

**VOCAL ART: MODERN PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING
NATIONAL COMPETENCIES IN THE FIELD OF TRADITIONAL SINGING****Akbarova Mokhigul Gulomovna**
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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the scientific and pedagogical foundations for developing national competencies among future specialists studying in the field of traditional singing. It highlights issues of improving the educational process in vocal art through the integration of national values, performance traditions, aesthetic thinking, and innovative technologies. The article also reveals the importance of the master-apprentice tradition, methods of teaching national heritage, and mechanisms for gradually forming competencies. The research results contribute to increasing the effectiveness of vocal education.

KEYWORDS: traditional singing, vocal art, national competence, national value, pedagogical technology, master-apprentice tradition, performance, innovation, education system, methodology, national heritage, aesthetic thinking, vocal training, skill, musical thinking, professional development, creative approach, cultural identification.

INTRODUCTION. The traditions of classical national singing have developed as the foundation of Uzbek traditional vocal art. Studying any field, conducting research, engaging in scholarly work, and, most importantly, taking on the responsibility of teaching and training students as a mentor require a deep understanding of the essence of that art form, its origins, historical development, and current state. As is well known, the art of *maqom* serves as the basis of traditional singing. Therefore, it is essential to understand what *maqom* is, when and where it emerged, and how it evolved.

In teaching the art of *maqom* singing today, we rely on the accumulated knowledge and traditions that have been passed down through generations. It is known that “Shashmaqom” encompasses the Bukhara, Khorezm, and Fergana–Tashkent styles, each with its distinctive rhythmic and melodic features. Before the emergence of *Shashmaqom*, the system of “Twelve Maqoms” (*O’n ikki maqom*) existed, which, over time, was modified and condensed into the current *Shashmaqom* cycle. Musicologists such as Najmiddin Kavkabi and Darvishali Changiy, who lived and worked in the 16th–17th centuries, mentioned in their treatises that the “Twelve Maqoms” were institutionalized during the Bukhara Khanate and that many compositions and songs were created based on these modes. Hence, it can be concluded that the “Twelve Maqoms” continued to be used in Central Asia even in the 17th century.

Since notation systems as we know them today did not exist in the early periods of Eastern music, the earliest examples of *maqoms* have not survived in written form. Traditional singing, as a discipline, aims to develop essential performance skills, enabling students to perform folk songs both solo and in ensembles, to master the psychology of ensemble formation, and to acquire the ability to lead musical groups. The artistic value of traditional solo singing lies in its ability to convey poetic meaning through melody, engaging the listener both emotionally and spiritually. The listener derives aesthetic pleasure, comprehends the conveyed idea, and forms

an evaluative response. This interactive process reveals the essence of traditional solo singing as a unique art form. Traditional solo singing is generally divided into two types: (1) amateur solo singing and (2) professional solo singing. An amateur singer learns the basic principles of vocal performance and performs traditional songs within limited contexts. A professional singer, on the other hand, possesses formal musical education, performs traditional songs at a professional level (either solo or in ensembles), and often engages in creative work. Today, both amateur and professional solo singing continue to develop dynamically in Uzbekistan. However, the advancement of professional solo singing remains a key priority.

MAIN PART. After Uzbekistan gained independence, the development of national culture and art—particularly folk music and traditional performance schools—was defined as one of the main priorities of state policy. Folk music, including *maqom*, *doston*, folk songs, and classical singing, represents not only artistic heritage but also the embodiment of national identity and spiritual perfection. Therefore, the system of training future specialists in the “Vocal Art: Traditional Singing” field must focus not only on enhancing performance mastery but also on developing their national competencies, creative thinking, critical analysis, and ability to interpret national values within a modern context.

Traditional singing is an art form that has evolved over centuries based on the master-apprentice (*ustoz-shogird*) tradition, characterized by unique performance styles, melodic systems, poetic structures, and rhythmic-intonational patterns. The goal of this field is to prepare qualified performers and pedagogues for artistic ensembles, theaters, *maqom* groups, and educational institutions across the republic. In the current era of globalization, increasing young people’s interest in national art, preparing them for creative activity, teaching through modern technologies, and ensuring in-depth theoretical and practical understanding of Uzbek *maqom* art have become crucial objectives. In this process, the concepts of “competence” and “creativity” occupy a central role.

Competence is the ability of an individual to perform activities independently, creatively, and effectively based on knowledge, skills, experience, and values. In the field of “Vocal Art: Traditional Singing,” this concept encompasses not only pedagogical preparedness but also loyalty to national culture, artistic taste, aesthetic thinking, and spiritual maturity. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop technologies for enhancing national competencies among future specialists in vocal art—particularly in traditional singing—by analyzing their theoretical and practical foundations and identifying modern pedagogical methods rooted in the *ustoz-shogird* (master-apprentice) tradition.

In today’s rapidly evolving world, developing national competencies in the art of traditional singing is an urgent issue—not only culturally but also educationally and spiritually. This is because national music, especially traditional singing, embodies the spiritual world, history, aesthetic worldview, and moral values of the people. Thus, fostering national competencies among future specialists must be considered a key priority in contemporary education. Educational programs in traditional singing should aim not only at learning historical songs but also at analyzing their ideological content, understanding their artistic and aesthetic values, and developing expressive performance skills. At the same time, the integration of modern vocal technologies, digital recording, and analytical tools into the learning process expands students’ technical and creative potential. The *ustoz-shogird* system has been one of the most effective

methods of education for centuries in traditional singing. Today, combining this system with innovative teaching methods—such as reflective analysis, the portfolio method, and project-based learning—helps students cultivate independent creative thinking. Digitally preserving and using audio, video, and written materials related to Uzbek traditional singing in the educational process fosters national pride, historical awareness, and analytical skills among students. To achieve this, creating electronic platforms based on *maqoms*, folk songs, and the works of renowned singers, as well as expanding distance-learning opportunities, is essential. Future singers must also develop a deep sense of national aesthetic taste, artistic thinking, stage culture, and proper etiquette in dress and behavior, as these are integral components of national competence. Musical education should be viewed not merely as technical training but as a process of personal moral and spiritual development.

Participation in international festivals, master classes, and online competitions enhances students' professional level and equips them with the ability to promote national art on a global scale. Interactive lessons, artistic meetings, and stage practice serve as effective tools to inspire students' inner creativity, foster love for traditional singing, and cultivate respect for national values. For aspiring singers, conducting small-scale research on *maqoms*, folk songs, singer lineages, and performance styles, as well as writing articles and theses, and participating in seminars and scientific conferences, strengthens their analytical thinking, musical interpretation, and research competencies. In conclusion, developing national competencies among future specialists in traditional singing is a multifaceted process that includes pedagogical innovation, cultural heritage preservation, deep understanding of national identity, and the integration of modern technologies. As a result, the younger generation will grow into specialists who are loyal to national values, possess refined artistic taste, think creatively, and can confidently represent their art on the global stage

METHODOLOGY. The new stage of modern social development is characterized by the search for new ways of personal growth — particularly by fostering creativity, independence, and active engagement. The demands placed on the preparation of qualified specialists, including their creative abilities and problem-solving skills in professional contexts, are constantly increasing. Today, only those who approach their work creatively can meet the practical and theoretical challenges posed by economic transformations and scientific-technical progress. In current conditions, professional success, career growth, and self-realization depend on the ability to apply acquired knowledge, as well as on one's intellectual and creative capacities. Innovation and mutual development — the foundation of modernizing society — are key factors of individual success, highlighting the need for reforms in the education sector. Such reforms must include strategies to cultivate creativity among participants in the educational process, fostering critical and innovative thinking through new activity methods and cognitive models. Education today must aim to develop the learner's independence, critical thinking, and creative potential. Preparing highly qualified specialists requires programs that shape students' knowledge, skills, and competencies in their chosen field, teaching them to acquire knowledge autonomously and apply it practically — one of the most pressing issues in modern pedagogy.

In our research “*Technologies for Developing National Competencies in Vocal Art: Traditional Singing*,” the following methods were applied:

- Theoretical analysis — the psychological-pedagogical foundations of competence and creativity were studied through scientific literature on national art education;
- Systemic approach — all components of traditional singing education (theory, practice, master-apprentice system, performance) were analyzed in their interrelations;
- Pedagogical observation — students' motivation, creativity, and mastery levels were monitored during vocal lessons;
- Comparative analysis — traditional and modern teaching methods, as well as international experiences, were compared with national pedagogical practices;
- Empirical research — surveys were conducted among students and teachers in art faculties, and performance results were analyzed.

The theoretical foundations of this study draw on the treatises of Eastern scholars such as *Abu Nasr al-Farabi*, *Ibn Sina*, *Alisher Navoi*, *Safiuddin Urmavi*, and *Darvish Ali Changi*, as well as modern pedagogical theorists including *J. Guilford*, *D. Bogoyavlenskaya*, and *Y. Ponomarev*, who explored the nature of creativity. The object of the research is students studying in the “*Vocal Art: Traditional Singing*” field, while the subject is the system of pedagogical technologies that develop their national competencies. The main goal of this field is to study the centuries-old Uzbek vocal heritage — *classical singing, maqom performance, and folk songs* — and to cultivate national musical thinking through modern interpretations.

Students study Uzbek melodies, songs, major genres such as *Shashmaqom*, *Fergana-Tashkent maqoms*, and *Khorezm maqoms*, learning about their history, performance range, rhythmic patterns, and stylistic structures. Each student, through the learning process, develops not only technical mastery but also aesthetic taste, stage culture, and psychological readiness. At the heart of this process lies the *ustoz-shogird* (master-apprentice) tradition: the teacher's practical guidance — voice work, interpretation, and expressive nuances — is absorbed by the student through imitation and analysis.

A future specialist's competence consists of three main components:

- General cultural competence — knowledge of national and world culture, musical-aesthetic thinking, and artistic perception;
- Professional competence — vocal technique, maqom theory, performance analysis, and stage culture;
- Social competence — teamwork, cooperative performance, aesthetic communication, and group analysis.

Developing national competencies in *Vocal Art: Traditional Singing* primarily requires a strong pedagogical foundation centered on the *ustoz-shogird* tradition. Unlike other fields, this specialization is deeply rooted in national customs, oral traditions, and the living heritage of Uzbek musical culture. Students acquire pedagogical and analytical skills through the process of listening to, understanding, and practically interpreting the musical and theoretical teachings of their mentors. Creative competence reflects a student's ability to think non-traditionally, experiment with new performance styles, and create modern forms based on national material. This is especially evident in maqom and folk song performances, where students explore their vocal capacities and develop new interpretations.

The following technological approaches were found to be most effective:

- Integrated master-apprentice model — combines traditional mentoring with modern pedagogical techniques; the teacher demonstrates, the student analyzes, and performance is recorded for feedback.
- Reflective analysis technology — students record and self-assess their performances after each lesson, then discuss results with the teacher.
- Multimedia-based instruction — lessons are enriched with videos of maqoms, classical songs, and historical performers.
- Problem-based learning — students engage in complex analytical tasks related to maqom structure, poetic meter (*aruz*), and text interpretation.
- Creative laboratories — students develop independent projects (song recording, maqom analysis, stage performances) demonstrating their competencies.
- Integrated approach — vocal art is studied in harmony with related fields such as poetry, history, philosophy, and linguistics.

Through these technologies, students internalize not only the musical material but also the aesthetic, philosophical, and spiritual layers of national musical thinking. Consequently, they evolve into specialists who not only perform but also promote the national heritage.

Competence formation in traditional singing occurs in three stages:

- Preparatory stage — developing theoretical knowledge and listening-analysis skills;
- Practical stage — performing maqoms and folk songs under the guidance of a master, expanding vocal range;
- Creative-integrative stage — independent creativity, new interpretations, and stage performances.

These stages evolve through continuous analysis, self-assessment, and consideration of the mentor's feedback.

In today's higher education, the field of traditional singing stands out for its depth and complexity compared to other art disciplines. Here, the teacher acts not only as an instructor but also as a promoter of national values and a spiritual guide. The teacher's personal example, artistic taste, and pedagogical style play a decisive role in developing modern competencies. Integrating digital technologies, recording studios, stage training, and international collaborations into the educational process further enhances its effectiveness, ensuring that traditional singing continues to evolve as both a cultural and pedagogical art form.

CONCLUSION. The development of national competencies in the field of vocal art and traditional singing is not only a process of improving professional skills but also one of nurturing national identity, aesthetic thinking, and creative independence. The results of this study show that when methods such as the *master-apprentice system*, *reflective analysis*, *multimedia technologies*, and *creative laboratories* are integrated, students develop not only performance abilities but also analytical, communicative, and innovative skills.

Therefore, in training future specialists in the field of “**Vocal Art: Traditional Singing**”, the following recommendations are crucial:

- introduce innovations into educational programs based on a competence-oriented approach;
- integrate the *master-apprentice* system with modern technologies;
- encourage students' independent analysis and creative thinking;
- combine international experience with national teaching traditions;
- study the national *maqom* heritage in depth through scientific and theoretical research.

As a result, students specializing in traditional singing become successors of national culture, active participants in contemporary art processes, and highly competent professionals. The analysis also reveals interconnections between **traditional singing** and other art forms, showing the holistic nature of this discipline. The conclusions are based on continuous observation of students in the *Traditional Singing* field and are aimed at developing a technology that fully encompasses **national competencies** within vocal art education. Drawing from the experience of senior teachers with many years of practice, combined with the enthusiasm and innovation of young pedagogues using modern technologies, we can confidently ensure the achievement of the desired educational goals in this specialty.

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