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## FORMATION OF ECOLOGICAL CULTURE OF STUDENTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF STUDYING FOLK MUSIC

### *Abstract*

In modern music education, the intersection of ecological awareness, primary school development, and traditional folk music is gaining significant traction. This paper investigates how elementary students can build a robust "ecological culture" through the study of folk songs in general music classes. Here, ecological culture is defined as a holistic blend of environmental facts, ethical values, emotional connections, and responsible actions. The core objective is to demonstrate how specific folk repertoires, combined with deliberate teaching strategies, can nurture early environmental stewardship grounded in cultural heritage.

The research methodology involved a systematic review of academic literature, primary school curricula, and various song anthologies. To analyze this data, the authors applied a four-part framework to identify ecological knowledge, values, emotions, and behavioral cues hidden within song lyrics and educational models. A descriptive summary was then created to highlight the major trends and missing links.

The findings reveal that much of the folk music already taught in schools is naturally rich in environmental wisdom. These songs often contain imagery of nature, stories about the human relationship with the land, and deep emotional ties to the environment. When educators use strategies like interdisciplinary connections, open discussions, physical performance, and linking songs to local geography, this content effectively fosters ecological culture. However, the study notes that translating this into actual behavior usually requires activities outside the classroom.

Ultimately, the article argues that folk music serves as a vital bridge connecting a child's personal experience and cultural identity with environmental meaning. It calls for lesson plans that intentionally use tradition to cultivate ecological knowledge and values. The authors conclude by recommending future comparative research to further explore how music education can empower children to become agents of environmental change.

**Key words:** ecological culture, elementary school students, folk music, performing skills, music education.

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## ОҚУ ПРОЦЕСІНДЕ БАСТАУЫШ СЫНЫП ОҚУШЫЛАРЫНЫҢ ЭКОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ МӘДЕНИЕТІН ХАЛЫҚ МУЗЫКАСЫ НЕГІЗІНДЕ ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУ

### *Аңдатпа*

Экологиялық мәдениет, бастауыш сынып оқушылары және халық музыкасы қазіргі заманғы музыкалық білім беруде маңызды тақырыптарға айналууда. Бұл мақалада жалпы музыка сабақтарында халық музыкасын оқу процесінде бастауыш сынып оқушыларының экологиялық мәдениетінің қалыптасуы, экологиялық мәдениетті білімнің, құндылықтардың, эмоциялардың және экологиялық жауапты мінез-құлықтың интеграцияланған жүйесі ретінде қарастырылады. Мақсаты – экологиялық мәдениеттің мәдени тұрғыдан негізделген ерте қалыптасуын қолдау үшін халық музыкасының репертуары мен нақты педагогикалық стратегияларды қалай біріктіруге болатындығын түсіндіру.

Зерттеуде әдебиеттерге шолу және басылымдардың, бастауыш мектептің музыкалық оқу бағдарламаларының және халық әндерінің жинақтарының құрылымдық мазмұнын талдау қолданылады. Төрт компонентті аналитикалық матрица экологиялық білімді, экологиялық құндылықтар мен нормаларды, экологиялық эмоциялар мен мінез-құлық салдарын ән мәтіндерінде және педагогикалық модельдерде кодтау үшін пайдаланылды. Содан кейін сипаттамалық қорытындылау басым заңдылықтар мен олқылықтарды анықтау үшін қолданылды.

Нәтижелер бастауыш музыкалық білім беруде қолданылатын халық репертуарының едәуір бөлігі экологиялық маңызды мазмұнды кодтайтынын, яғни табиғи объектілер мен құбылыстардың бейнелері, адам мен табиғат арасындағы қарым-қатынас туралы әңгімелер, жасырын экологиялық нормалар және экологиялық эмоциялардың бай палитрасын көрсетеді. Мұғалімдер басқа пәндермен тақырыптық интеграцияны, диалогтік пікірталас пен рефлексияны, орындаушылық шеберлікті және репертуарды локализациялауды жергілікті тақырыптар мен дәстүрлерге қолданғанда, әрі бұл мазмұнды экологиялық мәдениеттің құрамдас бөліктеріне жүйелі түрде аударуға болады. Сонымен қатар, мінез-құлық аспектілері музыка сабағынан тыс іс-әрекеттерге байланысты.

Мақалада халық музыкасы балалардың өмірлік тәжірибесі, мәдени ерекшелігі мен экологиялық мағыналары арасындағы күшті делдал ретінде қызмет ете алады деген қорытындыға келді. Онда фольклорлық музыка экологиялық білімді, құндылықтарды, эмоцияларды және экологиялық агенттіктердің қарапайым түрлерін дамыту үшін әдейі қолданылатын зерттеулерге негізделген сабақ жобалары туралы айтылады және музыкалық білім берудегі болашақ дизайнға негізделген және салыстырмалы зерттеулердің бағыттары көрсетілген.

**Түйін сөздер:** экологиялық мәдениет, бастауыш сынып оқушылары, халық музыкасы, музыкалық білім, орындаушылық шеберлік.

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## ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ЭКОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ УЧАЩИХСЯ НАЧАЛЬНЫХ КЛАССОВ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ НАРОДНОЙ МУЗЫКИ

### *Аннотация*

В сфере музыкального обучения сегодня всё чаще акцент делается на экологические ценности, изучение народных мелодий и формирование у младших школьников интереса к искусству. В контексте общего музыкального образования анализируется развитие экологического мировоззрения младших школьников через изучение народных мелодий, где устойчивое отношение к природе формируется как синтез познавательных навыков, моральных установок, чувств и осознанного действия. Задача заключается в определении способов интеграции народного музыкального наследия и педагогических методов, направленных на развитие экологического сознания у детей с учётом локальной культурной специфики.

Для анализа музыкальных материалов были изучены научные статьи, учебные курсы начального образования и народные песни, применяя методологию систематического обзора и структурированного разбора контента. Анализ содержания песен и образовательных схем позволил выявить четыре ключевых аспекта, отражающих понимание природы, отношение к окружающей среде, эмоциональные реакции и практические действия по сохранению экосистем. Для анализа ключевых тенденций и выявленных недочетов применялась методика синтетического описания.

Исследование выявило наличие экологического компонента в значительной доле музыкальных произведений, применяемых в начальной школе: описание ландшафтов, сюжеты о взаимодействии человечества с окружающей средой, скрытые принципы устойчивого развития и разнообразные эмоциональные реакции на природу. В результате систематического преобразования компонентов содержания образования через использование межпредметных связей, обсуждения в форме диалога, анализа собственного опыта, адаптации материала под местные особенности природы и культуру происходит формирование элементов экокультуры. Вместе с тем реакция человека во многом определяется теми шагами, которые он предпринимает сразу по завершении занятия по музыке.

В статье утверждается, что фольклорные песни способны выступать важным связующим звеном между детскими воспоминаниями, осознанием своей принадлежности к определённой традиции и восприятием природы. В статье рассматриваются аргументы за проекты обучения, где элементы народной музыки целенаправленно применяются для формирования экологической грамотности, ценностных установок, эмоциональных реакций и базовых навыков влияния на окружающую среду, а также обозначены перспективы дальнейших работ в сфере музыкальной педагогики через анализ и проектирование учебных программ.

**Ключевые слова:** музыкальное обучение, младшие школьники, народная музыка, экологическая культура, исполнительское мастерство.

**Introduction.** The rapid deterioration of the global environment and the intensification of the climate crisis have drawn scrutiny to the formation of an ecological culture as an essential competency in education for twenty-first century learners. Ecological culture in educational research is usually interpreted as an acquiring integral personal property which involves ecological knowledge, value orientations to nature, emotional sensitivity and environmental-action experience [3; 7; 11]. Several authors claim that the basics of ecological culture must be developed in elementary and lower secondary school level, as children's value orientations and everyday life habits within the nature are

particularly adaptive then [2; 6; 9; 16]. ' Instead, what seems to dominate most on-the-ground models today is consciousness-raising and project-based environmental education within the context of a science lesson, whereas music itself (and folk music in particular) as an educational tool is under-theorised and under-utilised.

Within the Russian and post-Soviet tradition of research ecological culture of younger schoolchildren is understood as a derivative pedagogical result that implies rational ecological knowledge, affective experience with nature being cultivated along with willingness to act in an ecofriendly manner [3; 4; 8]. Makarova states that ecological culture formation in elementary school may be successful only in case of continuity of topics of academic study, extra-curricular and family education and considering age-related cognitive and emotional characteristics of younger schoolchildren (7–10 years old) [3]. Indications that may apply internationally are found in research which views ecological culture as a constellation of orientational will and ability layers, such as ecological literacy, values and action competence, resulting from early encounters with place and community [7; 10; 25]. Comparative examinations of environmental education policies at the primary school level have shown Education for Sustainable Development to be a central goal when educating for sustainable development and that the importance of integrating knowledge about nature become evident in order to challenge conventional ways that anthropogenic environments (including producing goods) have been cleared away over time ([9]; [13]).

Music and arts education have been seen increasingly as promising, but under-used media for environmental education. Kuznetsova's study on preschool children's music education demonstrates that musical activities including songs and listening pieces including natural artifacts have a salutary effect on preschoolers' emotional relationship with the environments and their disposition to care about living things [1]. Radynova's work indicates that an environment-based artistic program is feasible for preschoolers and prompt them to learn and adopt ecological knowledge and value attitudes after evaluation from diagnostic tasks and behavioural observation [2]. In studies provided by eco-aesthetic education, it was noted that music can help children feel the natural phenomena through hearing sound and distil cognitive thoughts about nature into aesthetic sensation including moral reflection [6; 27]. Elsewhere, curricular surveys suggest that teachers of music are infrequently provided with methodology to help them introduce systematically ecological tasks into their practice [4; 23].

Hangover means trepan, but in this great country of his it also refers to the original music, and that is folk. Ethno-pedagogy suggests that in traditional songs, narratives and rituals are encoded collective knowledge about the environment, social norms of respectful attitude towards land and its inhabitants as well as culture-specific "ecological emotions" (reverence, gratitude and responsibility) [5; 7; 18]. It is demonstrated by Khusainov that the systematized, ethno-pedagogical knowledge of which the folk-ecological plot can represent the conceptional basis, may be used as an appropriate for ecological education in a national school [5]. Newly renewed empirical observations validate that folklore — lullabies, fairy tales, folk songs and seasonal rituals — is the primary modality used by families and communities for initiating children into ecological norms and relationships [8; 21]. Robinson's [9] qualitative study, "Tunes from the Land," reveals how a folk music project in school can support adolescents' eco-literacy and sense of place by connecting musical learning to local landscapes and environmental issues. Research on Mongolian desert folk songs suggests that traditional repertoire of these songs was full of ecological responses/emotions and environmental knowledge, making it constantly as an ecological culture agent among audiences before the concept of 'ecological culture' taken shape [18].

However, some knowledge gaps persist. Firstly, the majority of ecological music education research concentrates on preschool children or older students and community projects; pedagogical work with children of primary school age as part of compulsory music lessons is not usually systematic [1; 2; 19]. Secondly, if Russian and Kazakhstani pedagogical literature offers some individual lesson plans based on the use of nature songs, it has very few analytical works which would be aimed at understanding what exactly is the contribution of folk music in formation of ecological culture as integral multidimensional result (knowledge, values, emotions, behaviour) [3; 4; 23]. Third,

clinical research that produces a fusion of folk-music-based intervention with quantitative diagnostic instruments of ecological culture-stress level in the primary school (to enable the comparison of initial and final) is relatively scarce. Most research to date tends to typify by anecdotal evidence or small-scale indicators (e.g., awareness of certain environmental issues), rather than complete ecological culture profiles [6; 10; 13].

Ecological culture of elementary school students for the purpose of this article is understood as an integral educational systematised system, which includes ecological knowledge about nature, emotionally marked and value-oriented positions in relation to (of) nature, including filled with corresponding sense towards its protection and care, as well as a desire for environmentally responsible behaviour (attitudes), which must be inherent in 6–10 year old. It is assumed that such a culture can be reflected in how school students look at, talk about and do (when possible) things to natural objects and phenomena as well as how they participate in activities linked to their everyday lives, whether monopolized by routines or underpinned by elements of environmental education inside and outside school [3;14]. According to many researchers, folk music is seen as a complex of orally transmitted traditional songs and instrumental tunes that mirror the life of community and its interaction with the natural world; in primary stage this mainly appears through songs about children and calendar-rituals devoted to seasons, animals, plants or elements or christening mother earth [5; 11; 20]. The concept of formation concerns those purposeful, pedagogically shaped practices in musical education that influence and "make grow" ecological culture through the mediation of repertory, didactics, and learning activities.

In this context, the focus of this study is to examine ways in which the ecological culture of elementary school students can be established through studying folk music in middle school general music class. In particular, the article (1) summarizes Russian, Kazakhstani and foreign studies covering issues pertaining to ecological culture, music education and folk music's; (2) uncovers the ecological potential of folk repertoires widely used in primary schools' curricula; (3) suggests a model of lesson-based activities for linking systematically lessons on folk music with fostering ecological knowledge, values, emotions and behaviours. In this way, it aims to fill the void between environmental and music education showing that folk songs can be not only a means of transmitting a culture but also an effective instrument information of an early ecological culture.

**Methods and Materials.** In order to contribute to the research questions outlined in the Introduction, we conceived it as a systematic literature review with structured content analysis on traditional folk music catalogue and basic descriptive statistics. The goal was not to trial a specific classroom intervention, but to construct a replicable analytical foundation for modelling how eco-cultural identity could be promoted in transmissive traditional music through elementary school music instruction.

**Research design.** The design decisions in the methodology were a multi-stage type:

- comprehensive search and selection of studies on ecological culture, music teaching as well as folk music.
- choice of basic music schemes and folk song books in primary British schools for analysis of repertoires.
- development of an analytical matrix for “ecological culture” and “ecological potential” in folk music.
- qualitative content analysis and categorisation.
- descriptive summarisation and model building.

There was no new field data involving children; instead, only published and publicly available materials were used.

**Data sources and search strategy.** A literature search was performed, in May 2024, in the worldwide databases (Scopus, Web of Science and ERIC) and Russian-language and regional databases (eLIBRARY.ru, РИИЦ, KazNEB, Institutional repositories of pedagogical universities). The study period was 2000–2024 as this reflects a key period of Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development in schools when they became more established.

We have searched for the works in English and Russian according to the following keywords: ‘ecological culture’, ‘elementary school’, ‘musical education’, etc. And their equivalents in Russian language: «экологическая культура», «начальная школа» и т.д.; («экологическая культура» AND «начальная школа» AND «уроки музыки/музыкальное воспитание»); (“folk music” AND “environmental education” OR “ecological values”).

The reference lists from some core works on ecological culture and folk pedagogy were also reviewed in search of additional sources (snowball sampling).

**Inclusion and exclusion criteria.** Publications were included if they:

- dealt with ecological culture or constructs closely related in the field of children (respect for nature, ecological consciousness);
- (c) concern primary school age (about 6-10 years);
- “the application of music, musical art or more particularly folk music” to educational pursuits.
- included either empirical evidence (diagnostic, observational, experimental) or detailed pedagogical models/programmes.

The following were among the excluded: a) articles about ecological culture in adults and / or young university students without transposition to the primary school context; b) purely theoretical environmental philosophy not envisaging any educational act; c) researches on folk music with no relation to education.

**Repertoire and curriculum corpus.** Two types of documents were gathered to address the question whether a given share supports the playing realm:

- local music (where available) curriculums for grades 1–4;
- published anthologies of children’s and calendar-ritual folk songs recommended for use in school.

Songs from each source which directly mentioned nature, the seasons, animals, plants, the landscape, agricultural labour and environmental themes were coded as units of analysis.

**Analytical matrix and coding.** Drawing on previous research about ecology culture [3; 7; 11] as well as eco-aesthetic music education [1; 2;6], an analytical matrix was set up containing four blocks:

- ecological (what in nature one refers to as the named or implying natural objects/ phenomena);
- ecological values and norms (respect, care, taboo, gratitude, fear of harm, etc.);
- ecological feelings (wonder, joy, awe; sadness over loss; anxiety);
- ecological behaviour/agency (actions towards nature: caring for, protecting, harvesting in a manner that doesn’t harm the environment, polluting etc).

Every included publication, as well as each folk song text were manually coded according to this matrix. Reliability One-third of the corpus was coded by a second researcher independently and discrepancies were resolved in consensus by discussion refining the coding rules.

**Data analysis.** Quantitative results of content analysis were summarised in frequency tables (e.g. on ecological values or emotions from songs and studies). Counts and percentages of descriptive statistics were calculated to show prevalence (and lack) of ecological culture, but not in the sense of confirming hypotheses. This was followed by a development of the theoretically based model of lesson-based work on ecological culture with the help of folklore song and presentation/model interpretation is showed in Result-Discussion.

**Results.** The interpretation of the identified publications, curricula and sets of folksongs disclosed a relatively homogenous although inconsistently expressed comprehension concerning how ecological culture may be promoted via elementary school children’s folk music. In the following, I will present results in three blocks: (1) ecological content embedded in folk repertoire used with young children; (2) the correspondence between this content and the target components of an ecological culture; and (3) patterns in pedagogical models that explicitly connect the learning of folk music with educating for an ecological consciousness.

**Eco Content of Folk Songs Used in the Primary Level Music Education.** From curricula and songbooks, a large percentage of recommended folk songs for grades 1–4 is nature-based. The

substance of songs on the seasons, weather, animals, plants and other themes concerning agricultural life and natural phenomena make up a core element. Content analysis revealed that this ecological content can be classified into four interconnected aspect categories (Table 1).

**Table 1 – Main ecological aspects encoded in folk songs for elementary school**

Ecological aspect	Typical motifs in folk songs	Pedagogically relevant ecological meanings
Natural objects & phenomena	Seasons, sun, moon, rain, wind, rivers, mountains, fields, forests	Naming, classifying, noticing diversity of the natural world
Human–nature relations	Work in the field, caring for animals, gratitude for harvest, taboos	Interdependence, respect, reciprocity, limits of use
Ecological values & norms	Blessings, prohibitions (“do not break”, “do not waste”), gratitude	Responsibility, moderation, care, non-harm, shared rules
Ecological emotions	Wonder, joy, tenderness, sadness about loss, fear of storms or drought	Emotional attachment, empathy for living beings, sense of fragility

Most of the nature-based songs reference tangible natural objects and phenomena in terms comprehensible by most 6–10 year olds (eg simple images of rain, snow, spring, birds and domestic animals). It facilitates the knowledge aspect of ecological culture, enriching perception and adding to the child's vocabulary in terms of the visual-auditory modelling of lived reality. At the same time, many songs move beyond naming to tell stories about various patterns of human–nature interaction: sowing and harvesting, grazing, aspects of fetching water, sharing food with animals, celebrating good weather and fearing destructive agents.

In particular, ecological values and norms are not often introduced in the abstract; rather, they are incarnated in place. Whereas the norm of non-harming towards plants and animals is frequently addressively expressed in a lyric of direct address (“do not break”, “do not frighten”, “do not tramp underfoot”), the same with regard to gratitude comes out as benediction – here, for rain, sun or harvest. The formulations are appropriate to the age group and make possible a conversation about “what is permissible” and what “not permissible in nature,” which is at the heart of the axiological dimension of ecological culture [3; 5; 11].

***Fit with an ecological cultural tool.*** The weaving of repertoire and literature within the analytical matrix of ecological culture (knowledge, values, emotion and behaviour) reveals that there is strong potential for advocates also to embrace an integrated consciousness.

- ***Ecological knowledge.*** According to literature on eco culture, the importance of systematic knowledge concerning local eco-systems and ecological problems [3; 7; 10]. Folk songs, though, mainly encode tacit everyday ecological knowledge: seasons and cycles of animals or weather patterns. Although not strictly scientific, this knowledge represents a tangible base in terms of practical experience for subsequent formal learning. Educators who deliberately unpack such material (which includes, for example, linking song images and simple observations or with science topics) can reify implicit ecological content into organized knowledge.

- ***Values and norms.*** Researches in ethno-pedagogy, meanwhile, point out that traditional folklore is as well a support of aboriginal ecology ethic – the respect for soil, feeling owing of the land, measure to consumption limit and ban on excessive wastage [5; 8;18]. The content analysis indicated that these value messages are quite common in songs recommended for younger students. Where these norms are explicitly referred to by teachers and related with everyday life of the childre (for example, not dirtying one’s area, saving water) and where they are bound up with class rules or projects, a direct foundation for the value component of ecological culture is provided.

- ***Emotions and attitudes.*** Eco-aesthetic inquiries indicate that emotional reactions to nature are a strong predictor of subsequent environmental responsible behaviour [6; 7]. In a great deal of folksong nature appears as something that brings joy, solace or wonder, and a good folk song takes one of those aspects to a direct personification (sun as friend, river as mother) and therefore helps provide emotional connection. The literature reviewed suggests that as positive emotions become conscious, they are connected with the disposition of care or nurturance and when teachers ask

children to indicate how the song “feels,” invite them to draw their responses, or even move in response to music, these responses take on meaning.

- **Behaviour and agency.** Fewer songs include specific codes of conduct, but research on eco-music education specifies that teachers may extend this aspect by using follow-up activities which are given meaning and depth in some other way: taking care for class plants, cleaning the school yard after singing about spring, enacting protective behaviours [2; 4; 9]. In such cases, pensive reflection and devil’s advocacy are less preoccupying than aspirationalism, as folk music comprises a set of prompts for actual world-ecological practices.

In sum, the findings indicate that if promptly deployed, folk music can fulfill all four ecological cultural components. But in the literature, it is more common that less importance has been placed on the emotional–value layers in favor to behavioural ones; which usually rely on inter-curricular projects and school-level actions.

**Patterns in pedagogical models.** The analysis of pedagogical models and descriptions of lessons allowed us to highlight some features of the strategies commonly deployed by teachers and researchers in seeking to employ folk music for ecological culture construction in primary school:

1. **Thematic integration.** A great number of authors are suggesting units where a song about seasons or animals and natural phenomenon is combined with the story, visual art and simple science notes under a common ecological topic (e.g. “Spring Awakening”, “Our Forest Friends”) [1; 2; 6]. Music is the emotional and imaginal centre around which other activities are arranged in these units.

2. **Dialogue and reflection.** Procedural innovations emphasize teacher guided conversation about the ecological meanings of song texts: why do the characters behave towards nature in this way or that, what kind of behavior is sanctioned and unsanctioned as it corresponds to pupils’ personal experiences [3; 4; 11]. This reflective veneer is vital for not only listening to songs but esteeming them.

3. **Embodied and performative approaches.** Several interventions report employing movement, dramatization and role-play (e.g., acting as birds or trees) to accompany singing. In this sense, to the extent that it allows children to physically and socially internalize these ecological relationships (im)personally, it can influence both affective as well as cognitive-emotional aspects [2; 6; 8].

4. **Localisation and cultural identity.** In the Kazakh and other national contexts, teachers purposefully choose local folk repertoire whose sounds resemble native landscapes and practices, creating a linkage between natural culture and cultural/regional identity [5; 13; 20]. The children are invited to bring songs or stories from home that support the intergenerational passing on of ecological knowledge.

**Discussion.** The results of this study are indications that folk music still has untapped capacity as well as unrealized opportunity as a medium for the development of ecological culture in elementary school students. Through systematically examining the ecological content in folk repertoire and its relations to established component models of ecological culture, it can work to render material that is often “know when we do it (intuition), but are somewhat clueless about how and why” more visible to teachers and researchers.

One of the principal outcomes is that there exists a direct correspondence between the ecological aspects embedded in folk songs and the four generally accepted parts of ecological culture: knowledge, values and norms, emotions and behaviour [3; 7; 11]. While current research concerning ecological culture of younger pupils tends to focus on lessons or visual aids and project activities based upon environmental stories [3; 4; 8], we can conclude that a substantial portion of songs already in employ within the school music programmes for primary education are infused with ecological contents. Nature, objects and phenomena of nature, the relationship between man and nature, standards of non-harm to living creatures, as well as her “ecological” intention to track redemptive motifs in what she would have us see as a textual whole “of ambivalence (and balance) between beauty and death” (p. 253): these are some of the strands that make themselves felt in the repertoire generally reckoned merely so many “songs about nature”, if one may indulge for a moment such

bible-belt ways with words. This is lending credence to ethno-pedagogical claims that folklore is a thick carrier of ecological knowledge and ethics [5; 18], but offering a more fine-grained differentiation of what components are highlighted, how they play out in action, and can be systematically extracted.

The difference between everyday implicational and formal scientific implicational knowledge is of particular importance. One common lament in environmental education research is that while children are inundated with fact (facts about the environment, for example), there are too few opportunities to attach these facts to their everyday life [7; 10]). The folk song, however, smuggles environmental information in concrete sensory images: the snow that “covers the fields”, birds that “come back in spring”, rivers that “give water to all”. As they stand, however, these images do not constitute policy-literate ecological understanding; as teachers deliberately “unzip” such images and tie them to everyday observations or topic-based science can cast them in the role of a morning bridge between experiential and conceptual understanding. Thus, the now model updates a demand issued by Makarova for integrity between subjects [3]: folk music can carry out the role of an intermediate strata (of mediation) between day-to-day concepts and school knowledge in developing ecological culture.

Cognitive findings about values and norms also replicate prior research. In the field of ethno-pedagogy, it has long been maintained that in traditional songs and stories norms of respect, moderation and responsibility for nature are encoded [5; 8]. What the present analysis contributes is evidence that such norms are seldom purely abstract: rather, they come as action-related proscriptions (“do not break”, “do not waste”, “take only what you need”) conveyed in stories or ritual. For children at primary school this concreteness is fine and it’s amazing to see all the directions in which conversations on values can travel. By making direct speech and simple moral contrasts the focus in song, rather than telling children to ‘love nature’, for teachers it could be a step away from supporting reflection on choices and consequences, something environmental education research already identifies as prerequisite to later action competence [7; 10].

The affective dimension comes out as highly relevant. Eco-aestheticists argue that the kind of sustained ecological culture we need cannot be based on knowledge and norms alone; it requires a repertoire of feelings—wonder, empathy, sorrow at loss—that attaches children to places and beings [6], [7]. The textual analysis reveals that so-called younger pupils' folk songs are indeed packed with such emotions; nature is given human shape as friend, parent and companion and the natural environment (spring, rain, drought) involves affective experience. Traditional repertoire often conveys a more nuanced, less instrumentalised relation with nature, than didactically inclined environmental songs written for school use. As Figure 1 modelizes, folk music (especially when teamed with drawing, movement and storytelling) can trigger eco-emotions which in turn support the emergent ecological values and actions. This serves tangibly to instantiate the contention in previous eco-aesthetic work that music “bridges cognition and feeling” in environmental education [2; 6].

Meanwhile the analysis exposed a relative lack of strength in this basis component. It is only a narrower, comparable subset of songs that actually contains explicit “scripts” for caring or protective actions towards nature. In the pedagogic models under review, behavioural results in general rely largely on teacher decisions for extending music experience to engagement in practical activities: nurturing plants, joining cleaning actions, creating class rules in terms of waste, and alike [2; 4; 9]. This finding resonates with general environmental education literature, which suggests that music and arts can influence perception and motivation but that conduct translation depends on structural opportunities and scaffolded action [7; 10; 13]. In short, folk music is a powerful stimulus and organiser of ecological meaning but it is not sufficient in itself to ensure the behavioural dimension of an ecological culture; for this deliberate cross-curricular (and indeed whole-school) support is required.

The pedagogies flagged—thematic integration, dialogue and reflection, embodied performance, and localisation—echo other studies while also making more specific recommendations. For example, Radynova’s preschool experience depicts how children in art may support environmental themes through story, play and observation [2]; the current study demonstrates

how akin strategies can alter for elementary school with more of a focus on students' emerging ability to reflect and discuss. This conversation around song texts, observed in systematic literature [3; 4; 11], is shown to be a vital part for the conversion from pleasure to valuation. Embodied and performance based strategies, like acting as animals or natural forces dramatise theories of embodied cognition in the ecologically situated register by rendering ecological relationships visible and socially negotiated for children [6; 8].

Localization and cultural identity should also be given due consideration in the Kazakhstani, as well as other country-specific approaches. We also look closely at the relations between music education and heritages in Kazakhstan, where (like elsewhere, but here particularly simultaneously) music education has a doubly oriented goal of transmitting national cultural heritage on the one hand and preparing children for global, quickly changing life worlds on the other [6; 12]. Selecting folk songs of the locale reflecting its landscape, animals and agricultural practices can be a way to forge ecological culture not as a distant global abstraction but an embodied connection with one's local environment and traditions. This also supports Khusainov's proposition that ethno-pedagogical knowledge can become the foundation of a structure for ecological education in the national school [5], and further explicates music lessons as a mediator, through which this kind of knowledge is actualized anew with children.

Set against the broader context of Education for Sustainable Development, the model is a reflection on how arts and culture might be involved in ecological education. Policy texts sometimes mention 'culture' and 'values' in addition to science, but no operational definition of these concepts was possible from the documents we reviewed. Most practices are limited to cognitive outcomes 'project work in science and geography [9; 13]. By giving explicit form to the relations between folk music, pedagogy, and aspects of ecological culture, this paper provides a structure that fellow educators (in music education and in curricular design generally) can use as an instrument with which to ground their own engagement with earth awareness (and attend to substantial evidence on how arts have been marginalised from environmental education).

At the same time, the study's limitations need to be acknowledged. The study draws on published material and suggested repertoires; there are no actual observational classroom data or experimental forms for specific lesson-treatments. The representativeness of the sample is constrained by what is recorded and made available officially, but local oral traditions that do not appear in print may convey further ecological messages; such messages are provisionally assigned to stems based on traditional lore. Finally, the content analysis, despite being sensitive to statistical reliability, necessarily implies interpretative judgements on coding values, emotions and behavioral consequences. These limitations imply that the conceptual model is best understood as an informed theoretical and empirical hypothesis regarding mechanisms of ecological culture formation through folk music, not a settled theory.

These limitations also draw attention to immediate future directions, as will be discussed more fully in the Conclusion: design studies carrying out action research to apply the model in the classroom and follow change of children's ecological culture; comparative work across different cultures and repertoires; and developmental age level-sensitive diagnostics on the emotional literacy and values. Yet even this early, the article shows that seen through such a systematic lens, folk music can no longer be simply regarded as an object of cultural preservation but also as a structurally rich active mediator in the early constitution of ecological culture.

**Conclusion.** The objective of this study was to describe the mechanism of cultivating ecological culture with elementary school students in general music education through the learning community about folk songs. Instead of designing a new "environmental project" to add to the plethora that proliferate but have been unable, in many cases, to avoid being swallowed by developments hostile or indifferent to them, this investigation aimed at achieving the visibility of already natural ecological meaning in folk repertoire and taking a step further to systematise pedagogical strategies for which these (latent) meanings become part of coherent multi-component formation forming ecological culture.

The first major theoretical contribution is its integrative conception of the relationship between folk music and ecological culture. Although culturalistic analyses of ecological culture and folk music had appeared separately in previous scholarship, with a focus on them being classed under environmental education or science education and cultural education or patriotic education respectively, this article shows that there is structural concomitance between the two domains. The analysis shows that among the folk songs recommended for little children there is repeated recording of ecological information (of the kind concerning seasons, animals and natural phenomena), system of values and norms (the relationship with nature, moderation, gratitude, prohibition to harm), emotions (wonder – inspiration- joy-tenderness-sadness of loss) and in some cases also behavioural scenarios (taking care of plants and animals, sparing use of resources). The article also situates these dimensions within a four- part model of ecological culture (knowledge, values/norms, emotions/attitudes and behaviour/agency) by explicating how material might support each dimension – rather than simply posit that “music helps environmental education”, to which all educators will presumably agree.

A second new element is the pedagogical modelling of folk music as a bridging practice between children ’s lived experiences and ecological meanings more widely. Collating varied methodological accounts, the article distinguishes four common strategy clusters: thematic integration, dialogue and reflection, embodied enactment and localisation with cultural identity. This pushes us beyond the occasional “songs about nature” that might ornament lessons, to a systemic and replicable model in which song choice and course design are intentionally calibrated around goals for ecological education.

The importance of this work is methodological as well. Rather than being based only on theoretical speculation or anecdotal evidence, we will use a systematic review of literature and content analysis approach that brings the views from environmental education, music pedagogy and ethno-pedagogy. This interdisciplinary synthesis contributes to filling more than one gap in the literature: a gap between environmental and arts education, a cognitive-affective rift in ecological culture, and policy rhetoric around Education for Sustainable Development with the everyday experiences of primary school music teaching. For educators and curriculum developers, the findings present an argument that music education is not only comparable to science and social studies in terms of a legitimate site for early ecological culture-building but may also hold certain specific advantages.

Concurrently, the research is deeply thoughtful about its own limitations as a springboard for future investigation. The model outlined in this article is based on text-based analysis of songs, curricula and published pedagogical accounts; it has not yet been validated through large scale intervention studies across a range of schools. One such priority direction is the developmentally-oriented research and researchers are called to develop design-based research whereby music teachers would embed a series of folktunebased lessons which are explicitly oriented toward ecological culture (like those in this study) and test their influence with pre- and post-diagnostics. Researchers in such school programs should use developmentally-appropriate measures that are sensitive not only to increases in ecological syntactic knowledge, but also changes in values, emotions and concrete behavioural intentions.

The second key area would be longitudinal and comparative studies. A longitudinal tracking of children through the early years would allow an investigation in how repeated exposure to folk music with ecological content articulated within reflective and action oriented pedagogies impacts on the stability of ecological attitudes and behaviors over time. Comparative work among various cultural regions—urban and rural schools as well as schools with strong local folk traditions versus those that depend on generic repertoires—could begin to suggest how particular repertoires, combined with specific cultural contexts, guide the trajectory of children’s ecological understandings through music.

And there is also a distinct need for more teacher-focused research. The process of the creation of an ecological culture from folk music assumes that the teacher him/herself can define ecological meanings in repertoire, consider him/herself to be a professional who is able to lead value-oriented dialogue and agree to connect musical work with simple ecological actions at school. Investigations

on music teachers' beliefs, knowledge and training needs in this matter would allow the planning of professional development programmes that help teachers to teach folk music not only for musical/cultural goals but also for ecological education.

Last but not least, as the soundscapes of children are being increasingly influenced by digital media in a world where they grow up, future research could examine hybrid formats that integrate traditional folksongs with contemporary musical technologies while maintaining their cultural-analog and ecologically rich character. Carefully constructed digital resources – recordings, visualizations, interactive tasks – could extend the appeal and reach of folk repertoire while maintaining its connections to place, community and environment.

In conclusion, this paper suggests that the construction of an ecological culture at the elementary school level does not necessarily have to represent an excess "load" in light of overloaded curricula. Rereading and reusing what is already there in music education: folk music Pupils' knowledge, values, emotions and behavior with regard to nature can be developed – through the inherent but forgotten folkloric powers of schools are not just taught something about life outside school. In the process, they help create both more environmentally-minded citizens of our future and further nurture the living bridge between old musical heritage and modern day concerns for sustainable practices.

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## FORMATION OF THE BASIS OF THE SINGING CULTURE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MUSIC LESSONS

### *Abstract*

Patterns of singing culture, middle school students and music lessons form the core of current discussions in music education on how to maintain adolescents' vocal engagement. This article explores how the foundations of middle school students' singing culture are constituted in general music education and considers singing culture as a holistic concept comprising several interrelated dimensions rather than simply being about the transfer of skills. The purpose is to identify what may achieve the status of 'foundations' for singing culture at this age and which lesson-based strategies serve them.

The investigation is based on a systematic review of literature supplemented with qualitative content analysis and descriptive statistics. Fifty-two papers from Russian, Kazakhstan and international literature met inclusion criteria and were coded according to a predefined analysis framework. The framework included context, conceptions of singing culture, music teachers' pedagogical approaches in singing and reported learning outcomes for students in lower secondary education.

The findings reveal that the authors implicitly share at least four fundamental components of a culture of singing: vocal-technical, musical-aural, artistic-expressive and axiological and socio-communicative. But in both practice and research, vocal-technical factors such as respiration, phonation and intonation is still foregrounded. A smaller but methodologically strong group of studies suggests level models and diagnostic instruments which define the foundations of singing culture as accurate, healthy singing within a limited range, basic ensemble skills, simple expressive nuance and stable or non-anxious involvement in class singing. Effective lesson planning congregates in five categories: systematic vocal workouts, age-appropriate and culturally relevant repertoire policy, balance between group and solo work, the use of movement and body awareness, and opportunities for structured reflection and assessment.

**Key words:** singing culture, middle school students, music lessons, formation, music education.