



Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi

Academic Journal of History and Idea

Special Issue

Education, Environment, and Sustainable Development – Multidimensional Approaches and Scientific Research (15 October 2025)

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Geliş tarihi |Received:09.06.2025

Kabul tarihi |Accepted:30.09.2025

Yayın tarihi |Published:25.10.2025

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Atıf Künyesi | Citation Info

Aliyev, İ. (2025). On the Essence of the Concepts “Folk Pedagogy” and “Ethnopedagogy”. *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 12 (Special Issue: Education, Environment, and Sustainable Development – Multidimensional Approaches and Scientific Research), 156-160.

On the Essence of the Concepts “Folk Pedagogy” and “Ethnopedagogy”

Abstract

Folk pedagogy is presented as an ancient, experience-based system transmitted orally through customs, folklore, and moral teachings. It reflects the collective pedagogical knowledge of a people shaped by their lifestyle, faith, and traditions. In contrast, ethnopedagogy, introduced by Gennadi Volkov, is a scientific field that analyzes and systematizes the educational experience of ethnic groups. It interprets and adapts the values of folk pedagogy to contemporary education, emphasizing the preservation of cultural identity within modern pedagogical processes. The study concludes that folk pedagogy is empirical, traditional, and oral, while ethnopedagogy is research-oriented, structured, and theoretical. Both complement each other and play crucial roles in maintaining national heritage and enriching modern educational practices through cultural wisdom.

Keywords: Folk Pedagogy, Ethnopedagogy, Traditional Education, Pedagogical Science, Cultural Heritage

“Halk Pedagojisi” ve “Etno Pedagoji” Kavramlarının Özüne Dair

Öz

Halk pedagojisi, gelenekler, folklor ve ahlaki öğretiler yoluyla sözlü olarak aktarılan, kadim ve deneyim temelli bir eğitim sistemi olarak sunulmaktadır. Bu sistem, bir halkın yaşam tarzı, inancı ve gelenekleriyle şekillenen kolektif pedagojik bilgisini yansıtır. Buna karşılık, Gennadi Volkov tarafından ortaya konan etno pedagoji, etnik toplulukların eğitimsel deneyimlerini analiz eden ve sistemleştiren bilimsel bir alandır. Etno pedagoji, halk pedagojisinin değerlerini çağdaş eğitime uyarlayarak kültürel kimliğin modern pedagojik süreçler içinde korunmasına vurgu yapar. Çalışma, halk pedagojisinin deneysel, geleneksel ve sözlü; etno pedagoji'nin ise araştırma temelli, yapılandırılmış ve kuramsal olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Her iki alan da ulusal mirasın korunmasında ve kültürel bilgelik aracılığıyla modern eğitim uygulamalarının zenginleştirilmesinde önemli roller üstlenmektedir.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Halk Pedagojisi, Etno Pedagoji, Geleneksel Eğitim, Pedagojik Bilim, Kültürel Miras

Introduction

The upbringing system of a people plays an irreplaceable role in preserving their ethnic characteristics, organization, self-regulation, and development. The importance of ethnopedagogical research is growing, as it enables the effective organization of education for the younger generation on a national basis by exploring the potential of this system. In this context, clarifying the essence of the concepts “folk pedagogy” and “ethnopedagogy” is of particular significance.

Folk pedagogy represents the traditional educational system. In the pedagogical literature, there are differing opinions regarding the meaning and scope of the concepts “folk pedagogy” and “ethnopedagogy.” Some scholars argue that the term “folk pedagogy” is more comprehensible and should be used exclusively. Others claim that both terms carry the same meaning and may be used interchangeably. Yet another group believes that these concepts have distinct meanings. The present study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of this distinction.

The development of humanity is intrinsically linked to the processes of learning and teaching. Since ancient times, people have educated younger generations without formalizing their methods, engaging intuitively in a continuous process of transmission and renewal. Each generation accepted this experience as empirical knowledge, applied and expanded it according to the demands of their era, and passed it on to the next. This collective educational experience—tested over centuries—has been preserved through customs, traditions, oral folk creativity, and national-moral values. The potential of this informal yet powerful system, which ensures the socialization of the younger generation, began attracting scholarly attention around the mid-19th century and came to be termed “folk pedagogy.” Almost none of the researchers regard *folk pedagogy* as a formal science. Several existing definitions illustrate this diversity of perspectives:

“Folk pedagogy is the collection of pedagogical experiences and knowledge preserved in oral folk creativity, rituals, children’s games, and toys” (Volkov, 2000, p. 7).

“Folk pedagogy is the collection of pedagogical knowledge, experience, views, rules, and customs obtained through the daily observations and experiences of the working masses under their living conditions throughout history” (Hashimov & Sadiqov, 2000, p. 11).

“Folk pedagogy is a part of the collective creativity of the people, a manifestation of the pedagogical culture of the masses... it reflects the ideas and aspirations of the people, their ideals,

worldview, and perceptions about people, family, children, and the upbringing of the younger generation” (Izmayilov, 1991, p. 7).

“Folk pedagogy is the educational traditions of a specific ethnic group” (Kukushin & Stolyarenko, 2000, p. 41).

“Folk pedagogy is the collection of experiences, ideas, and traditions obtained by the masses through empirical means under daily living conditions in the field of education and upbringing” (Aliyev, 2009, p. 37).

The main characteristics of *folk pedagogy* include:

- * It represents a historically formed body of knowledge and understanding about humans and their upbringing.

- *The entire community participates in the education of the younger generation.

- *It lacks codified laws and systematized scientific knowledge, reflecting instead each people’s unique psychology, mentality, and way of life.

- *Since educational experience is transmitted through oral forms, *folk pedagogy* may display variations and contradictions.

- *It is predominantly guided by moral and ethical principles.

Ethnopedagogy as a Scientific Discipline

The distinction between ethnopedagogy and folk pedagogy was first introduced into the scientific environment by the renowned Chuvash scholar Gennady Volkov, who wrote the work *Ethnopedagogy* (Volkov, 1974). The first and, in our opinion, most comprehensive definition of ethnopedagogy also belongs to G. N. Volkov. He wrote: “*Ethnopedagogy is the science about the experience of the masses in the upbringing of the younger generation, about their pedagogical views; it is the science of household pedagogy, family, generation, clan, people, and national pedagogy*” (Volkov, 2000, p. 5).

Another definition states: “*Ethnopedagogy is a science that reflects scientific perspectives on educational phenomena, analyzes social and pedagogical processes, and studies the interrelation and mutual influence of pedagogy and the people’s culture*” (Kukushin & Stolyarenko, 2000, p. 6). According to I. T. Ogorodnikov, “*while folk pedagogy deals with the transmission of ideas and means of the people’s experience, ethnopedagogy is a field of theoretical thinking, a branch of science*” (Ogorodnikov, 1981). He states: “*If two anthologies were compiled—one on folk pedagogy and the other on ethnopedagogy—the first would include works of oral folk creativity about education, customs related to the upbringing of the younger generation,*

and ethnographic classifications; the second would include excerpts from the works of pedagogical scholars on folk pedagogy and folk education.”

Ethnopedagogy analyzes, interprets, and clarifies *folk pedagogy* and determines how it can be applied under modern conditions.

The main tasks of *ethnopedagogy* are:

*To identify, generalize, and systematize the knowledge of the people in the field of education and upbringing;

*To clarify the reasons for the successes of *folk pedagogy*;

*To determine the theoretical foundations of the formation of the people’s educational experience;

*To identify the practical applications of the people’s pedagogical views;

*To determine the role of the people’s pedagogical culture in moral development;

*To define the possibilities, methods, and conditions for the effective use of *folk pedagogy* in the modern pedagogical process.

Conclusion

Thus, in terms of their characteristic features:

**Folk pedagogy* is empirical and traditional in nature; *ethnopedagogy* is a research-oriented scientific discipline.

* *Folk pedagogy* is spontaneous, oral, and variable; *ethnopedagogy* is structured and theoretically substantiated.

*The main function of *folk pedagogy* is the transmission of values and socialization of the younger generation; the main function of *ethnopedagogy* is the analysis, systematization, and assimilation of educational experience.

*Sources of *folk pedagogy* include folklore, customs, games, rituals, etc.; sources of *ethnopedagogy* include scientific research, academic works, and publications on these areas.

This comparative overview reveals the transformation of educational experience from traditional to scientific domains. *Folk pedagogy* emerges as a collective, experience-based form of education that embodies the moral and cultural values of a nation. It functions through oral transmission, social customs, and community-based interaction, emphasizing continuity and moral upbringing. In contrast, *ethnopedagogy* serves as a reflective discipline that analyzes and

systematizes these experiences, positioning them within a theoretical and methodological framework.

The relationship between the two is not oppositional but complementary. *Ethnopedagogy* derives its substance from *folk pedagogy*, interpreting and adapting its values to contemporary educational contexts. Through this synthesis, the heritage of the people becomes an academic foundation for modern pedagogy. Consequently, *ethnopedagogy* functions as both the guardian and interpreter of traditional pedagogical wisdom, ensuring that national and cultural identity remain integral to the educational process in an increasingly globalized world.

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