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Traditions of Child-Rearing in Nomadic Culture and Their Preservation in the Context of Globalisation: An Ethnopedagogical Study

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to identify the principal traditional components of child-rearing within the nomadic culture of the Kyrgyz people and to examine the extent to which processes of globalisation have influenced these practices. The methodological framework combined a theoretical analysis of historical and cultural sources with social surveys conducted among respondents from diverse regions of Kyrgyzstan, including rural areas (Naryn, Batken, and Osh) and urban centres (Bishkek, Osh, and Karakol).

The findings indicate that traditional child-rearing practices retain considerable significance across both contexts. Among urban respondents, 80% expressed appreciation for traditional initiation rituals, 75% supported early labour education, and 68% regarded proverbs as essential to moral development. While 58% reported daily use of folk lullabies, only half communicated with their children in Kyrgyz. Furthermore, 70% favoured the integration of folk traditions into school curricula, and 73% supported the introduction of a dedicated ethnopedagogy course. Concerns regarding the negative impact of urbanisation on cultural traditions were voiced by 77%, whereas 88% endorsed the creation of online platforms for the study of cultural heritage.

In rural regions, support for traditional practices was even more pronounced: 88% valued initiation rituals, and 92% approved of children's involvement in household labour. At the same time, 90% believed that digital media diminished children's interest in traditions, and 91% viewed urbanisation as detrimental to cultural preservation. Overall, the results reveal partial but meaningful support for traditional child-rearing forms in both rural and urban settings.

Based on these findings, recommendations were formulated for integrating traditional rituals, labour education, and folklore into contemporary educational practice. Three scenarios for preserving and adapting Kyrgyz nomadic cultural traditions were identified: a folklorised model, an interactive contextual model, and a mixed model. These results may inform the development of culturally oriented educational programmes, the creation of digital resources, and the planning of cultural heritage policies.

Keywords: Child-Rearing; Nomadic Culture; Ethnopedagogical Study; Kyrgyz People; Kyrgyzstan

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Introduction

The traditions of child-rearing in nomadic cultures emerged as an integral component of the worldview, social organisation, and value system of nomadic peoples, serving as a primary mechanism for transmitting experiential knowledge, moral norms, and behavioural models across generations. Rooted in a close relationship between the child and the natural environment, collective responsibility, and established forms of intergenerational interaction, these practices historically ensured social cohesion and cultural continuity. Yet, under the pressures of globalisation, standardised educational systems, rapid urbanisation, and cultural homogenisation, these pedagogical models are undergoing significant transformation and, in some cases, face the risk of displacement. Such processes often fail to account for the specificities of traditional nomadic lifeways, thereby intensifying concerns regarding the potential loss of unique ethnopedagogical knowledge. Consequently, the documentation, analysis, and adaptive preservation of nomadic educational practices have become increasingly urgent.

Child-rearing customs in nomadic societies are deeply embedded in their historical, cultural, and ecological contexts. The nomadic lifestyle—characterised by mobility, communal interdependence, and reverence for the natural world—has shaped these practices in profound ways. Vylka Ravna (2019), for example, examined prenatal and postnatal care among Nenets mothers, highlighting the particular challenges posed by mobility and harsh climatic conditions. Her findings demonstrate that child-rearing practices, especially those related to childbirth and early childhood care, are carefully adapted to the demands of a mobile environment. These customs form part of broader ethnopedagogical systems developed over centuries to ensure survival, social unity, and the formation of civic identity within nomadic communities.

However, as modernity and globalisation exert increasing pressure on nomadic societies, these child-rearing systems are undergoing rapid change. Shifts away from traditional livelihoods have altered patterns of cultural transmission and disrupted established educational models (Kozub et al., 2025; Sultanbayeva et al., 2013a). Degen and Dana (2024) argue that transitions to sedentary lifestyles often lead to a weakening of traditional cultural practices, including child-rearing customs. Global influences further complicate this process by overshadowing indigenous pedagogical knowledge. Although the ethnopedagogical heritage of Kyrgyz nomads continues to be actively studied and valued (Karabalaeva et al., 2024; Konurbaev et al., 2025), it faces mounting challenges in a rapidly changing world where standardised educational models frequently take precedence over culturally embedded approaches.

Globalisation, however, does not solely produce negative effects; it also creates opportunities for adaptation and revitalisation. Qizi (2021) contends that integrating national cultural elements into global frameworks can support the modernisation of traditional practices. Yet such cultural modernisation requires a careful balance between embracing change and safeguarding heritage. Sadykova et al. (2022) emphasise that cultural continuity among Kyrgyz and Kazakh nomads depends on the transmission of values through both formal and informal educational systems—a process increasingly complicated by younger generations' gravitation towards urban lifestyles.

Urbanisation and globalisation thus produce a dynamic intersection between traditional knowledge and contemporary realities. Tugjamba et al. (2021) highlight the resilience of Mongolian nomadic herders, demonstrating how traditional knowledge informs adaptation strategies in the face of environmental and social change. The preservation of child-rearing customs may similarly be understood as a form of resistance to cultural homogenisation, particularly given the importance of indigenous knowledge in navigating challenges associated with climate change and technological

transformation (Angjelkoska et al., 2015; Stankovska et al., 2023). Yembuu (2021) further illustrates how informal educational systems in Mongolia facilitate the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge, including child-rearing practices, thereby sustaining nomadic identity despite modernising pressures.

Comparable struggles are evident across nomadic communities worldwide. Al-Absi and Hassan (2024) document how Syrian Bedouins endeavour to preserve traditional parenting practices amid rapid social change, urbanisation, and political instability. Pesambili (2025) similarly examines the Maasai of East Africa, where rites of passage such as *olpûl* are increasingly challenged by Western educational systems. These cases underscore the ongoing negotiation between cultural preservation and external influences, a process central to maintaining distinct nomadic identities.

The pressures of globalisation are further intensified by youth migration to urban centres (Ostapenko et al., 2025a, 2025b; Sultanbayeva et al., 2013b). Formal education systems, which often marginalise indigenous knowledge, exacerbate this shift. Inman (2024) describes similar dynamics among Namibia's Himba people, who face cultural erosion due to socioeconomic and environmental change. Lange et al. (2025) highlight parallel challenges among the Sámi of Scandinavia, who seek to integrate traditional knowledge into contemporary educational frameworks while navigating tensions between indigenous customs and modern academic expectations. Collectively, these studies illustrate the global struggle of nomadic communities to preserve distinctive child-rearing traditions while adapting to the demands of modernity.

Despite these contributions, notable gaps remain in the existing literature. Few studies provide comprehensive analyses of child-rearing practices specifically in relation to the preservation of mobile lifestyles, the impact of transnational processes on intergenerational value transmission, or empirical insights grounded in the lived experiences of nomadic communities. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to investigate the mechanisms through which traditional child-rearing models in Kyrgyz nomadic culture are transformed under the influence of globalisation and to identify opportunities for integrating ethnopedagogical knowledge into contemporary educational practice. The objectives are threefold: (a) to analyse the historical and cultural foundations of child-rearing in traditional Kyrgyz nomadic society; (b) to examine the extent of preservation and transformation of these educational models in family and institutional settings using empirical data; and (c) to develop practical recommendations and scenarios for preserving and adapting elements of nomadic child-rearing culture within a globalised context.

Methodological Framework

The theoretical component of the study employed a descriptive method to identify key ethnopedagogical concepts articulated in the work of Kenzheshev (2022)—including folk pedagogy, traditions of nomadic cultures, folklore-based education, craft training, and intergenerational knowledge transmission—each of which is central to child-rearing in traditional nomadic environments. Through contextual analysis of UNESCO (2025a), the educational system of the Kyrgyz people was examined, with particular attention to how natural conditions, nomadic lifeways, and family-tribal structures shaped pedagogical norms.

A folklore-analytical method was applied, drawing on Baitova (2023), to reconstruct educational models grounded in collectivism, respect for elders, labour-centred upbringing, and the values of dignity, honour, sacrifice, and endurance. Proverbs, customs, rituals, and informal socialisation systems were analysed to illuminate the cultural logic underpinning these practices. The study also explored the dynamics of transformation within these models under the pressures of modernisation, urbanisation, migration, mass culture, and digital media.

To contextualise these transformations, statistical data from several sources were incorporated. United Nations (2025b) provided

demographic structure data; Kemp (2025) offered insights into levels of urbanisation; United Nations (2025a) enabled analysis of the national age pyramid; Kyrgyzstan Population (2025) supplied birth-rate trends; and UNESCO (2025b) contributed information on ethnocultural conditions in rural regions.

A social survey was conducted between October 2024 and January 2025 with a total sample of 120 respondents: 60 from rural regions (Naryn, Batken, and Osh) and 60 from urban centres (Bishkek, Osh, and Karakol). These locations were selected to represent contrasting sociocultural environments—rural regions characterised by strong preservation of ethnocultural practices, and urban centres shaped by modernisation, globalisation, and shifting educational norms. Gender balance was maintained (61 women, 59 men), and respondents ranged in age from 20 to 70 years.

Inclusion criteria required Kyrgyz ethnicity, experience in child-rearing or living within a traditional family environment, and familiarity with cultural traditions. Exclusion criteria included lack of child-rearing experience, prolonged residence outside Kyrgyzstan (more than 15 years), or refusal to answer key survey questions. Data collection was conducted via Google Forms for urban respondents and paper-based questionnaires for rural participants. Ethical procedures followed the American Sociological Association's (1997) *Code of Ethics*.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used to summarise the data. Inferential analysis was conducted using Pearson's chi-square test (χ^2) to assess differences between rural and urban respondents across categorical variables, including attitudes towards initiation rituals, labour education, the role of folklore, and perceptions of digital media and urbanisation. All statistical tests were performed at a significance level of $p < .05$ to ensure reliable group comparisons.

Appendices 1 and 2 present detailed results from rural and urban regions, respectively, including respondents' views on initiation rituals, labour education, and the role of folklore in moral development. Appendix 3 contains the full survey instrument, comprising 20 closed-ended questions organised into three thematic blocks: (a) perceptions of traditional educational norms, (b) practices of transmitting cultural values within the family, and (c) external factors influencing child-rearing.

Based on the empirical findings, practical recommendations and adaptive scenarios were developed for preserving and integrating traditional child-rearing practices within contemporary Kyrgyz society.

Results

Analysis of the Historical and Cultural Foundations of Child-Rearing in the Traditional Nomadic Environment of Kyrgyz Society

The life of ancient Kyrgyz nomadic communities was structured around cyclical seasonal migrations from summer pastures (*jayloo*) to winter encampments (*kyshtoo*). These movements not only defined the economic foundations of nomadic existence but also constituted the natural setting for informal education. From early childhood, boys and girls observed and participated in essential domestic and ritual activities: organising the camp, tending livestock, and engaging with the spiritual landscape through rituals dedicated to the Earth Mother and Water Mother, performed before each migratory departure (Kenzheshev, 2022). Such understandings of human–nature interdependence were embedded in oral traditions, including proverbs such as *Almustaktan beri belgiluu* ("It is known from the cold times"), which conveyed principles of moderation and respectful environmental conduct (Konurbaev et al., 2025).

Oral folk creativity formed the core of family-based education. The epic *Manas* served as a principal medium for transmitting ideals of communal loyalty, personal courage, and devotion to homeland. As the text proclaims, *Manas baatyr – el üchün, zher üchün jaralgan* ("The hero Manas was born for the people and for the land"), reinforcing the inseparability of individual destiny from collective wellbeing.

Proverbs and sayings shaped ethical orientations; for example, *Jash bala biyik too, zhete albasaŋ artka kait* ("A young child is like a high mountain; if you cannot reach it, turn back") emphasised the gradual acquisition of life skills. Traditional games, such as *Bir, eki, üç – kolumdu ech kim аны сындыра албашы үчүн* ("One, two, three, I grow my arms so no one can break them"), cultivated physical resilience and social learning through structured play (UNESCO, 2025a). Lullabies—represented in more than fifty regional variations—were not merely soothing but also pedagogical, transmitting cosmological knowledge of ancestral deities, Tengrian worldviews, and beliefs in mountain spirits (Baitova, 2023).

The novel *Kök Asaba* provides a comprehensive representation of the stages, methods, and factors of child upbringing among the nomadic Turkic peoples, aimed at cultivating heroic values and warrior virtues (Tairova, 2020). The ritual introduction of the newborn to ancestral land—symbolised by giving the infant a handful of sacred soil from the father's grave—affirmed generational continuity. Early placement on horseback functioned as an initiation into communal life, while paternal admonitions, the "spiritual word", provided moral guidance echoing the Orkhon-Enisei inscriptions. From the age of seven, independent horse riding and participation in herding practices fostered endurance and adaptation to natural hardship. Warrior games nurtured bravery and dexterity, and training in crafts and weapon-making instilled discipline and physical strength. Central to this system was mentorship: the figure of *Er Kishi* embodied the archetypal guide whose efforts shaped the child into a defender of the people. Collectively, these elements reveal a holistic pedagogical system combining sacred ritual, practical skill, oral tradition, and mentorship—demonstrating how epics such as *Manas* functioned as powerful instruments of intergenerational value transmission.

Initiation rituals formed a structured sequence within nomadic pedagogy. The *süünçüloo* ceremony, performed on the third or seventh day after birth, involved elders offering *ak niyet*—ethical wishes and guidance for maintaining natural balance. The *tushöö kesüü* ritual, in which a two-coloured wool rope was tied around the child's legs and ceremonially cut by the winner of a designated competition, symbolised the child's transition to independent movement and social resilience (Cutting of Ties…, 2014). The final stage, *beshik toy*, involved decorating the cradle with protective charms and instructing parents in practices to ensure the child's physical and emotional wellbeing. Daily life reinforced these teachings: children participated in herding, tool-making, hunting, and horseback riding under the supervision of elders, forming an informal educational system aimed at cultivating endurance, mutual aid, and adaptation to the mountain environment. Physical and moral education was further supported through traditional games and music-dance forms such as *zhir-syńdyruu*, which combined rhythmic movement with moral instruction.

During the Soviet period (mid-1920s to 1991), traditional nomadic education underwent gradual transformation due to the institutionalisation of formal schooling and the standardisation of pedagogical models (Bocheliuk et al., 2019a, 2020; Ramey et al., 2024). In mountainous regions, however, innovative initiatives emerged in which yurts were repurposed as educational spaces. Elements of traditional culture—fairy tales, folk songs, miniature yurt crafting, and ritual instruction—were incorporated into teaching, with elders participating as cultural transmitters. Yet such initiatives remained limited: fewer than half of rural schools adopted these programmes, and in urban settings cultural heritage was preserved primarily through ceremonial or representational forms (A Yurt for Learning…, 2024).

Demographic data illustrate the continued relevance of traditional environments. As of March 2025, 61.6% of Kyrgyzstan's population resided in rural areas, with an urbanisation level of only 38.4% (United Nations, 2025b). Rural regions thus remain strongholds of nomadic cultural practices, where natural upbringing

factors—work, ritual, and folklore—continue to shape child-rearing (United Nations, 2025a). With an average population age of 25.4 years, youth constitute a significant audience for ethnopedagogical programmes (Kyrgyzstan Population, 2025). The birth rate of approximately 2.8 children per woman ensures ongoing generational renewal, sustaining cultural transmission. The inclusion of the *ak-kalpak* in UNESCO's (2025b) Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, alongside traditional wool textiles such as *ala-kiyiz* and *shyrdak*, underscores the cultural significance of Kyrgyz craft practices and provides opportunities for integrating ethnocultural heritage into formal education through workshops, craft clubs, and ethnographic modules.

Contemporary youth, while engaged in cultural self-identification, are also highly mobile and digitally oriented. This duality creates demand for innovative methods of cultural transmission—from craft workshops to online courses. Digital media pose challenges, as children often engage more readily with games and social networks than with family rituals (Hevko et al., 2021). Nevertheless, successful initiatives demonstrate that integrating ethnopedagogical elements into school curricula—through workshop-based lessons led by cultural bearers—can strengthen cultural engagement. Video platforms and interactive role-playing games enable youth to learn about nomadic labour practices and moral codes in formats suited to the digital age. Ethnopedagogical camps modelled on medieval tribal yurts, where children live according to traditional norms for several weeks, have shown a 70% increase in motivation to study national heritage.

Overall, the child-rearing traditions of the Kyrgyz nomadic world have proven remarkably resilient. Initiation rituals, folklore, and family-tribal practices formed a cohesive system of socialisation that instilled respect for nature and community. Their preservation in the twenty-first century is achievable through a synthesis of traditional ethnopedagogy and modern educational technologies, combining embodied cultural transmission with innovative media formats (Bashynska et al., 2022; Ji et al., 2023). In this way, the historically self-sufficient nomadic school continues to serve as a foundation of national identity in a globalised world. Yet globalisation has transformed all spheres of public life, including education, altering traditional mechanisms of experience transmission, the role of elders, and the content of moral guidance (Kang et al., 2025; Kemp, 2025). These shifts have produced negative consequences: generational divides, fragmentation of traditions, and a diminished practical component of education, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Globalisation is a multifaceted process that reshapes cultural customs through technological, sociocultural, and economic channels. From a sociocultural perspective, the expansion of mass media, accelerating urbanisation, and the diffusion of global behavioural norms contribute to the erosion of regional rituals and practices, often leading to the fragmentation of traditional knowledge systems. Younger generations, increasingly oriented towards standardised global lifestyles, may become detached from local customs, resulting in weakened cultural identity (Baltieva, 2025).

Yet globalisation also encompasses technological and economic dimensions that create opportunities for cultural adaptation and preservation. Digital platforms enable the revitalisation and transmission of traditional practices in hybrid forms. Social media, online courses, and virtual heritage platforms facilitate the dissemination of cultural knowledge to wider audiences, including urban populations for whom traditional customs might otherwise fade (Doszhan, 2023; Park et al., 2024). Drawing on these theoretical perspectives, the present study examines how globalisation simultaneously challenges and enables the transformation and preservation of nomadic cultural practices, offering insights into the adaptability and resilience of these communities under global pressures.

Globalisation has also transformed traditional education by altering its foundational elements through sociocultural change. The authority of elders—once central to nomadic pedagogical systems—has diminished in an era dominated by digital communication and global behavioural models. Collectivism, historically cultivated through dense kinship networks and communal living, has increasingly been replaced by individualism characteristic of urban environments (Iskakova et al., 2016). Labour-centred education, which fostered responsibility and independence, has declined due to shifts in domestic organisation and formal schooling structures (Bocheliuk et al., 2019b).

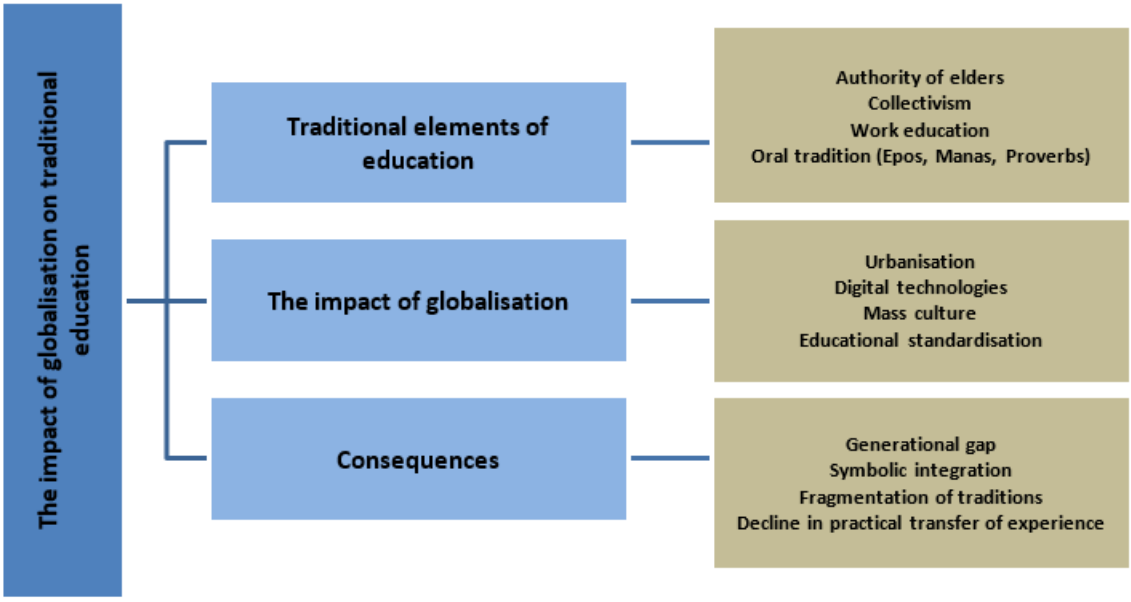

Figure 1: Impact of Globalisation on Traditional Education: Components, Factors, and Consequences
Source: Created by the Authors

Oral traditions—epics, proverbs, legends—have weakened as young people engage more frequently with digital media than with living bearers of cultural knowledge. Urbanisation has further disrupted intergenerational bonds, as multi-generational households, once the foundation of socialisation, have become less common (Olga et al., 2023). Digital technologies have replaced face-to-face communication, contributing to the fragmentation of traditional worldviews. Mass culture, disseminated through online platforms and global media products, promotes universalised imagery that marginalises local values (Bessarab et al., 2022). Standardised education, oriented towards global competencies, has narrowed the space available for preserving authentic experiential knowledge traditionally transmitted within families and communities.

These processes have produced several consequences. A widening generational divide has emerged, with younger people less oriented towards the experiences and moral guidance of elders. Symbolic integration into global cultural flows has intensified, often without regard for local contexts. Traditions have become fragmented, with individual cultural elements functioning in isolation and losing the coherence of the original educational system. The practical transmission of experience—once embedded in direct interaction—has diminished, posing a threat to the continuity of ethnopedagogical heritage.

Thus, globalisation has not only modernised educational and cultural practices but has also endangered the preservation of values that shaped the identities of many generations. For the harmonious development of society, it is

essential to develop models that integrate traditional approaches with innovative educational forms, ensuring the preservation of cultural identity within an open and globalised world.

Assessment of the Degree of Preservation and Transformation of Educational Models in the Contemporary Family and Educational Environment

To examine attitudes towards traditional child-rearing models, the degree of their preservation within family and educational environments, and the perception of cultural heritage across generations, a survey was conducted. The results are presented in Appendix 1.

The findings indicate that nomadic educational practices remain highly valued within Kyrgyz society. A substantial majority (80%) regarded initiation rituals such as *süünçüloo* and *tushöö kesüü* as essential for shaping foundational values, while 75% affirmed the importance of involving children in household labour from an early age. These results underscore the centrality of ritual and labour education within the nomadic socialisation paradigm, which historically cultivated responsibility, dignity, and resilience. Over two-thirds of respondents (68%) emphasised the moral significance of proverbs, and 60% viewed folk counting rhymes as beneficial for early development, suggesting that verbal folklore continues to function as a key linguistic and ethical resource.

Between 55% and 70% of participants expressed the view that knowledge of folk rituals and moral guidance should be incorporated into the mandatory school curriculum. Furthermore, 73% supported the formal inclusion of ethnopedagogy in education, indicating strong public interest in developing specialised courses on folklore and ritual practices. Labour education was also highly valued, with 82% recognising its importance for character formation—highlighting the potential for practical activities such as tool-making and participation in simulated nomadic camps.

Globalisation and urbanisation were identified as significant challenges. A large proportion (85%) believed that digital media diminish children's interest in traditional rituals, while 77% viewed migration to urban centres as detrimental to the preservation of family traditions. Nevertheless, 88% supported the use of online platforms and webinars led by cultural bearers, demonstrating a readiness to adopt digital tools for the transmission of ethnopedagogical knowledge. This suggests that mediated cultural engagement is becoming increasingly viable, particularly in urban contexts where direct intergenerational transmission is weakened.

Digital solutions may therefore play a pivotal role in cultural preservation. Multimedia libraries containing audio-visual resources—proverbs, lullabies, ethnographic recordings—and mobile applications with interactive modules on folklore and ritual practices could provide flexible access to cultural knowledge. Advanced technologies such as virtual and augmented reality offer further possibilities: immersive simulations of *jayloo* environments could allow users to experience yurt construction, seasonal migrations, and ritual activities. By integrating visual, auditory, and participatory elements, these tools may deepen understanding of ethnocultural practices and support their adaptation to contemporary urban settings.

Appendix 2 presents results from rural regions, where support for traditional child-rearing practices was even more pronounced. A large majority (88%) considered initiation rituals essential, and 92% affirmed the importance of early involvement in household labour. Proverbs and sayings were valued by 76%, while 79% highlighted the significance of folk lullabies in moral development. Nearly all respondents (95%) believed that knowledge of rituals and folklore should be included in school curricula, and 90% supported the mandatory inclusion of moral guidance within family upbringing.

Traditions were primarily transmitted through elder relatives (73%), and 85% reported that their children speak Kyrgyz at home. However,

participation in intergenerational master classes was low (20%). Most respondents (90%) stated that digital media reduce children's interest in traditions, and 91% viewed urbanisation as harmful to cultural preservation. Opinions on whether global standards adequately consider cultural features were evenly divided. Overall, the findings suggest that traditional ethnopedagogical practices remain deeply valued in rural Kyrgyzstan, though the negative effects of urbanisation and digital technologies necessitate adapted educational programmes that combine traditional content with modern learning tools. Support for ethnopedagogy in schools was high (84%).

Chi-square tests revealed statistically significant differences between urban and rural respondents across several indicators. Support for initiation rituals differed significantly (χ^2 = 4.27, p = .039), with rural respondents expressing stronger endorsement (88%) than urban participants (80%). Labour education showed a similar pattern (χ^2 = 6.85, p = .009), with rural respondents (92%) more supportive than their urban counterparts (75%). These findings indicate that traditional practices are more deeply embedded in rural socio-cultural contexts, reflecting the enduring influence of family-based and community-oriented parenting styles.

Perceptions of contemporary influences also varied. Rural respondents (90%) were slightly more likely than urban respondents (85%) to view digital media as detrimental to children's interest in traditions, though this difference did not reach statistical significance (χ^2 = 1.12, p = .290). Attitudes towards incorporating ethnopedagogy into formal education showed no significant difference (χ^2 = 2.03, p = .154), with both groups demonstrating high levels of support (84–95%). Despite differences in daily practices and value transmission, this convergence suggests shared recognition of the importance of institutionalising cultural education.

A gender-disaggregated analysis provided additional insights. Women expressed slightly higher support for initiation rituals (82%) compared with men (78%), reflecting women's historically central role in transmitting cultural norms, particularly in early childhood socialisation. Men showed stronger support for labour education (84%) than women (79%), suggesting that men may more closely associate labour participation with responsibility and practical competence, while women may adopt a more balanced perspective that incorporates modern educational approaches.

Support for integrating ethnopedagogical elements into formal education was high among both genders (approximately 70% of men and 74% of women). Women were slightly more likely (86%) than men (83%) to perceive digital media as detrimental to children's interest in traditions, possibly due to their closer involvement in daily childcare. Attitudes towards digital platforms for ethnopedagogical learning were similar across genders, indicating broad acceptance of mediated cultural transmission.

Overall, the gender-based analysis suggests that while traditional child-rearing principles are widely supported, subtle differences in perception reflect gendered roles within family structures.

Discussion

The preservation of traditional educational forms depends largely on the cultural flexibility of a community and its capacity to adapt to new realities while safeguarding the core of its ethnic values. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Allred et al. (2022), who examined the Penan of Borneo and demonstrated that educational and moral-ethical practices can endure global pressures when communities engage in active cultural resistance. Bouhoreira and Oubbiche (2025) similarly highlighted the pedagogical content embedded in traditional games in rural southern Algeria, noting that play served as a medium through which children learned social roles, behavioural norms, and moral principles—paralleling the functions of traditional games among Central Asian nomads.

The present study likewise confirms that involving children in traditional practices—herding, seasonal migrations, assisting elders—

supports practical learning. This corresponds with Blanchier's (2023) research on Mongolian nomads, which emphasised that daily participation in cultural dance ensured a "live transmission" of identity. Karassayev et al. (2024) further argued that geographical mobility cultivated resilience, discipline, and self-sufficiency among children; their work traced the decline of traditional upbringing to the loss of spatial autonomy. However, the findings diverge from Kumar's (2023) assertion that digital transformation inevitably displaces traditional social structures. In contrast, the present study identified hybrid forms in which digital tools complement traditional education—for example, watching folklore tales or documentaries about nomadic life online—demonstrating the adaptability of nomadic communities in synthesising old and new pedagogical forms.

The analysis also underscores the importance of spatial organisation as an educational factor. Al-Malki et al. (2024) showed that innovative housing models in Qatar helped preserve collective living patterns, thereby sustaining traditional forms of child socialisation. Comparable dynamics were observed among Iranian nomads: Kawamorita et al. (2024) found that maintaining mobility and close ties to tradition supported both economic adaptation and educational practices, particularly through children's involvement in crafts and trade. These insights resonate with the principle of practical learning identified in the present study.

At the same time, the survey revealed several problematic trends associated with the transformation of educational practices under social change. A large majority (85%) reported that intensive use of digital media reduces children's interest in traditional culture, while 77% noted the negative impact of urbanisation on family values. Only 25% of respondents regularly participated in intergenerational master classes, indicating weakened intergenerational bonds. Moreover, 70% reviewed ethnographic materials with their children less than once every six months, suggesting fragmented and unsystematic transmission of cultural heritage within families.

Comparative analysis with studies by Khondker (2022), Oli (2023), and Macdonald (2021) reveals similar mechanisms of cultural preservation in transformed socio-cultural environments. As Khondker (2022) observed among migrant families in Gulf countries, educational practices were maintained through conscious reproduction of native cultural elements; likewise, rural respondents in Kyrgyzstan emphasised the continued importance of rituals such as *süünçüloo* and *tushöö kesüü*. Oli's findings on the Raute tribe's labour-centred upbringing parallel the present results: 92% of rural respondents considered labour education essential, though only 8% actively practised it, indicating a gradual decline in daily implementation. Macdonald's observations regarding women as cultural intermediaries were also reflected in the data: 52% of respondents highlighted the role of grandmothers, mothers, and female relatives in transmitting norms and values. Yet only 6% participated in intergenerational activities such as master classes, revealing weak institutionalisation of traditional mentorship.

Some aspects of traditional upbringing—particularly child labour for household or ritual purposes—require careful interpretation within international legal frameworks. Weatherwax and Rigg (2023), analysing children's participation in Mongolian horse-riding competitions, raised concerns about exploitation. Saradha (2020) documented similar tensions among the nomadic Lamba tribe, where urbanisation and global media reshaped family structures and child behaviour. In Kyrgyzstan, although traditional structures remain comparatively intact, tendencies towards gradual displacement of customs were observed.

The role of elder family members remains significant: 65% of respondents recognised the authority of grandparents and other relatives in transmitting traditions, and 62% expressed willingness to participate in ethnopedagogical community events such as festivals, workshops,

and camps. This indicates a high level of cultural mobilisation and suggests that, with appropriate institutional support, traditional education can be effectively integrated into modern pedagogical frameworks.

The findings also correspond with Sanyal and Sarkar (2025), who described the pedagogical role of traditional holidays, songs, and dances in Himalayan communities. Ritual practices in Central Asian nomadic cultures—Kazakh, Turkmen, and Kyrgyz—serve similar functions, transmitting historical, moral, and ecological knowledge. However, tensions arise when traditional practices conflict with modern child-protection standards. Singh and Alam (2025) highlighted such conflicts in the case of Indian nomadic groups whose children participated in street circus performances. Although no comparable examples were found in Kyrgyzstan, the need to delineate boundaries between tradition and legal standards remains evident.

Markowska-Manista (2020) demonstrated how isolation from formal education marginalised Ba'aka children in the Central African Republic. In contrast, Kyrgyz nomadic communities exhibit a degree of balance between tradition and modernisation, though risks of losing deeper cultural meanings persist. Thrift (2024) raised concerns about the commercialisation of cultural practices—such as cashmere production—arguing that rituals, crafts, and child-rearing have increasingly become objects of market value. Similar tendencies were observed in Kyrgyzstan, where traditional practices are undergoing commodification, contributing to the transformation of cultural content.

Practical Recommendations and Scenarios for Preserving and Adapting Elements of Nomadic Educational Culture in a Globalised Society

A comparative analysis of survey results from rural and urban regions of Kyrgyzstan enabled the formulation of practical recommendations tailored to each sociocultural environment. These recommendations take into account the degree of tradition preservation, the role of the family, participation in cultural practices, and levels of support for ethnopedagogical initiatives.

Findings from rural regions indicate that traditional forms of upbringing—particularly initiation rituals and labour-centred education—remain deeply embedded in community life. This provides a strong foundation for integrating family-based labour practices into the educational process, for example through school ethnoculture clubs or seasonal "family workshops" organised within local communities. Proverbs and sayings continue to play a central role in moral education, underscoring the vitality of oral tradition. This resource should be supported not only within households but also in schools through interactive competitions, digital folklore collections, and audio projects featuring traditional texts.

The importance of lullabies in early childhood socialisation further highlights the strength of folkloric transmission. Modern tools—such as video and audio recordings accompanied by artistic visualisations—could reinforce this practice and facilitate dissemination through social networks and educational platforms. Strong support for the formal integration of ethnopedagogy (95%) suggests opportunities for developing curriculum modules with practical components, including field classes, participation in festive rituals, and involvement of cultural bearers in teaching. The linguistic resilience of rural communities—where 85% of families speak Kyrgyz at home—provides a basis for bilingual educational programmes and the creation of Kyrgyz-language digital content.

Nevertheless, several challenges were identified. Participation in intergenerational master classes remains low (20%), indicating the need to expand such initiatives and strengthen community engagement through partnerships with cultural centres. Additionally, 90% of respondents reported that digital media reduce children's interest in traditions. This challenge may be addressed by embedding ethnocultural content into contemporary formats such as mobile applications, multimedia fairy tales, and educational videos that combine play and learning.

Survey results from urban regions (Bishkek, Osh, Karakol) reveal more moderate support for traditional educational models. Although 80% of respondents consider initiation rituals important, traditions require additional reinforcement in urban contexts. Integrated ethnopedagogy modules with practical tasks could help strengthen children's connection to cultural heritage. Labour education is supported by 75% of respondents, reflecting a gradual detachment from rural family practices. Adapted educational projects—such as school mini-farms, urban ethnofestivals, or themed craft days—may help bridge this gap.

Oral tradition is also less prominent in urban settings: 68% value proverbs and sayings, and only 58% regularly use folk lullabies. Multimedia resources—audio and video collections, interactive applications featuring proverbs and counting rhymes—could help reintroduce folklore into daily urban life. The linguistic situation is particularly notable: only 50% of urban families speak Kyrgyz at home. This highlights the need for language initiatives that combine formal instruction with extracurricular practice, including clubs, interactive groups, and media projects encouraging everyday use of the native language.

Urban respondents demonstrated strong openness to digital tools for cultural preservation, particularly online platforms for studying ethnopedagogy. This creates opportunities for hybrid programmes combining offline master classes, ethnofestivals, and virtual sessions with interactive elements. However, concerns about the negative impact of urbanisation and digital media on cultural preservation underscore the need for both digital promotion and the creation of live cultural spaces—such as ethnocultural centres, family workshops, and interactive festivals.

Overall, the findings suggest that rural and urban environments require differentiated approaches to cultural preservation. Rural areas benefit from reinforcing traditional practices through family involvement, rituals, and intergenerational learning, whereas urban communities require hybrid models that blend modern technologies, formal education, and innovative cultural formats. Such tailored approaches can help sustain a resilient cultural identity for future generations.

Based on the analysis, three scenarios for preserving and adapting Kyrgyz nomadic educational traditions were proposed:

- **Folklorised Scenario** This scenario emphasises symbolic reproduction of traditions without deep functional practice. Customs and rituals are presented through theatrical performances, museum exhibitions, and festive events. While this approach enhances cultural visibility, it requires additional reinforcement through practical engagement.
- **Interactive-Contextual Scenario** This model involves educational simulations, role-playing games, and themed camps where children experience aspects of nomadic life—building yurts, herding livestock, and participating in initiation rituals. Such experiential learning enables the transmission of values through embodied practice, dialogue, and sensory engagement.
- **Mixed Scenario** This approach combines traditional and modern educational methods. Ritual, folkloric, and moral foundations of nomadic culture are preserved but integrated into contemporary schooling, daily life, and leisure activities. Examples include incorporating folk songs into music lessons, using folklore narratives in school projects, and embedding traditional holidays into community events.

The study not only documents the current state of Kyrgyz child-rearing traditions but also proposes pathways for reintegrating them into a dynamic, globalised environment. Central to these approaches is the principle of cultural continuity, achievable only through a holistic strategy that unites education, family, digital technologies, and active community

participation. Such an integrated model offers a sustainable foundation for preserving cultural identity while engaging constructively with the realities of a globalised world.

Limitations

The study also acknowledges several limitations. The survey was conducted over a relatively short period (October 2024–January 2025), and remote mountain regions could not be included. Respondents' self-assessments may have influenced the accuracy of reported practices, particularly regarding language use, lullabies, and participation in cultural events. The modest sample size (n = 120) limits the generalisability of the findings. Future research should explore attitudes towards traditions across age, educational, and socio-cultural groups, and conduct comparative analyses across different regions of Kyrgyzstan. Expanding the empirical base through qualitative methods—such as interviews with cultural bearers and ethnographic observation—would provide deeper insight into the lived dynamics of tradition preservation.

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Ethical Approval

All research procedures complied with the American Sociological Association (1997) Code of Ethics and the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and its later amendments.

Bishkek State University named after
Academician Kusein Karasaev

ETHICS APPROVAL

The Research Ethics Council of the Bishkek State University named after Academician Kusein Karasaev reviewed the scientific study entitled "Traditions of child-rearing in Nomadic culture and their preservation in the context of globalisation: An ethnopedagogical study". Following the Council's review, it was determined that all research procedures complied with the American Sociological Association (1997) Code of Ethics and Helsinki Declaration (1964) and its later amendments. The study was conducted on a voluntary basis, ensured the anonymity of participants, and met the ethical requirements applicable to sociological and educational research. The study was approved for implementation in its present form (Approval No. RA-10035).

Ethical Procedures:

1. Informed Consent: Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents completed the survey either via Google Forms (urban participants) or paper questionnaires (rural participants), implying informed agreement to take part in the research after being informed about its purpose and procedures.
2. Confidentiality: The study did not collect personally identifiable information. Survey data were processed using descriptive statistics and presented in aggregated form, ensuring the anonymity of participants and the protection of their personal data.
3. Right to Withdraw: Participation was based on voluntary consent, and respondents retained the right to refuse participation or decline to answer key survey questions, as reflected in the stated exclusion criteria.
4. Ethical Standards Compliance: The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the American Sociological Association (1997) Code of Ethics, which governed the design, data collection, and implementation of the social survey.
5. Non-coercive Participation: No coercive measures, incentives, or external pressures were applied. Participants were selected based on predefined inclusion criteria related to ethnicity, experience in child-rearing, and familiarity with cultural traditions.
6. Data Use and Reporting: Collected data were used exclusively for academic research purposes. The results were reported in generalised statistical form (frequencies and percentages) to prevent the identification of individual respondents.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

AI Use Statement

AI-based tools were used for minor language editing and proofreading to improve the clarity and readability of the manuscript. All AI-generated suggestions were critically reviewed and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final content.

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Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author

upon request.

Appendix 1: Data from the Sociological Survey of Respondents from Urban Areas (Bishkek, Osh, Karakol)

Question	Responses (%)
1. Do you consider initiation rituals (süünçüloo, tushöö kesüü) to be an essential part of child-rearing?	a) yes, they are necessary to form basic values – 80%; b) no, children are fine with modern forms of education – 20%
2. Is it important to involve children in household chores (milking, making shepherd's tools) from an early age?	a) yes, it develops responsibility – 75%; b) no, it's outdated for modern society – 25%
3. What role do proverbs and sayings play in shaping a child's moral values?	a) they are of primary importance – 68%; b) uncertain/slightly – 32%
4. Do you support the use of folk counting rhymes in early education?	a) yes, they are useful and connected to culture – 60%; b) no, modern developmental games are better – 40%
5. Should moral guidance (honour, sacrifice, resilience) be mandatory topics in family upbringing?	a) yes, it is the foundation of nomadic life – 55%; b) no, the family should choose values independently – 45%
6. Do you perceive labour education as a factor informing character?	a) yes, without it, children will not learn to work – 82%; b) no, modern children need other skills – 18%
7. Do you think that knowledge of folk rituals and folklore should be part of the mandatory school curriculum?	a) yes, it will help preserve cultural identity – 70%; b) no, the school should focus on general education subjects – 30%
8. Who most often teaches you traditional rituals in your family?	a) elder relatives – 65%; b) parents – 35%
9. How often do you take children to nomadic camps or ethnofestivals?	a) at least once a year – 40%; b) less than once every two years – 60%
10. Do you use folk lullabies during daily child care?	a) yes, almost every evening – 58%; b) no, only during holidays – 42%
11. Does your child speak Kyrgyz at home with the family?	a) always – 50%; b) mostly Russian or English – 50%
12. Do you keep traditional items (ornaments, mini yurts) in your home as part of daily life?	a) yes, they are used in daily life and décor – 45%; b) no, only symbolically – 55%
13. How often do you review ethnographic recordings with your children?	a) at least once a month – 30%; b) less than once every six months – 70%
14. Does your family participate in intergenerational master classes?	a) yes, regularly – 25%, b) no, never participated – 75%
15. What effect do digital media have on children's interest in traditional rituals?	a) significantly decreases interest – 85%; b) scary/does not significantly affect – 15%
16. Do you agree that schools should teach a separate course on ethnopedagogy?	a) fully agree – 73%; b) no, it's unnecessary – 27%
17. How do you assess the impact of urbanization on the preservation of family traditions?	a) very negative – 77%; b) moderate or insignificant – 23%
18. Do modern global educational standards take Kyrgyz community cultural features into account?	a) no, they are universal and the same everywhere – 35%; b) yes, there are adapted programs – 65%
19. Do you support online platforms for studying ethnopedagogy?	a) yes, it is convenient and relevant – 88%; b) no, it's better in person – 12%
20. Are you willing to participate in ethnopedagogical events?	a) yes, I have the desire and time – 62%; b) no, it is not of interest to me – 38%

Source: Created by the Authors

Appendix 2. Survey results from respondents in rural regions of Kyrgyzstan (Naryn, Batken, Osh regions)

Question	Answer options and percentages (%)
Do you consider initiation rituals (süünçüloo, tushöö kesüü) to be an essential part of child-rearing?	a) yes, they are necessary to form basic values – 88%; b) no, children are fine with modern forms of education – 12%
Is it important to involve children in household chores from an early age?	a) yes, it develops responsibility – 92%; b) no, it's outdated for modern society – 8%
What role do proverbs and sayings play in shaping a child's moral values?	a) they are of primary importance – 76% b) uncertain/slightly – 24%
Do you support the use of folk counting rhymes in early education?	a) yes, they are useful and connected to culture – 69% b) no, modern developmental games are better – 31%
Should moral guidance be mandatory topics in family upbringing?	a) yes, it is the foundation of nomadic life – 90% b) no, the family should choose values independently – 10%
Do you perceive labour education as a factor in forming character?	a) yes, without it, children will not learn to work – 89%; b) no, modern children need other skills – 11%
Should knowledge of folk rituals and folklore be part of the school curriculum?	a) yes, it will help preserve cultural identity – 95%; b) no, the school should focus on general education subjects – 5%
Who most often teaches you traditional rituals in your family?	a) elder relatives – 73%; b) parents – 27%
How often do you take children to nomadic camps or ethnofestivals?	a) at least once a year – 60%; b) less than once every two years – 40%
Do you use folk lullabies?	a) yes, almost every evening – 79%; b) no, only during holidays – 21%
Does your child speak Kyrgyz at home with the family?	a) always – 85%; b) mostly Russian or English – 15%
Do you keep traditional items in your home?	a) yes, they are used in daily life and décor – 77%; b) no, only symbolically – 23%
How often do you review ethnographic recordings?	a) at least once a month – 35%; b) less than once every six months – 65%
Does your family participate in intergenerational master classes?	a) yes, regularly – 20%; b) no, never participated – 80%
What effect do digital media have on interest in traditions?	a) significantly decreases interest – 90%; b) scary/does not significantly affect – 10%
Should schools teach a course on ethnopedagogy?	a) fully agree – 84%; b) no, it's unnecessary – 16%
How do you assess the impact of urbanization?	a) very negative – 91%; b) moderate or insignificant – 9%
Do global standards take cultural features into account?	a) no, they are universal and the same everywhere – 50%; b) yes, there are adapted programs – 50%
Do you support online platforms for studying ethnopedagogy?	a) yes, it is convenient and relevant – 30%; b) no, it's better in person – 70%
Are you willing to participate in ethnopedagogical events?	a) yes, I have the desire and time – 62%; b) no, it is not of interest to me – 38%

Source: Created by the Authors

Appendix 3: Closed Questions of the Survey

Thematic block 1: Perception of traditional educational norms

1. Do you consider initiation rituals (süünçüloo, tushöö kesüü) to be an essential part of child-rearing?

a) yes, without them, it is impossible to form core values;

b) no, children only need modern forms of education.

2. Is it important to involve a child in household chores (milking, making shepherd's items) from an early age?

a) yes, it develops responsibility;

b) no, it is outdated for modern society.

3. What role do proverbs and sayings ("Jash bala– biiyk too..." etc.) play in shaping a child's moral values?

a) they are of primary importance;

b) unclear/to a small extent.

4. Do you support the use of folk counting rhymes in early education (for developing motor skills and attention)?

a) yes, they are useful and connected with culture;

v) no, it is better to use modern developmental games.

5. Should moral guidance ("honor", "sacrifice", "endurance") be mandatory topics in family upbringing?

a) yes, it is the foundation of the nomadic lifestyle;

b) no, the family should choose values independently.

6. Do you view labor education as a factor in shaping character?

a) yes, without it, a child will not learn work;

b) no, modern children need other skills.

7. Do you think knowledge of folk rituals and folklore should be part of the mandatory school curriculum?

a) yes, it will help preserve cultural identity;

b) no, the school should focus on general education subjects.

Thematic block 2: Practices of transmitting cultural values in the family

1. Who most often teaches you traditional rituals in your family?

a) older relatives (grandfathers, grandmothers, aunts, uncles);

b) parents.

2. How often do you take children to nomadic camps or ethnofestivals?

a) at least once a year;

b) less than once every two years.

3. Do you use folk lullabies in your daily care of the child?

a) yes, almost every evening;

b) no, only during holidays.

4. Does your child speak the native Kyrgyz language in the family?

a) always;

b) mostly Russian or English.

5. Do you keep traditional items in your home (decorations, miniature yurts, embroidered textiles)?

a) yes, they are used in daily life and décor;

b) no, only symbolically.

6. How often do you review ethnographic recordings (rituals, holidays) with your children?

a) at least once a month;

b) less than once every six months.

7. Does your family participate in intergenerational master classes (making yurts, decorations)?

a) yes, regularly;

b) no, they haven't participated.

Thematic block 3: The impact of modern factors on education

1. What effect do digital media (games, social networks) have on children's interest in traditional rituals?

a) they significantly reduce interest;

b) they scare/influence minimally.

2. Do you agree that the school should offer a separate course in ethnopedagogy?

a) fully agree;

b) no, it is unnecessary additional load.

3. How do you assess the impact of urbanization (moving to cities) on the preservation of family traditions?

a) very negative;

b) moderate or insignificant.

4. Do you think modern global educational standards take into account the cultural features of the Kyrgyz nomadic community?

a) no, they are universal and the same everywhere;

b) yes, there are adapted programs.

5. Do you support the use of online platforms for studying ethnopedagogy (video lessons, webinars from culture bearers)?

a) yes, it's convenient and relevant;

b) no, better in person.

6. Are you willing to participate in the creation and conduction of ethnopedagogical events at school or in the community?

a) yes, I have the desire and time;

b) no, it's not within my interests.