The article presents the results of the current state of practice of character education in adolescence and youth in the process of sports. The socio-pedagogical significance of systematic sports activities in the formation of the character of young athletes has been determined. The psychological and pedagogical conditions of upbringing and character formation have been formulated, the problems existing in this context have been highlighted, the resource of the family and the personality of the coach in their solution has been noted. This article aims to study the features of character formation in the sports activities of young athletes. The research was based on the hypothesis that the formation of character traits of young athletes in sports activity depends on the consolidation of behavior motives, their shift into habits, stable and fixed ways of behavior.

Keywords: Upbringing, Character, Personality Qualities, Youth Sports, Methods, Features, Young Athletes.

Introduction
The upbringing of a sporting character in young athletes involves solving several educational tasks that psychological and pedagogical science faces. VCIOM together with the All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute of Physical Culture and Sports conducted a sociological survey to determine the individual needs (motivation) of all categories and groups of the population in conditions of physical exercise in 2019, as part of the implementation of the "Sport is the norm of life" Federal project. The presented data showed that children 3-5 years old (51%) and 6-12 years old (67%) are systematically engaged in sports more often, but this proportion is gradually decreasing by older ages – 41% are systematically engaged at the age of 13-29, 36% – 30-59 years old, and 27% – over 60 years old. There is a decrease in physical activity among adolescents and adults: their share is 73% at the age of 13 to 29. (VCIOM, 2019).

According to E.P. Ilin and other researchers, the manifestation of will has its distinctive features at primary school age: the child performs volitional actions at the direction of adults, i.e. is a good performer of the will of adults, self-regulation of behavior is not yet sufficiently developed, endurance is formed only with time, impulsivity weakens (Ilin, 2000).

Certain changes in the volitional sphere occur in adolescents against the background of general puberty. Therewith, their endurance decreases with increasing courage. Following the nature of mental development, the processes of arousal prevail over inhibition, and as a result, discipline decreases and stubbornness increases. And they show their perseverance only in interesting activities (Ilin, 2000; Maiorov, Sakharchuk, & Sotov, 1992).

Indeed, the lack of motor activity in modern adolescents affects the functional state and...
leads to several serious health consequences, stress, the connection with which was described in the writings of G. Gelb and P. Zigel (1990). Therefore, doing sports in adolescence is an excellent tool for educating a child's character.

The moral component of the will and the mechanism of self-stimulation first appears in adolescence, where young men, when achieving their goals, show sufficiently high perseverance, the ability to be patient against the background of fatigue, volitional activity has the character of purposefulness (Matveev, 2005).

It is possible to indicate the inadequacy of school programs in physical culture, in terms of increasing motivation for independent physical education, leading a healthy lifestyle one of the reasons for the decrease in physical activity among high school students, based on the analysis of the works of I.M. Vorotilikina, O.V. Anokhina (Vorotilikina & Anokhina, 2012; Anokhina & Vorotilikina, 2016).

The “sports education” term in the psychological and pedagogical literature has appeared not so long ago. In sports education, L.I. Lubyshева (2012) recommends paying attention to two interrelated and complementary aspects – this is the education of a positive attitude to sports and education through sports. Nevertheless, we adhere to the second direction in this work, which more fully reveals the process of character education of young athletes.

Comprehensive improvement of physical qualities, abilities in unity with the upbringing of spiritual and moral qualities of a young athlete is the main goal of sports education. Sports character is defined by psychologists as a behavioral type and attitude to reality based on the formed stable motives and behaviors of athletes (Dementev & Ushakov, 2010).

Based on the conducted research, B.J. Kretti (1978) attributes the following to the sports-important personality traits of highly qualified athletes: a high level of aggressiveness, achievement motivation, extroversion, and staunchness.

According to Cattell, the athletic character is determined by the fullness of emotional stability, freedom of thought and action, self-criticism in assessing oneself and others, psycho-emotional stability, and low anxiety in extreme situations (Kretti, 1978).

Not all children who come to sports have innate inclinations of staunchness, while they can also achieve maximum results, provided that the coach takes into account their typological characteristics. In children's sports, the achievement of high results largely depends on the identification of personality traits and features of the psycho-emotional state of novice athletes, on the work competently planned by the coach (Nakhodkin, Kolodeznikova, & Semenov, 2019; Nakhodkin & Portnyagin, 2016; Nakhodkin, Sergin, Makhmudova, Spiridonova, & Nikolaev, 2019). In this regard, the study is relevant.

**The purpose of the study:** To study the features of the formation of the character of young athletes in sports activities. The research was based on the hypothesis that the formation of character traits of young athletes in sports activity depends on the consolidation of behavior motives, their shift into habits, stable and fixed ways of behavior.

**Methods**

The research methods included an assessment of patience, perseverance, persistence, staunchness, and determination (E.P. Ilin, E.K. Feshchenko), in which 58 young athletes of the control group (CG) at the stage of specialization and experimental group (EG) of sports improvement selectively participated; questioning of parents of young athletes on the subject of attitude to sports, interviews with coaches, pedagogical observations of the process of sports training.

The sociological survey by VCIOM in 2019 showed that more than 50% of parents believe that sports activities affect the upbringing of a child (62% for 3-5-year-olds, 60% for 6-12-year-olds), improves health (87% and 85%), promotes the all-round development of personality (29% and 22%), forms character (26% and 28%) and disciplines (17% and 19%) (VCIOM, 2019).

The results of mass studies of families with children conducted by US scholars, published by the Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, indicate that sport contributes to strengthening favorable family relations between parents and children (Podorvanyuk, 2009).

Studies conducted by O. Strandbu, I. Smette, A. Bakken, and K. Stefansen (2018, 2020), which reveal a strong relationship between the sports culture of the family and the participation of adolescents in sports, are of interest. Growing up with parents who are passionate about sports increases the likelihood that children will become involved in sports. Parents consider sports to be a normal phenomenon and a way to connect emotionally with the child and contribute to his/her development. In youth sports, parents are often volunteer coaches and team leaders, raise money for clubs and help organize championships. Most parents are initiators and motivators of sports. Some parents believe that sport prepares their children for life, sports are beneficial in performing professional tasks, increase competitiveness, teach them to resist pressure. These answers reflect a view of sport...
as a character-building activity. Many parents also spoke warmly about the qualities associated with sports skills as something valuable that children can learn in sports (Stephansen, Smette, & Strandbu, 2018; Strandbu, Bakken, & Stephansen, 2020).

A pilot study by O.S. Zolotukhina (2013) proves the positive effect of sports, a decrease in the level of aggressiveness in adolescents, and reveals that adolescents who systematically engage in sports are less aggressive (81.1%), which indicates their success and self-confidence.

The survey conducted among the parents of the pupils of the youth sports school revealed the main motives of parents to do sports for their children. (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Parents’ attitude to sports (in %)

Therewith, 88% of parents surveyed say that they do not associate the future of their children with big sports.

However, they see the value of sports in educating the character of a teenager, strengthening his/her health, and most importantly, preparing him/her for life (Nakhodkin, 2007). Most parents noted that sports activities develop purposefulness, perseverance in adolescents in achieving their goals, reducing the level of aggressiveness and anxiety.

Results and Discussion

The sensitive time of character formation is considered to be the age up to 9-10 years when a child's psyche is most susceptible to the formation of basic personality qualities. Character in most cases is stable and affects all cognitive mental processes, volitional and emotional states of the individual. Both positive and negative character traits – kindness, responsiveness, sociability, selfishness, indifference to people, callousness are formed under the influence of adults (Table 1).

Table 1.
Features of character formation in the age periods of development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development periods</th>
<th>Features of character formation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool-age</td>
<td>Formation of positive qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– diligence, accuracy, responsibility, conscientiousness, perseverance in games, and the process of the simplest household work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school age</td>
<td>Formation of character traits manifested in interpersonal communications, expansion of the circle of contacts with new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Development of strong-willed character traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early youth</td>
<td>Development of moral qualities of character</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, it can be argued that the character is formed in stages, following the type of temperament based on an individual parenting style.

As the analysis of the results of the educational and training process has shown, adolescence (13-15 years) is sensitive for the upbringing of a sporting character, moral and volitional development.

According to the just remark of V.L. Dementev and A.F. Ushakov, the formation of an athlete's character is scrupulous work that requires a lot of time, perseverance, and
enthusiasm on the part of the coach during the long-term training of the athlete. Therewith, the authors emphasize that the entire educational and training process of an athlete’s preparation must, first of all, meet the requirements of morality since martial arts can form not only positive but also negative traits of an athlete’s character (Dementev & Ushakov, 2010).

Upon a detailed examination, the process of character formation in young athletes under the influence of sports activity and upbringing manifests itself in committed volitional acts (Table 2). V.I. Slobodchikov and E.I. Isaev (2005) indicate that the formation of the character of a young athlete, a set of effective attitudes and properties, depends on the direction of volitional behavior in situations of training and competitive activity and determine his/her behavior and volitional actions.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Character traits</th>
<th>Methods and techniques of character education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Staunchness</td>
<td>Learning to own feelings and emotions, methods and techniques of volitional regulation, psychoregulation of behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Purposefulness</td>
<td>Training methods of setting, accepting, and fulfilling the goals and objectives set by the athlete; methods of encouragement; reflexive analysis of performances together with the athlete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Psychological and pedagogical support of an athlete to overcome unpleasant feelings, methods of improving skills to achieve goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>Training methods for overcoming inertia and hesitation, selection of sparring partners, impact on the self-esteem and proper pride of the athlete, conducting attacking actions, open struggle, without the use of protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Competitive duels; formation of the ability to make strong-willed efforts in an extreme situation, conflict interaction with an opponent; instilling self-confidence; exercises and tasks associated with a certain risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>Training methods for overcoming difficulties encountered and ways to achieve the goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Methods of mental regulation of pre-start, competitive and post-competitive states, methods and techniques of volitional regulation, psychoregulation of behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Methods of education: staunchness, sensitivity, and attentiveness to a partner, a sense of honor and dignity, reliability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organization of competitive activity by the coach should ensure a gradual increase in the skill of young athletes, exceeding the level of preparedness of their rivals.

To this end, systematic psychological work was carried out with young athletes using the following methods: persuasion and instilling faith in their strength in overcoming difficulties. The performance of complex elements of exercises occurred due to installations in solving specific tasks close to competitive situations, where athletes were required to perform psychotechnics of self-regulation of states at all stages of sports activity.

Experimental work on the education of the sports character of young athletes was carried out in three age groups (stages): junior schoolchildren, teenagers, high school students and consisted of the following psychological and pedagogical features:

At the first stage, the coach's attention is paid to the process of self-development and self-knowledge through the assessment of behavior by other people (coach, teammates). The following psychological and pedagogical methods and techniques were used (praise, comments based on the analysis of training, as well as the level of independence when performing individual tasks). Discussions and practical training sessions on relevant segments of sports training on the following topics proved to be more effective: "Mindfulness education", "What is a sporting character?", "We are a team", "Our strength is in solidarity and friendship", "What hard work gives me?" and others.

It is important to implement the "teacher-coach – athlete – sports team – parent" pedagogical system at the second stage of the training and educational process, which creates an effective environment for the education of a stable character, the need to improve positive behavior experience. The task in the process of psychological and pedagogical support is to form such character traits as mutual supportiveness, assistance, and support to teammates, the application of common efforts in achieving collective success, subordination of one’s behavior and activities to the goals and objectives of a sports team (collective).

Sports character is developed with the gradual emergence of a sense of self-confidence, the level of self-control, the autonomy of actions. The qualities of perseverance, persistence, and determination in achieving goals are formed by creating psychological situations close to competitive conditions. To relieve excessive tension and fear of overcoming psychological barriers in sports activities, young athletes were given feasible technical or tactical tasks in their chosen sport.
and provided individual assistance by a coach using methods of suggestion and persuasion.

A competent approach to the organization and conduct of the training and educational process was required on the part of the teacher-coach. Personality qualities such as a sense of duty and responsibility to the team, mutual support, self-education of character traits with an emphasis on self-esteem, and fixation of goals, tasks, and work results are formed. For this purpose, cognitive practical classes and pieces of training were held on the topics: "What should a leader be like?", "Team actions and the art of winning", "How to cultivate strength of character?", "Self-management", "On drawing up an individual program of psychological training", "How to work with an athlete's diary?", "Education of fighting qualities", team analysis and introspection of training and competitive situations, etc.

At the third stage, young men manifest such character traits as social initiative, independence in goal setting, in selecting ways to achieve it, in taking personal responsibility for the team and teammates, and qualities of perseverance and self-control are also formed. A conscious approach to sports is manifested in the desire to improve the work process. The main emphasis was paid to the formation of adequate self-esteem, motivation to achieve goals, the development of the qualities of collectivism, the education of sports, and personal discipline, reducing the level of excessive anxiety.

A cycle of psychological and pedagogical pieces of training and games, conversations, and classes on topics for athletes, parents, coaches were conducted: "How does character affect the competitive result?", "What is the essence of success in sports?", "Control over emotions", "I want, I can, I must, I have the right", "What is the essence of masculinity?", "Self-confidence, self-readiness", "On the systematic introduction of an athlete's diary or a diary of self-development", "Managing emotional state", "Relaxation and mobilization exercises", "Modeling and planning of individual psychological preparation for competitions", "Situational management of an athlete at competitions", "Rules for the implementation of coach's instructions – sports character education", etc.

Psychological work on sports character education was also carried out with the coaching staff in the format of practical seminars, individual consultations within the framework of the author's advanced training courses. Coaching authority is important in fostering a strong athletic character in a growing person. The main criterion in this is a vivid personal example of a fair and demanding teacher-coach, as well as professional and methodological skills, goodwill and the ability to find a common language with others, readiness, and desire for self-improvement.

The results of the study show that in the structure of the development of the qualities of the character of EG athletes at a high level, the indicators of determination prevail by 24%, patience – by 17% higher than in the CG (Table 3).

According to the research results, it can be noted that the staunchness borders on the concept of "self-confidence", which is formed gradually in the process of systematic sports training (readiness to take risks and overcome hard work, working capacity against fatigue and fulfill the tasks set by the coach, etc.). To some extent, an athlete can feel "an exceptional sense of self-confidence". The athletic quality of "pain tolerance" is also forming over time.

Consequently, sports contain a huge educational potential. Thanks to sports, the character of young athletes is tempered, they learn to endure the difficulties encountered, stressful situations with fortitude.

**Table 3**

*Criteria and levels of development of character traits of young athletes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Development criteria of character traits</th>
<th>CG, %</th>
<th>EG, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-assessment of patience</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Self-assessment of perseverance</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-assessment of persistence</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Self-assessment of determination-timidity</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Selective indicators of the development of character traits

The results of the study show that in the structure of the development of the qualities of the character of EG athletes at a high level, the indicators of determination prevail by 24%, patience – by 17% higher than in the CG (Table 3).

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Consequently, sports contain a huge educational potential. Thanks to sports, the character of young athletes is tempered, they learn to endure the difficulties encountered, stressful situations with fortitude.

**Conclusion**

Teachers-coaches need to fulfill the following set of pedagogical conditions to educate young athletes' character: to form a culture of experiencing fears and overcoming failures and mistakes; it is necessary to combine group training work in a children's sports team with individual work; take into account the psychophysiological characteristics of age; to conduct educational and training sessions as the
main environment for the accumulation and consolidation of generally accepted and socially approved models of behavior at different stages of sports training; to build an educational and training process as a condition for the realization of the personal and sports potential of a person who can overcome his/her weaknesses, who knows how to control his/her emotions (Nakhodkin, 2007, 2016).

Thus, the character education of an athlete takes place in the process of skillfully combining methods of improving sports skills, encouragement, psychoregulation of behavior, consolidation of generally accepted and socially approved behaviors at different stages of sports training. To do this, it is necessary to stimulate the acquisition, preservation, and accumulation of positive moral and volitional experience of behavior in sports activities by a teenager based on joint productive activities with peers.

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