

# THE THEORY OF LABOR EDUCATION IN KAZAKH FOLK PEDAGOGY

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## Abstract

The article reveals the essence of the theory of labor education in Kazakh folk pedagogy, its goals and objectives, its content and structural components, and its practical mechanisms. Based on folk experience, the influence of labor on personality formation is analyzed, as well as the role of the family, community, and the traditional way of life in cultivating diligence, responsibility, honesty, patience, and vocational orientation. Proverbs and sayings, tales and legends, customs, the mentorship tradition (“ustaz–shogird”), and everyday labor practice are also examined as the main means of labor education. The study substantiates labor education as an interconnected system of educational (moral), social, and professional directions; practical ways of integrating it into the modern educational process are proposed (project-based activities, life skills, career guidance, socially useful labor).

**Keywords:** Kazakh folk pedagogy; labor education; ethnopedagogy; professional education; ustaz–shogird; oral folk art; customs and traditions; life skills; diligence; responsibility.

## Introduction

Labor education is considered one of the most important factors in personal development and the progress of society. In the process of labor, not only practical abilities and skills are formed, but also willpower, a sense of responsibility, discipline, honesty, and such moral and ethical qualities as patriotism. From this point of view, labor education in folk pedagogy acts as a stable system relying on life experience, customs, values, and educational traditions transmitted from generation to generation.

In Kazakh folk pedagogy, the theory of labor education (еңбек тәрбиеси) is aimed at the child’s early preparation for life, their awareness of duty to the family and the community, teaching types of work characteristic of the lifestyle (pastoralism, agriculture, crafts, and household work), and thereby the formation of a “harmoniously developed personality.” Proverbs and sayings, tales and legends, instructions and guidance, the mentorship tradition (“ustaz–shogird”), as well as everyday labor practice serve as the main sources of labor education. Through them, the child is instilled with the value of work, the significance of profession and craft, the idea of being useful to society, and the principle of “earning one’s livelihood through labor.” [1][3]

With the strengthening of the competency-based approach in the education system, the scientific analysis of the theory of labor education in Kazakh folk pedagogy and its integration



into the modern teaching–learning process becomes especially relevant. The folk model of upbringing contributes to the development of life skills, professional orientation, entrepreneurial spirit, collective interaction skills, and social responsibility among young people.[8][9]

### Literature Review

To identify the socio-economic foundations of educating schoolchildren through labor in Kazakh folk pedagogy, we considered it appropriate to begin by examining the history of the development of the economy of the Kazakh people. This is because the history of labor education of schoolchildren in Kazakh folk pedagogy is closely connected with the history of the emergence, development, and formation of the traditional Kazakh economy. However, for a long time, stable forms of collective labor did not develop in the Kazakh economy, because the Kazakhs led a nomadic lifestyle and settled in a dispersed manner. Economic activity mainly developed within the family. All labor activity was carried out using handmade tools. This continued until the February Revolution. The difficulties of nomadic life forced the population to involve children in various forms of labor activity. Thus, a tradition of labor education began to develop within the family. To confirm these conclusions, one may cite the classification of the historical development of Kazakh folk pedagogy into eight periods proposed by the researcher of Kazakh ethnopedagogy S. Kaliev: (the Stone and Bronze Ages BCE; VII–III centuries BCE – V century BCE; V–IX centuries; X–XV centuries; XV–XVIII centuries; from the 18th century to the 1920s; 1920–1990; ...). It is known that the development of human history is divided into three periods: the Stone, Copper (Bronze), and Iron Ages. At the initial stage, special economic activity was limited to using ready-made products of nature. Primitive humans gathered fruits and grains of wild plants and hunted animals. Thus, hunting became the main branch of the economy. This led to the emergence of a new occupation in the division of labor—the production of stone tools.[2][4][6]

F. Engels noted: “in the earliest epoch children were common, collective, since the private family did not exist; consequently, the upbringing of children was a collective affair of the members of primitive society.” [6]

The following scholarly information presented in the учебное пособие “Қозок,” prepared under the leadership of А. Қосимжонов, served as the basis for considering the history of children’s labor education in the Kazakh family starting from the Stone Age. It states that “the most ancient inhabitants (about 800 thousand years ago) were people of the Stone Age. Remains of ancient stone tools are found in various parts of Kazakhstan: at the foothills of Karatau, in the Northern Balkhash region, in Central and Eastern Kazakhstan, as well as in Mangystau. The life and activities of the bearers of this ancient culture in the territory of Kazakhstan continued uninterrupted until the late stage of the Stone Age—Neolithic and Eneolithic (V–II millennia BCE). Their richest economic and cultural experience was transmitted from generation to generation, which enabled generations that reached a later stage of cultural development to create and form in each region a unique type of social production dependent on the geographic and ecological environment. In the period called the ‘Neolithic Revolution,’ as in other parts of Eurasia, the economic and cultural level of the ancient



population in Kazakhstan was high.” In addition, the scholarly conclusions in Professor S. Kaliev’s textbook “Қазақ этнопедагогикасының теориялық негіздері мен тарихы” may also serve as evidence of the above statements. He notes that, from a historical and social point of view, it is incorrect to consider the ancient experience of the Kazakhs in educating the younger generation only starting from the period of the formation of the Kazakh Khanate (XIV–XV centuries).[1][3]

### Main Part

Labor education (еңбек тәрбиесі) in Kazakh folk pedagogy is a people’s system of upbringing aimed, alongside the physical and mental development of the child, at preparing them for life and forming diligence, responsibility, an orientation toward honest labor, respect for profession and craft, as well as values of being useful to society. It is closely connected with the traditional way of life (pastoralism, agriculture, crafts, household work) and relies on the idea that “labor is the main school for educating a person.” [1][3][7]

From a theoretical point of view, labor education ensures the following structural interconnection: labor → ability/skill → responsibility and discipline → moral maturity → professional orientation. That is, labor education is not simply “performing work,” but a socio-pedagogical process that forms personal qualities (willpower, patience, thrift, honesty).[4]

### Conclusion

The theory of labor education in Kazakh folk pedagogy relies on life experience, customs, values, and educational views accumulated by the people over centuries. At the center of this theory is the idea: “labor is the main factor that shapes personality, develops society, and perfects the human being.” Through oral folk art (proverbs and sayings, legends, songs, терме, жыр), family upbringing traditions, “mentor–student” relations, and the practice of collective labor, the child develops love for work, responsibility, discipline, patience, thrift, an orientation toward honest labor, and respect for profession.

The theory of labor education in Kazakh folk pedagogy is a system aimed at comprehensive personal development and a harmonious combination of moral-spiritual, social, and practical skills. Its scientific and practical significance lies in the fact that the use of this heritage in the modern educational process increases students’ adaptability to life, develops interest in professions, diligence, and social responsibility. Therefore, integrating the ideas of labor education from folk pedagogy into the content of modern education is an effective way to educate a harmoniously developed, initiative generation ready for useful labor.

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