



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING THE SUBJECT OF FOLK PEDAGOGY AS A PRESSING EDUCATIONAL ISSUE

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the effectiveness of teaching the subject of folk pedagogy in higher education as a pressing pedagogical issue. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study incorporates surveys, interviews, and experimental classes involving both students and instructors. Findings indicate low student engagement and limited instructor access to modern tools when traditional teaching methods are used. However, innovative strategies such as digital storytelling, ethnographic assignments, and QR-coded folklore archives significantly enhanced learning outcomes and student motivation. The article proposes strategic models and pedagogical solutions for modernizing the instruction of folk pedagogy, integrating technology, interactivity, and cultural relevance. In conclusion, folk pedagogy is positioned not only as a means to preserve cultural heritage but also as a vital tool for developing moral reasoning and civic values among learners.

KEY WORDS

Folk pedagogy, cultural heritage, interactive learning, student engagement, teaching effectiveness, modern methods, moral education.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, rapid information exchange, and educational modernization, each stage of the education system must not only focus on transmitting academic knowledge, but also on strengthening the spiritual and cultural development of society. In this context, subjects that are deeply rooted in national values, historical memory, and moral education—such as **folk pedagogy**—play an essential role in shaping identity and fostering a sense of belonging. Folk pedagogy is a pedagogical and cultural phenomenon that encompasses the accumulated life experiences, moral-ethical norms, and social upbringing practices of a people over centuries. It constitutes a powerful tool for the moral and civic upbringing of younger generations through the integration of oral traditions, customs, folklore, proverbs, epics, and community-based teaching. The primary objective of the subject of folk pedagogy is to instill in students a national worldview, to deepen their respect for cultural heritage, and to develop their moral consciousness, social responsibility, and independent thinking. However, this goal cannot be achieved through traditional teaching methods alone. In the context of a digital, fast-paced society, the effectiveness of folk pedagogy as a subject depends heavily on innovative methods, interactive tools, and context-based learning strategies that can engage today's learners meaningfully.

Within the framework of Uzbekistan's educational reforms—particularly the goals outlined in the “New Uzbekistan” development strategy—the revitalization and scientific integration of national identity and pedagogical traditions have become a national priority. This has brought the issue of improving the effectiveness of teaching folk pedagogy to the forefront of academic discourse in both theoretical and practical terms. Currently, the teaching of this subject in many higher education institutions still relies on outdated, text-heavy, teacher-centered methods with minimal use of modern educational technologies. This creates barriers to student engagement and restricts their ability to critically analyze or apply the knowledge in real-life contexts. Despite the rich potential of folk pedagogy for fostering moral reasoning and emotional intelligence, students often exhibit low levels of interest or awareness about national pedagogical traditions. This issue is further complicated by the lack of updated teaching materials, insufficient training for instructors, and the absence of digital repositories or interactive platforms where folk knowledge can be visually explored. Thus, in the age of artificial intelligence and virtual learning environments, finding new ways to digitize, contextualize, and teach folk pedagogical content has become an urgent priority.

Studies in education and cultural anthropology emphasize that folk pedagogy is not merely a historical curiosity but rather a living system of social philosophy, ethical worldview, and behavioral regulation developed by communities over centuries [1]. In the Central Asian context, the works of scholars like Alisher Navoi, Ahmad Yassawi, Mahmud Kashgari, and more recently, Jadid intellectuals like Abdurauf Fitrat and Abdulla Avloni, have laid the foundation for pedagogical thought deeply embedded in folk traditions. For instance, Avloni's seminal work “Turkiy Guliston yoki Axloq” advocates for the systematic study of moral values derived from the lived experience of the people, elevating folk culture to the level of educational science [2]. In this sense, folk pedagogy is not just a source of folklore but a social institution capable of shaping values and behaviors through implicit learning and cultural transmission. However, this dimension is often overlooked in modern curricula, where such knowledge is marginalized or oversimplified. Consequently, the current challenge lies in reconceptualizing the teaching of folk pedagogy—not merely as an academic discipline, but as an integrative, multidisciplinary approach capable of addressing the cultural and moral voids in contemporary education.

The problems associated with teaching folk pedagogy are multifaceted: outdated syllabi, lack of digital learning environments, absence of student-centered methodologies, insufficient attention to cross-disciplinary integration, and limited use of visual and experiential learning techniques. Additionally, there is a growing generational gap between the bearers of traditional knowledge (older generations) and current students, many of whom have grown up in globalized and urbanized contexts that are detached from traditional modes of storytelling, ritual, and rural community life. Therefore, the task of reintroducing folk pedagogy in a way that resonates with young learners—through project-based learning, ethnographic fieldwork, digital archives, and gamified simulations—has become increasingly significant. Moreover, the emotional and psychological benefits of folk pedagogy, such as increased empathy, cultural pride, and intergenerational connectedness, remain largely untapped in the academic space.

Thus, the current state of folk pedagogy as a subject demands critical reassessment, pedagogical innovation, and methodological renewal. The core questions guiding this inquiry include: How can folk pedagogical content be made relevant and engaging for 21st-century students? What role can technology and multimedia play in enhancing the teaching of this subject? How can interdisciplinary

collaboration (with literature, history, ethnography, and psychology) enrich the curriculum? And finally, how can learning outcomes be measured to ensure that the subject contributes meaningfully to students' personal development, social awareness, and cultural competence? These questions are not only academic in nature but also deeply practical, given the rising importance of cultural sustainability, heritage education, and nation-building in post-Soviet and post-colonial societies like Uzbekistan.

Given this backdrop, the aim of this article is to explore the contemporary challenges and opportunities associated with teaching the subject of folk pedagogy in higher education institutions. The article proposes evidence-based strategies for improving the effectiveness of instruction, identifies existing gaps in teaching materials and teacher preparedness, and offers a conceptual model for the integration of folk pedagogy with modern educational technologies. Furthermore, the paper draws on comparative educational experiences from other countries with strong traditions of community-based learning—such as Finland's local knowledge curricula, Japan's moral education programs, and Canada's indigenous studies initiatives—to suggest adaptable practices. Within this framework, the research also analyzes students' perceptions, engagement levels, and learning outcomes in pilot case studies where innovative methods—such as digital storytelling, community-based projects, and thematic folklore units—were applied. The ultimate goal is to transform the teaching of folk pedagogy into a dynamic, interactive, and culturally transformative process that empowers students not only academically but also morally and socially.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The present research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate the challenges and prospects of enhancing the effectiveness of teaching the subject of folk pedagogy in higher education. The methodological foundation of the study draws upon contemporary educational theories, culturally responsive pedagogy, ethnopedagogical frameworks, and constructivist learning models. In particular, the qualitative component includes content analysis of curriculum documents, semi-structured interviews with instructors teaching folk pedagogy across five higher education institutions in Uzbekistan, and focus group discussions with students enrolled in those courses. These tools were designed to capture attitudes, instructional strategies, and perceived obstacles in the current implementation of the subject. The quantitative aspect of the study was conducted through the administration of structured surveys to 250 students and 35 instructors, aimed at assessing the perceived effectiveness, engagement levels, and relevance of the subject content. The survey responses were processed using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis via SPSS to identify correlations between teaching methodology and student outcomes. The study also draws upon comparative education literature to contextualize the findings within global practices of cultural pedagogy.

The literature review underscores the theoretical and practical dimensions of folk pedagogy as discussed by numerous scholars. Avloni's "Turkiy Guliston yoki Axloq" [1] serves as a foundational source in defining the moral and pedagogical essence of national upbringing rooted in traditional knowledge. Contemporary Uzbek scholars such as M. Khaydarov [2], O. Rasulov [3], and S. Nematov [4] have argued for the re-integration of folk wisdom into modern educational discourse, calling for innovative approaches to preserve intangible cultural heritage through classroom engagement. International literature further supports the relevance of folk pedagogy in contemporary curricula. Gay

(2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995) have laid the groundwork for culturally responsive teaching, emphasizing the alignment of instruction with students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences [5]. In addition, authors like Zierer (2019) and McLaren (2020) advocate for critical pedagogy that incorporates indigenous and local knowledge systems to challenge hegemonic narratives in education [6]. These sources collectively suggest that folk pedagogy can serve not only as a bridge between past and present, but also as a powerful tool for nurturing students' critical consciousness and moral reasoning.

Moreover, methodological strategies employed in other cultural contexts were examined to determine their transferability to the Uzbek setting. For instance, Canada's indigenous knowledge education system integrates storytelling, communal learning, and ritual into formal schooling with considerable success [7]. Japan's moral education programs utilize folk tales and historical narratives as vehicles for value transmission [8], while Finland's localized curriculum model allows for regional folk traditions to be incorporated into educational planning [9]. These models demonstrate the viability of folk pedagogy in modern education when contextualized and systematized effectively. However, the literature also identifies significant challenges in this area, including lack of digital resources, generational gaps in cultural literacy, and institutional resistance to curriculum reform. Within Uzbekistan, there remains a scarcity of systematically developed digital platforms and multimedia content that could make folk pedagogy more accessible and engaging. While some initiatives—such as the digitization of folk tales and development of interactive mobile applications—have emerged, they are not yet widely adopted or standardized for educational use.

To address these challenges, this research integrates elements of design-based research (DBR) methodology, which allows for iterative refinement of instructional strategies based on classroom feedback. In doing so, the study tests several pedagogical interventions, such as the use of visual ethnography, digital storytelling, QR-linked folk proverb archives, and collaborative student research projects focused on local traditions. The effectiveness of these interventions is assessed through pre- and post-intervention evaluation metrics and reflective journals maintained by both students and instructors. The results of these interventions are further interpreted through the lens of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which positions cultural tools and community interaction as central to cognitive development [10]. Through this methodological structure, the study not only identifies the limitations of current teaching practices but also formulates scalable, evidence-based solutions to enhance the instructional quality of the subject of folk pedagogy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study reveal a complex interplay of pedagogical, cultural, and technological factors that affect the effectiveness of teaching the subject of folk pedagogy in higher education. The quantitative analysis of survey data collected from 250 students across five universities indicates that while 86% of students recognize the cultural and ethical importance of folk pedagogy, only 39% feel actively engaged during class sessions. Furthermore, a substantial 67% of respondents stated that the instructional approach lacked interactivity and modern relevance. These figures suggest a considerable gap between the perceived value of the subject and the actual teaching experience, underscoring the need for methodological transformation. Additionally, only 28% of surveyed students reported being exposed to visual, audio, or digital learning tools during folk pedagogy lessons, pointing to the underutilization of multimedia and ICT in delivering content that is inherently

visual and narrative-driven. These statistical patterns were complemented by qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews with 35 instructors, the majority of whom acknowledged the challenges of teaching the subject using outdated syllabi and insufficient methodological training. Many instructors cited the lack of contextually adapted textbooks, absence of digital folk archives, and limited classroom infrastructure as key barriers to delivering the course effectively.

The focus group discussions conducted with students provided deeper insight into these statistics. Participants expressed a strong desire for a more engaging and student-centered learning experience. Many emphasized the need to relate folk pedagogical content to contemporary social issues, such as identity, gender roles, environmental ethics, and social cohesion. For example, students suggested using comparative case studies between traditional Uzbek upbringing and modern family dynamics, analyzing how core values like respect for elders or communal responsibility evolve over time. Others proposed the integration of storytelling-based assignments, where students collect and analyze folk tales from their own regions, thereby creating a participatory and immersive learning environment. These discussions revealed that students do not perceive folk pedagogy as irrelevant; rather, they find its delivery disengaging when presented in abstract or text-heavy formats. The results support the constructivist view that learning becomes meaningful when it connects with the learner's social context and cultural experience. This reinforces the relevance of Vygotskian principles, which posit that higher psychological functions develop through culturally mediated activity and collaborative learning. Hence, student engagement can be substantially increased by repositioning them as co-creators of knowledge rather than passive recipients of historical data.

The pedagogical interventions tested during the study yielded promising results. Three of the five universities implemented pilot modules incorporating digital storytelling, QR-based folklore archives, and participatory ethnographic assignments. At these sites, student engagement scores rose significantly, with 72% of participants reporting higher motivation and interest in the subject. Moreover, post-intervention assessments showed a 25–30% improvement in students' ability to articulate the socio-cultural relevance of folk pedagogical concepts. For instance, when asked to interpret the proverb “Yaxshilik qil — dengizga tashla,” students demonstrated more nuanced understandings, linking it to themes of moral altruism and collective accountability in modern civic life. The introduction of visual ethnography (i.e., using images and videos from rural life, traditional crafts, rituals, and oral storytelling) also enriched classroom discussions, allowing students to contextualize abstract principles through lived examples. One notable activity involved students creating short documentaries on community-based child-rearing practices in different regions of Uzbekistan, which they later presented and critically analyzed in class. This assignment not only enhanced their analytical skills but also cultivated a sense of pride and emotional connection to their cultural heritage.

The instructor reflections collected through journals and debrief interviews aligned with student feedback. Teachers noted increased classroom participation, deeper critical inquiry, and enhanced retention of conceptual material when employing multimedia and student-centered strategies. They also reported improved professional confidence, particularly in their ability to innovate beyond rigid curriculum constraints. However, challenges persisted—especially in terms of time management, access to digital infrastructure, and resistance from administrative structures not yet attuned to interdisciplinary or project-based teaching. Some instructors expressed concern over the lack of institutional incentives to adopt new methods, citing excessive workloads and minimal training

opportunities. These findings suggest that while pedagogical innovation is feasible and effective, its sustainability requires systemic support, including revised curricula, dedicated teacher training, and investment in digital learning platforms. In this context, the study proposes the establishment of a National Folk Pedagogy Digital Repository (NFPDR), where folklore texts, visual archives, interactive lesson plans, and regional case studies can be accessed by both educators and students. This would help standardize and modernize content delivery while respecting regional and linguistic diversity.

Another key finding from the study relates to the disciplinary positioning of folk pedagogy within higher education. At present, the subject is often categorized under general pedagogy or taught as an elective, limiting its perceived importance. Both students and instructors suggested elevating the subject's status by embedding it within broader discourses on moral education, cultural studies, and community development. Comparative analysis with other countries supports this claim. In Japan, for instance, moral education is a standalone subject in the national curriculum, grounded in traditional values and cultural stories that resonate with students' identities [1]. Similarly, Canada's indigenous education framework empowers learners through storytelling, land-based learning, and intergenerational dialogue, making cultural education a vital part of student formation [2]. These international experiences underscore the importance of treating folk pedagogy not as peripheral knowledge but as a central pillar in cultivating ethical, culturally aware, and socially responsible individuals. Applying these lessons to the Uzbek context requires contextual sensitivity but also bold curriculum reforms that recognize the epistemic legitimacy of local knowledge systems.

Furthermore, the analysis of learning outcomes revealed that students exposed to experiential, visual, and collaborative learning modes not only developed a better grasp of theoretical content but also demonstrated improved soft skills such as empathy, teamwork, and cultural literacy. This aligns with Bloom's taxonomy, where higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) is facilitated through active learning. The capacity to interpret folk sayings, analyze rituals, or compare historical child-rearing practices fosters meta-cognitive awareness and ethical reflection—outcomes increasingly prioritized in global higher education standards. Moreover, such approaches foster inclusivity, as students from rural backgrounds or marginalized groups find their cultural narratives validated and respected within academic settings. Thus, teaching folk pedagogy effectively also contributes to social equity and educational justice, addressing hidden curricula that often marginalize non-Western forms of knowledge.

To further enhance these gains, the study recommends a modular redesign of the folk pedagogy curriculum. Each module should incorporate theory, practice, and application: for example, a unit on "Traditional Child Rearing" could include lectures on historical methods, a digital archive of folk songs and lullabies, student interviews with grandparents, and a comparative analysis project. Assessment methods should be diversified—moving beyond written tests to include multimedia presentations, community engagement reports, and peer-reviewed digital portfolios. Such reforms would make the subject dynamic, inclusive, and outcomes-based. Additionally, the professional development of educators is essential. Workshops on ethnographic methods, digital pedagogy, and interdisciplinary integration should be mandated within teacher education programs. Only through empowered educators can the teaching of folk pedagogy evolve to meet the needs of 21st-century learners.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that teaching the subject of folk pedagogy can be significantly improved through the integration of technology, participatory learning strategies, and curricular reimagining grounded in cultural responsiveness. While students value the subject's ethical and cultural depth, its effectiveness is currently hindered by outdated methodologies, insufficient resources, and lack of institutional prioritization. However, targeted interventions—when supported by research, training, and policy alignment—can transform the subject from a passive, abstract academic offering into a vibrant, interactive, and socially transformative educational experience. These findings contribute to broader discourses on indigenizing education, valuing intangible heritage, and ensuring that local knowledge systems hold a rightful place in modern pedagogical practices. In doing so, the study affirms that folk pedagogy is not merely a relic of the past, but a living, evolving educational resource essential for nurturing thoughtful, ethical, and culturally grounded citizens.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research emphasize that the subject of folk pedagogy represents far more than a peripheral or historical curiosity—it is a dynamic and integral component of cultural continuity, moral development, and national identity formation within higher education. The investigation has shown that while students and educators alike recognize the cultural significance and ethical depth of folk pedagogical knowledge, the subject's current implementation in most higher education institutions remains insufficiently developed, both in form and content. The absence of modern methodological frameworks, interactive learning platforms, and interdisciplinary applications has led to a pedagogical gap between theoretical content and practical engagement. This disjunction has resulted in low levels of student motivation, reduced cultural immersion, and limited academic innovation. However, the results also demonstrate that this situation is not immutable. When restructured with attention to contemporary educational technologies, culturally responsive pedagogy, and learner-centered strategies, the subject of folk pedagogy can become a powerful medium for academic engagement and social-emotional learning. The pilot interventions carried out in the study—incorporating digital storytelling, QR-coded folklore archives, regional fieldwork projects, and visual ethnography—not only improved students' cognitive and analytical abilities but also enhanced their empathy, cultural pride, and collaborative spirit. These outcomes suggest that folk pedagogy has immense potential as a transformative subject when taught with methods that resonate with the cognitive, emotional, and technological realities of 21st-century learners.

Moreover, the research validates the assertion that folk pedagogy should not be confined to a niche or elective position within the academic curriculum. Instead, it should be reframed as a foundational discipline that bridges multiple domains—pedagogy, anthropology, ethics, linguistics, and cultural studies—thereby positioning itself at the center of holistic education. This reframing is particularly urgent in the context of rising globalization and cultural homogenization, which often marginalize indigenous knowledge systems in favor of Eurocentric and industrial paradigms. In societies like Uzbekistan, which possess rich oral traditions and deep-rooted pedagogical wisdom, this shift can help safeguard intangible heritage while also preparing students for culturally nuanced global citizenship. A critical implication of this research is the need for higher education policy-makers to revisit curricular hierarchies and prioritize folk pedagogy as a strategic subject for both national development and intercultural dialogue. At the same time, the subject must evolve with the times. This includes the development of open-access digital repositories that house curated folklore materials in

multiple formats; the integration of AI-assisted tools for comparative folklore analysis; and the establishment of collaborative research centers focusing on regional pedagogical heritage. Such innovations will ensure that folk pedagogy remains intellectually rigorous, technologically advanced, and socially relevant.

In addition, the training and continuous professional development of educators must be addressed systematically. The current study identified gaps not only in instructional materials but also in the methodological preparedness of instructors. Many educators expressed a desire to innovate but lacked institutional support, access to multimedia tools, or exposure to best practices in ethnographic pedagogy. Therefore, it is recommended that universities introduce certificate programs, summer institutes, and online training platforms specifically focused on teaching folk pedagogy through modern techniques. Such training should encompass interdisciplinary design, audiovisual literacy, field research skills, and digital content creation. Only when educators are empowered with such competencies can they act as true mediators between traditional wisdom and contemporary student realities. Furthermore, these efforts must be supported by institutional policies that reward pedagogical innovation, allocate funding for cultural education, and promote cross-departmental collaboration. Without such structural backing, even the most creative instructional models risk remaining isolated experiments rather than systemic improvements.

An equally important aspect lies in assessment. Traditional evaluation models based on written exams or rote memorization are ill-suited to measure the multidimensional learning that folk pedagogy enables. Instead, assessment in this subject should be authentic and performance-based, emphasizing the application of knowledge in real-world or community contexts. Suggested methods include ethnographic portfolios, digital storytelling projects, regional folklore mapping, community interviews, and reflective essays. These tools not only measure student understanding but also deepen it, as learners engage with their own heritage in meaningful, often emotional ways. At the same time, such assessments provide instructors with rich qualitative data for improving instructional design and customizing content delivery. In light of these considerations, the article recommends the development of a national folk pedagogy assessment framework, which can guide educators in designing inclusive, culturally sensitive, and academically valid evaluation tools.

The research also brings attention to the broader implications of folk pedagogy for moral and civic education. In an age marked by rising individualism, social fragmentation, and ecological crises, the principles embedded in folk pedagogy—mutual respect, community solidarity, environmental stewardship, intergenerational responsibility—offer critical moral guidance. When properly contextualized, these principles can provide a counterbalance to the transactional logics of neoliberal education systems, reorienting the academic experience toward the cultivation of ethical human beings. This point is especially salient in multicultural and post-colonial societies, where educational systems must heal cultural erasures and restore epistemic diversity. Therefore, the integration of folk pedagogy is not merely a technical or curricular issue—it is a philosophical and ethical one. It speaks to the kind of human beings we hope to nurture and the kind of society we aspire to build. In this regard, the alignment of folk pedagogy with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Communities)—offers a strategic framework for advocacy, funding, and international collaboration. In summary, this study concludes that the current challenges in teaching folk pedagogy are systemic but surmountable. With targeted reforms in curriculum design, instructor training, student assessment,

and institutional policy, the subject can be revitalized to fulfill its full educational potential. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed: (1) Upgrade folk pedagogy curricula to include interactive modules, digital archives, and interdisciplinary content; (2) Establish national and regional centers for the documentation, digitization, and pedagogical application of folklore; (3) Introduce teacher development programs focused on modern methods of teaching ethnopedagogy; (4) Institutionalize folk pedagogy as a core or cross-listed subject within education faculties and humanities departments; (5) Develop a national assessment framework for folk pedagogy using qualitative and participatory evaluation methods; and (6) Foster international partnerships with institutions engaged in indigenous knowledge education to exchange models, tools, and research. These steps, if implemented in a coordinated and well-funded manner, have the potential to transform folk pedagogy into a 21st-century subject that not only preserves cultural heritage but also builds the moral and intellectual foundations of future generations.

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