülaver & Tammik, 2017; Duran, 2024; Halimah et al., 2020; Kayıran, 2023; Yenen & Ulucan, 2021). Excursions or activities in nature are another way to communicate values (Ülaver & Tammik, 2017; Duran, 2024; Kiliç & Andas, 2022). The use of visual material for values education, such as signs, banners, videos, and flipcharts, is everyday. This is an essential communicative technique in the preschool context, as children need to be mediated with concrete materials to achieve learning (Zdanevych et al., 2020; Kiliç & Andas, 2022; Van Krieken Robson, 2019; Duran, 2024; Kayıran, 2023). It is important to mention that the didactic strategies mentioned above are articulated around play, a playful instance that encourages children to experience meaningful learning (Kiliç & Andas, 2022; Van Krieken Robson, 2019; Duran, 2024; Ülaver & Veisson, 2015; Sakti et al., 2024; Halimah et al., 2020; Juutinen & Viljamaa, 2016).

In other studies, authors note that values are communicated not only through the specific strategies outlined in the pre-primary curriculum but also as an inherent part of the pedagogical task. The communication of values is intertwined with fundamental pedagogical ideas of the educational task (Ülaver & Tammik, 2017). The everyday practices of preschool teachers manifest the connection between what is indicated in the curricula and the values that emerge from educators' interpretations (Puroila et al., 2016). The transmission of values occurs through everyday communication and activities (Ülaver & Veisson, 2015). Daily practice is the setting for teaching values (Sigurdardottir & Einarsdottir, 2016), as well as interactions between children and teachers, throughout lunch, circle time, and free activities (Hansen et al., 2020).

Values are communicated within the social, cultural, and material environment through collective practices (Juutinen & Viljamaa, 2016; Zachrisen, 2016). It is significant to note that some teachers put contextual moral pedagogy into practice, enabling the communication of values to be designed with the children's life environment in mind (Van Krieken Robson, 2019).

The communication of values is implicit in the predominant way preschools operate. In the course of their daily work, preschool teachers are constantly confronted with questions involving values. In this way, values are embodied

and lived as moral functioning as a product of personal and professional background (Sigurdardottir & Einarsdottir, 2016; Baig & Begum, 2023). Table 2 shows the strategies educators use to communicate values.

Table 2. The Article Outlines the Types of Strategies to Communicate Values

Strategies	Authors
1. Didactic activities to communicate values	Amollo & Lilian (2017). Zdanevych et al. (2020); Ülavere & Tammik (2017); Kiliç & Andas (2022); Yenen & Ulucan (2021); Duran (2024); Ülavere & Veisson (2015); Sakti et al. (2024); Halimah et al. (2020); Juutinen & Viljamaa (2016); Zachrisen (2016); Kayıran (2023). Zdanevych et al. (2020).
2. Everyday practices in which values are communicated.	Ülavere & Tammik (2017); Puroila et al. (2016); Van Krieken Robson (2019); Sigurdardottir et al. (2019); Baig & Begum (2023); Ülavere & Veisson (2015); Sigurdardottir & Einarsdottir (2016); Juutinen & Viljamaa (2016); Zachrisen (2016); Hansen et al. (2020); Puroila & Haho (2016).

4. Discussion

4.1 Teach Values That Promote the Democratic Way of Life

Several authors agree that preschool teachers aim to communicate values to promote democratic ways of life in children (Puroila et al., 2016; Amollo & Lilian, 2017; Juutinen & Viljamaa, 2016; Van Krieken Robson, 2019; Hansen et al., 2020). A thorough review of these studies enables us to identify some significant findings that highlight how democratic values are communicated.

Preschool teachers emphasize the importance of teaching values that promote a democratic way of life, aiming to foster an educational environment that equips students with tools to resolve conflicts peacefully. A recurrent strategy used by teachers is addressing classroom problems. This methodology for values education promotes cross-cultural understanding, participation in the local community, and the building of positive relationships in the complex scenario of modern life (Amollo & Lilian, 2017; Van Krieken Robson, 2019).

In everyday practices, preschool teachers use artefacts, such as traffic lights, to communicate values in concrete ways. Green light means they can play; yellow light means play can continue for a while; red light means they can order their play. The purpose was to employ a group practice that would allow the children to understand the meaning of each activity. The sense of belonging to a peer group is linked to the values of well-being and democracy. Traffic lights were used to monitor and guide the children's behaviour. The activity enables children to experience their right to participate, to influence, and to be heard (Juutinen & Viljamaa, 2016). Democracy is experienced in preschool through children's participation in planning collective activities, such as circle time, circle time suitcase, and harvesting potatoes and carrots for a shared buffet. Such activities broaden horizons about key social issues, such as those stemming from cultural differences. The educational intention is that children follow the rules, relate to the existing social order, as mediated by their teachers, and use their skills to change that order (Puroila et al., 2016; Hansen et al., 2020).

4.2 Adequately Understanding Moral Values

Several researchers who have studied this category of values have highlighted its importance in the holistic development of preschool children. In instilling moral values, the educational intention is to elicit positive responses in children to foster good character (Halimah et al., 2020). Teachers consider it important to teach how to cultivate one's own opinion and to express it (Ülavere & Tammik, 2017).

Other authors point out that the value system a child needs to learn in preschool should align with international axiological standards. Develop an educational model that fosters children's understanding of minimum moral principles of humanity (Zdanevych et al., 2020). It is considered a duty of educators to help children broaden their horizons on values (Puroila et al., 2016), especially in communicating a set of moral standards and minimum ethical rules for being a moral person (Kiliç & Andas, 2022).

From the studies analysed, the moral practice of teachers in preschool contexts is an experience in which thinking, situated moral action, and cultural context are intertwined. In the course of their daily work, educators are repeatedly confronted with the question: What is the right or just way to act in this situation? What is expected of me as an exemplary educator? The educators' decisions about their daily actions manifest the values they assume, which are perceived as moral action. Thus, moral practice is not an individual initiative, but is mediated by social, cultural, and political contexts of the educational task (Puroila & Haho, 2016).

4.3 The Social Dimension of Values

Studies indicate that educators recognise values education as a set of moral and ethical rules that guide beliefs, behaviours, and thoughts considered right or wrong. These rules foster a sense of responsibility for society's survival. Research shows that this process is carried out through project work, the use of visual materials, and the implementation of artistic activities (Kilinç & Andas, 2022).

From a holistic perspective, the communication of values is experienced as a relational phenomenon among peers rather than an individual educational action, as it intertwines the educational work of everyday practices with educators' interpretations to transmit values to children (Puroila et al., 2016). The delivery of a set of social behaviour rules allows individuals, particularly children, to understand their responsibilities and the norms of social life. Communicating values through an active, learning-based approach, using techniques and methods, allows children to experience working in an environment of excellence, respect, and tolerance among peers, which could lead them to become good citizens (Yenen & Ulucan, 2021).

The experience of uncertainty in educational processes, amid the difficulty of predicting which knowledge and skills will be meaningful in a globalised world, highlights the importance of developing soft skills. These are part of the purpose of values education. Reflecting on how to treat others, cultivating respect for others, considering others' points of view, accepting differences between equals, working towards fairness, and developing politeness are fundamental to ensuring a tolerant social life (Sigurdardottir & Einarsdottir, 2016; Duran, 2024). Group interactions provide opportunities for children to experience the value of 'we' in a practical way (Zachrisen, 2016), thereby fostering a sense of shared participation in the peer group and fostering social belonging.

Finally, some studies suggest that teachers' establishment of rules is highly significant in teaching social values, as it instills in children a sense of responsibility for society's survival. Individuals, especially children, who are aware of the responsibilities and rules of social life, ensure the sustainable development of society (Yenen & Ulucan, 2021). Educators must involve children in establishing the norms and values that shape different educational activities. Teachers are required to transfer the meaning of norms and values to children and also how they are manifested in everyday life behaviour (Ülavere & Veisson, 2015). Communicating values such as cultivating care, respect, and discipline socially anchors children. Children must adopt these values as behavioural guidelines in life in order to become more socially adept (Sigurdardottir & Einarsdottir, 2016). Table 3 shows the categories established based on the recurring themes related to the strategies for communicating values

Table 3. Categories by Themes Reiterated in the Communication of Values

Categories	Authors
Teaching values that promote the democratic way of life	Amollo & Lilian (2017); Juutinen & Viljamaa (2016); Hansen et al. (2020); Puroila et al. (2016) Van Krieken Robson (2019)
Optimally understanding moral principles.	Puroila et al. (2016); Puroila and Haho (2016); Halimah et al. (2020); Ülavere and Tammik, (2017); Zdanevych et al. (2020); Kilinç Andas (2022); Yenen and Ulucan (2021);
The social dimension of values	Yenen & Ulucan (2021); Ülavere & Veisson (2015); Puroila et al. (2016); Yenen & Ulucan (2021); Sigurdardottir & Einarsdottir (2016); Duran (2024); Zachrisen (2016); Ülavere & Veisson (2015); Sigurdardottir et al. (2019)

5. Conclusion

In empirical studies on how preschool teachers communicate values to children, a wide range of modes and strategies has been documented over the last 10 years. From a methodological perspective, studies have been conducted primarily using qualitative methods, followed by action research, and finally quantitative methods. This research provides an opportunity to respond to the research objective of analysing how preschool teachers communicate values and which values they prioritise. From the findings, four relevant conclusions are presented. Firstly, the studies report two ways of educating preschool children in values: through didactic activities as part of a curricular plan and through everyday practice, since values are not communicated as a distinct element but are associated with educational work. Secondly, preschool educators aim to communicate values that promote a democratic way of life in children. Thirdly, in the course of their daily work, educators constantly ask themselves and make concrete decisions about how to teach values to children. Values are embodied and lived as moral action. Finally, the communication of values is experienced as a relational phenomenon among peers rather than an individual educational action, as it intertwines the educational work of everyday practices, the methodologies used, and educators' interpretations of how to transmit values to children.

6. Limitations and suggestions

As for the limitations of this article, due to space and time constraints, it was not possible to access more databases to extend the search. It is proposed that, for further studies on values education, studies with teachers at the first level of education should be conducted. This information is valuable for teachers working at this level of education and aiming at the holistic development of children.

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Authors contributions

Dr. Rodrigo Arellano Saavedra, Dr. Andrew Philominraj, and Dr. Ranjeeva Ranjan were responsible for study design and revision. Dr. Rodrigo Arellano Saavedra and Valentin Diaz Montecino were responsible for data collection. All the authors participated in drafting and revising the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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