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ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ҚАЗАҚ- ТҮРІК  
УНИВЕРСИТЕТІ

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**THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF ORGANIZING WORKSHOPS IN TRADITIONAL CRAFT SCHOOLS OF THE FERGANA VALLEY**

**Abstract**

The article explores the theoretical foundations of organizing workshops in traditional craft schools of the Fergana Valley, highlighting their role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Handicraft workshops serve as experiential learning platforms, integrating practical skills, aesthetic appreciation, and creative thinking. Unlike master classes, workshops emphasize active participation, allowing participants to engage in all stages of craft production, including observation, hands-on practice, reflection, and application. This model is grounded in John Dewey's experiential learning theory and Kolb's learning cycle, which stress learning by doing. The study employs field observations conducted in 2024–2025 in Margilan, Rishtan, Kokand, and Chust, combined with comparative analysis of international practices in Turkey, Morocco, Japan, and Peru. Findings indicate that workshops not only enhance skills but also strengthen cultural identity, support economic empowerment, and expand experiential tourism. Properly designed workshops require attention to studio environment, pedagogical structure, and cultural atmosphere. By transforming traditional studios into interactive learning spaces, the Fergana Valley can foster creative education, support artisan communities, and enhance tourism experiences. The research concludes that workshops are an innovative, sustainable, and effective tool for integrating craft education, cultural heritage preservation, and tourism development.

**Keywords:** Fergana Valley; handicrafts; workshops; experiential learning; cultural heritage; tourism; pedagogy; creative education; interactive learning; traditional crafts.

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**ФЕРҒАНА ӨРЕҢІНІҢ ДӘСТҮРЛІ ҚОЛӨНЕР МЕКТЕПТЕРІНДЕ  
ШЕБЕРХАНАЛАРДЫ ҰЙЫМДАСТЫРУДЫҢ ТЕОРИЯЛЫҚ ЖАҒДАЙЛАРЫ**

**Аннотация**

Мақала Ферғана алқабындағы дәстүрлі қолөнер мектептерінде шеберханаларды ұйымдастырудың теориялық негіздерін талдайды, олардың мәдени мұраны сақтау және насихаттаудағы рөлін көрсетеді. Қолөнер шеберханалары практикалық дағдыларды, эстетикалық түсінікті және шығармашылық ойлауды біріктіретін тәжірибелік оқыту алаңдары болып табылады. Шеберлік сабақтардан айырмашылығы, шеберханалар белсенді қатысуды көздейді, қатысушыларға қолөнер өндірісінің барлық кезеңдеріне қатысуға мүмкіндік береді: бақылау, тәжірибелік жұмыс, талдау және қолдану. Бұл модель Джон Дьюидің тәжірибелік оқыту теориясы мен Колбтың оқыту циклін негізге алады, олардың

басты қағидасы – іс-әрекет арқылы үйрену. Зерттеу 2024–2025 жылдары Марғилан, Риштан, Қоқан және Шахрисабзда жүргізілген далалық бақылаулар мен Түркия, Марокко, Жапония және Перу тәжірибелерін салыстырмалы талдауды қамтиды. Нәтижелер шеберханалардың тек дағдыларды дамыту ғана емес, мәдени идентичтілікті нығайту, экономикалық мүмкіндіктерді қолдау және тәжірибелік туризмді дамытуға ықпал ететінін көрсетеді. Тиімді шеберханаларды ұйымдастыру үшін студияның физикалық жағдайы, педагогикалық құрылымы және мәдени атмосферасына назар аудару қажет. Дәстүрлі шеберханаларды интерактивті оқу кеңістігіне айналдыру арқылы Ферғана алқабы шығармашылық білім беруді дамытып, қолөнер қоғамдарын қолдап, туризм тәжірибесін арттыра алады.

**Кілт сөздер:** Ферғана алқабы; қолөнер; шеберхана; тәжірибелік оқыту; мәдени мұра; туризм; педагогика; шығармашылық білім; интерактивті оқыту; дәстүрлі қолөнер.

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## **ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ МАСТЕРСКИХ В ТРАДИЦИОННЫХ РЕМЕСЛЕННЫХ ШКОЛАХ ФЕРГАНСКОЙ ДОЛИНЫ**

### **Аннотация**

Статья рассматривает теоретические аспекты организации мастерских в традиционных ремесленных школах Ферганской долины, подчеркивая их роль в сохранении и продвижении культурного наследия. Ремесленные мастерские являются платформами опытного обучения, объединяющими практические навыки, эстетическое восприятие и творческое мышление. В отличие от мастер-классов, мастерские ориентированы на активное участие, позволяя участникам вовлекаться во все этапы ремесленного производства: наблюдение, практическую работу, анализ и применение. Модель основана на теории опытного обучения Джона Дьюи и цикле обучения Колба, подчеркивающих обучение через практику. Исследование использует полевые наблюдения в 2024–2025 годах в Маргилане, Риштане, Коканде и Чусте, а также сравнительный анализ международного опыта в Турции, Марокко, Японии и Перу. Результаты показывают, что мастерские не только развивают навыки, но и укрепляют культурную идентичность, поддерживают экономическую самостоятельность и расширяют возможности туристического опыта. Эффективные мастерские требуют внимания к физической среде студии, педагогической структуре и культурной атмосфере. Преобразуя традиционные мастерские в интерактивные образовательные пространства, Ферганская долина может развивать творческое образование, поддерживать ремесленные сообщества и улучшать туристический опыт. Исследование заключает, что мастерские представляют собой инновационный и устойчивый инструмент интеграции ремесленного образования, сохранения культурного наследия и развития туризма.

**Ключевые слова:** Ферганская долина; ремесла; мастерские; опытное обучение; культурное наследие; туризм, педагогика; творческое образование; интерактивное обучение; традиционные ремесла.

### **Introduction**

Traditional handicrafts are an integral part of human culture, representing an organic expression of national heritage, aesthetic values, and social experience. In modern education and tourism systems, organizing practical training in the form of “workshops” within craft studios is an effective way not only to preserve cultural heritage but also to develop it through new pedagogical approaches. Through such activities, participants gain direct exposure to the philosophy, historical roots, and aesthetic principles of national craft traditions. This, in turn, strengthens their cultural

identity and enriches the elements of “cultural experience” in tourism. Moreover, handicraft workshops serve as a unique experiential space for foreign tourists as well, allowing them to communicate directly with local artisans and to gain deep impressions by participating in the process of creating traditional products.

This model is also increasingly being applied in contemporary education. In particular, incorporating practical handicraft-based activities into curricula plays an important role in fostering creative thinking, patience, aesthetic taste, and respect for cultural values among the younger generation. From this perspective, organizing workshops in craft studios not only enhances students’ practical skills but also educates them as creative individuals grounded in national and universal values. Workshops encourage active participation, independent thinking, and creativity among participants. In this process, the master is not positioned at the center but rather acts as a guide and facilitator who creates an enabling environment. Unlike the traditional master–apprentice system, the workshop model is based on a “subject–subject democratic pedagogical approach.”

This distinction is clearly visible in the example of the handicraft schools of the Fergana Valley. For instance, in traditional craft centers such as Marghilan, Rishtan, Kokand, Shahrixon, and Chust, the master–apprentice system has largely been maintained through hereditary transmission. Handicraft workshops, however, can transform this tradition into an open, interactive, and experiential learning platform. In such workshops, participants not only observe the master’s working process but also have the opportunity to perform tasks hands-on, analyze the results, and experiment with innovative approaches.

#### **Methodology (methods)**

The concept of the “workshop” is theoretically grounded in the notion of experiential learning. This theory was initially proposed by the American philosopher John Dewey, who advanced the idea that knowledge is acquired through practical activity [1, 548]. Subsequently, D. Kolb further developed this approach by interpreting the learning process as a four-stage experiential learning cycle [2, 35]. According to this model, learning is based on the stages of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In handicraft workshops, these stages occur naturally: participants first observe the master’s work, then engage in hands-on practice themselves, analyze the outcomes, and refine their own approaches. In this way, the process transforms learning from the mere acquisition of information into a creative and reflective educational experience.

The study primarily employed two methodological approaches. The first was the observation method, through which the potential for organizing workshops in handicraft studios was examined during field research on the ethnographic tourism of the Fergana Valley conducted in 2024–2025. The second approach was a comparative analysis of experience exchange, which involved comparing the activities of educational workshops organized in a workshop format abroad with the capacities and practices of local craft studios.

#### **Results**

The introduction of workshop-based training sessions in the field of traditional handicrafts represents a pedagogical model that aligns with the interactive and experiential approaches of contemporary education. Within this framework, participants do not merely acquire ready-made knowledge; rather, through their active involvement, they develop new skills and gain aesthetic experience. Today, this approach is considered one of the most advanced directions in cultural tourism and is widely implemented in practice by a number of countries around the world.

In particular, the model of pottery workshops is well developed in Avanos, a town in the Cappadocia region of Türkiye, which is recognized as an ancient center of pottery. Here, hands-on workshops designed for tourists are widely organized. Local masters demonstrate in practice the processes of clay preparation, shaping, firing, and decoration. Participants create pottery items with their own hands and take them home as souvenirs. This process is based on the principles of experiential learning and actively engages participants in a creative process. Studies show that such activities account for 17% of tourism revenue in Cappadocia and create new market opportunities for local artisans [3, 20].

The city of Fez in Morocco is considered one of the world's major centers of cultural heritage tourism. Within the framework of the "Medina Artisans Project," handicraft workshops are organized in an open format for tourists. Their purpose is not only to showcase artisans' labor but also to enhance their economic independence. Tourists directly participate in carpet weaving, ceramic painting, and leather processing. Research indicates that such workshops extend tourists' average length of stay by approximately 1.5 days and have a positive impact on the local economy [4, 115].

Another example of craft-related workshops is offered in Kyoto, Japan, through the "Cultural Craft Experience Program." Within this program, tourists participate in the practical stages of kasuri and yuzen (textile dyeing) as well as raku pottery. The sessions are conducted based on a combination of the traditional master-apprentice principle and modern educational methodologies. Through this model, Japan not only preserves its intangible cultural heritage but also promotes tourism. Research findings indicate that such interactive experiences have increased tourists' cultural interest by 40% [5, 78].

In the village of Chinchero, Peru, the "Centro de Textiles Tradicionales del Cusco," organized by local women, is one of the most successful handicraft workshop initiatives in the country. Tourists directly participate in hand spinning, preparing natural dyes, and weaving processes. The project aims to revive ancient Inca textile traditions and ensure the economic independence of local women. Studies show that as a result of this center's activities, average income in Chinchero village increased by 35%, and the younger generation has renewed its interest in traditional crafts [6, 420].

In Uzbekistan, local and foreign tourists are offered experimental hands-on activities in which artisans conduct master classes allowing participants to create products with their own hands. However, such practices differ significantly from the workshop model discussed in this study in terms of pedagogical, methodological, and goal-oriented aspects. A workshop is an interactive educational and practical format aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills through experience, based on participants' active engagement. It relies on the principle of "learning by doing" and is closely connected with constructivist educational theory. In a workshop, participants are not merely observers but active creators, which makes the learning process deeper, more effective, and more creative.

A master class, by contrast, is primarily based on demonstration and observation. In this format, a master or specialist showcases their skills, work process, or artistic techniques to an audience. This model is closer to the "learning by observing" approach and focuses more on inspiring participants and providing examples than on their active practical involvement. Therefore, master classes are generally short-term, illustrative, and demonstrative in nature.

In the field of handicrafts, the distinction between these two formats is particularly evident. For instance, in a silk-weaving workshop in Margilan, when tourists actively participate in processes such as spinning threads on the loom, creating patterns, or dyeing, this constitutes a workshop. If, however, the master merely demonstrates the work process without the active involvement of participants, it is considered a master class. Thus, workshops primarily focus on experiential exchange and interactive learning, whereas master classes are limited to the demonstration of skills.

For this reason, workshops can be regarded as a modern, interactive, and experience-based form of the traditional master-apprentice school. By directly engaging learners or tourists in the production process, workshops enhance the attractiveness of national handicrafts and become an effective means of creating an "immersive experience" within cultural heritage tourism.

### **Discussion**

The research results confirm that workshops provide significant opportunities as a new pedagogical model for handicraft schools in the Fergana Valley. They create a learning process based on active participation, transforming education from theoretical knowledge to practical experience. The Fergana Valley has historically developed fields such as silk production, pottery, knife-making, wood carving, candlemaking, jewelry, and copperware. The traditional master-apprentice system in these craft schools functioned not only as a mechanism for passing on

professional skills but also as a cultural vehicle for transmitting aesthetic views, diligence, and communal values from generation to generation.

Handicraft centers established in Fergana, Margilan, and Rishton—such as the “Yodgorlik Silk Center,” “Rishton Pottery Complex,” and “Kokand Masters’ Association” have implemented practical training sessions that are essentially real-life examples of the workshop model [7, 795]. Here, masters interactively teach local youth, students, and foreign tourists. For example, participants in the “Silk Workshops” in Margilan have the opportunity to engage hands-on in all stages of silk production – from nurturing seedlings, spinning and dyeing threads, to weaving. This transforms learners and tourists from passive observers into active participants.

The introduction of the workshop model serves to integrate the Fergana Valley’s handicraft heritage with “experiential learning and cultural tourism.” Consequently, craft processes become not only objects of professional study but also social platforms that preserve cultural heritage while generating innovative and economic value. Additionally, workshops ensure the living preservation of cultural heritage in the region. While the traditional master–apprentice system involved primarily local youth, the workshop format expands this opportunity internationally. With the direct participation of tourists, researchers, and students, Fergana Valley crafts can develop new communicative and economic dimensions within “cultural experience tourism.”

However, it must be noted that despite the Fergana Valley’s considerable tourism potential in the field of handicrafts, this potential is not yet fully utilized. The full implementation of workshops requires meeting several key requirements. One of the most important factors in organizing workshops in traditional craft studios is the proper didactic and aesthetic arrangement of the environment. The studio is considered not only a workspace but also a pedagogical space that fosters cultural interaction, creative experience, and knowledge acquisition [8, 1-6]. Therefore, when preparing a studio to function as a workshop, attention must be paid to three main components: the physical environment, the pedagogical structure, and the cultural atmosphere.

First, the physical environment – the material and technical equipment of the studio – determines the quality of the learning process. For example, a pottery studio must include equipment such as pottery wheels, clay mixers of various sizes, local clay, molding forms, coloring pigments, kilns, and so forth. In addition, for active participant engagement, it must provide safety tools, individual workstations, and a demonstration area for observing the master’s activities.

In a knife-making studio, it is necessary to equip facilities for metal melting and shaping with coal furnaces, air blowers, hammers and anvils, sharpening stones, wooden tools for handles, as well as safety equipment such as goggles, gloves, and protective clothing. The studio layout must be ergonomic, allowing each participant independent and safe access to tools and equipment.

Second, the pedagogical structure determines the effectiveness of the workshop process. Each session should be organized in four stages based on the “experiential learning model”:

Demonstration stage – the master explains and demonstrates the work process;

Participation stage – participants engage directly in hands-on activities;

Reflection stage – the process is analyzed, strengths and weaknesses are discussed;

Application stage – learned techniques are reinforced, and a final product is created.

This structure develops not only craft skills but also competencies in creative thinking, problem-solving, and aesthetic evaluation among participants.

Third, creating a cultural atmosphere in the studio is of particular importance. In this process, the master’s role goes beyond mere technical guidance, acting as a “cultural mediator and experiential leader.” The Fergana Valley’s craft traditions provide a rich aesthetic environment: walls decorated with national patterns, displays of traditional tools, and inscriptions reflecting the masters’ guidance on patience, honesty, and diligence – all contribute to imparting “national spirit and inspiration” within the workshop.

Culturally well-organized workshops go beyond being simple “learning spaces”; they function as “centers of experiential culture.” This aligns fully with UNESCO’s (2021) concept of “living heritage spaces,” which allows cultural heritage to be learned and preserved through active, practical engagement.

Thus, when organizing workshops within pottery and knife-making studios, the effective design of the environment, ensuring safety and cultural requirements, structuring pedagogical stages on a scientific basis, and integrating national aesthetic values into the setting can significantly enhance the effectiveness of craft education. This approach is considered not only a method for learning handicrafts but also an important scientific-practical model that fosters cultural identification, creative thinking, and the educational dimension of tourism.

In local contexts, particularly in Uzbekistan, workshops have historically been located in neighborhood centers, where their social function included not only production but also teaching the younger generation crafts and showcasing national culture to visitors. Therefore, when organizing modern workshops, it is advisable to preserve these values while harmonizing ergonomic design, safety standards, and interactive learning elements.

Consequently, the workshop model serves to integrate the craft schools of the Fergana Valley with modern education, the creative economy, and tourism systems. This approach maintains the cultural foundations of the traditional master–apprentice system while advancing it to a new stage characterized by experimentation, innovation, and international collaboration. As a result, handicrafts in the Fergana Valley can not only preserve their national values but also make a significant contribution to Uzbekistan’s cultural diplomacy and the international recognition of its tourism brand.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, workshops represent an innovative model that combines the theoretical and practical foundations of craft education. They play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting tourism, and enhancing educational effectiveness. Therefore, transforming traditional studios into modern learning laboratories, providing methodological support, and facilitating international experience exchange is a pressing scientific and practical issue.

Scientific analysis demonstrates that organizing workshops in traditional craft studios not only enriches practical education but also becomes an effective means of preserving and promoting national cultural heritage. This experiential learning-based approach allows participants to acquire knowledge directly through active engagement. Craft workshops develop creativity, aesthetic thinking, and cultural awareness in learners while expanding the concept of “cultural experience” in tourism.

Organizing workshops in the craft studios of the Fergana Valley could be an effective strategy for local tourism development. Such initiatives not only popularize the work of artisans but also increase young people’s interest in traditional arts. Providing tourists with hands-on participation enriches their cultural experience and fosters “experiential tourism” in the region. Consequently, demand for handicraft products increases, creating a stable source of income for the local economy. Furthermore, these practical activities allow the integration of Fergana’s cultural heritage with modern marketing principles. Therefore, workshops are recognized as a promising mechanism for both preserving handicrafts and integrating tourism.

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