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## Training Future Primary School Teachers to Foster a Health Culture in Schoolchildren

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### Abstract

This article examines the pedagogical and organizational factors necessary to prepare future primary school teachers to cultivate a healthy culture among schoolchildren. Key aspects include fostering internal motivation in future teachers, providing educational and methodological resources, and using a range of teaching methods and activities, both in and outside the classroom. The active engagement of prospective teachers in pedagogical practice and the development of practical skills through targeted training are also very important. In addition, the alignment and collaboration of faculty, community organizations, and parents in promoting a healthy culture significantly affects the preparedness of future teachers to shape students' health behavior.

**Keywords:** Culture, Teachers, Schoolchildren's, Primary schools, Health

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### Introduction

In Kazakhstan, human health protection and improvement is a central pillar of national policy, as reflected in key government documents. The “Development Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2050” (1997), the Presidential Decree “On Priority Measures to Improve the Health of Citizens” (1998), and the “Comprehensive Healthy Lifestyle Program” (1999) all emphasize the significance of health culture. Other important documents such as the “Law on Education in Kazakhstan” (1999), the “Comprehensive Education Program” (2000), and the “Healthy Kazakhstan” Healthcare Development Program (2010) demonstrate a continuous commitment to promoting a culture of health across the nation. The 2017 state address “Looking to the Future: Modernization of Public Consciousness” further underscored the importance of these goals.

Education is recognized globally as a fundamental element for societal growth, touching on social, political, economic, and cultural development [1]. Educational systems are constantly evolving, with an emphasis on new models and approaches, often influenced by cultural frameworks. This shift in educational philosophy aligns with the challenges and priorities that shape educational policies [2]. President Nursultan Nazarbayev highlighted the importance of rational living, focusing on education, health, and professional success as essential elements of pragmatic behavior [3].

Health challenges among Kazakhstan's schoolchildren are significant, with over half (53.8%) facing various health issues. The growing trend of drug use among youth is alarming, affecting children as young as 11-14 years old. In particular, the last



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decade has seen a rise in health problems such as cardiovascular disorders, digestive system issues, and spinal column problems. For example, the incidence of cardiovascular diseases among high school students increased from 10.3% to 17.8%, while digestive issues grew from 6.6% to 12.5%, and spinal problems rose from 4.3% to 15.7%.

Primary schools play a critical role in shaping children's health culture, with the introduction of health-saving technologies and sanitation methods. However, the effectiveness of these interventions has been limited. The pressing need for qualified teachers capable of engaging in health-promoting activities highlights the current gap in training. Despite efforts in the "Pedagogy and Methods of Primary Education" program, the preparation of future teachers to foster a healthy culture remains insufficient. Many future educators do not adequately grasp key concepts such as "health," "healthy lifestyle," and "health culture." An evaluation of the curriculum for future primary school teachers reveals that promoting health and well-being in children is not sufficiently prioritized in the training process.

To address this, a set of pedagogical conditions must be established to ensure that future primary school teachers are adequately prepared to contribute to the health culture of schoolchildren. This article explores the pedagogical and organizational factors essential for preparing future primary school teachers to cultivate a healthy culture among schoolchildren.

## Materials and Methods

A thorough review of existing research and official documents related to education and health, combined with pedagogical experience, led to the identification of key pedagogical conditions for preparing future primary school teachers to develop a health culture. The term "condition" refers to an essential concept in philosophy that describes the relationship between an object and its surrounding environment, emphasizing that an object's existence depends on these external factors. Unlike a direct cause, which produces a specific phenomenon, conditions are the broader context in which phenomena emerge and develop. Understanding these conditions allows for the creation of environments that foster desired outcomes in educational and health contexts [4].

Researchers exploring pedagogical systems often employ the concept of "condition," which they define and categorize in various ways. For instance, Babansky [5] distinguishes between two main types of conditions based on their area of influence: internal conditions, such as natural-geographical, social, cultural, industrial, neighborhood, and secondary factors, and external conditions, which include educational-material, scholastic hygiene, moral-psychological, and aesthetic factors [5]. According to Borytko [6], a pedagogical condition is an external factor or circumstance that significantly affects the educational process. While these conditions are intentionally created by the educator, they do not necessarily ensure a particular outcome [6].

Several scholars, including A.Ya. Nayna, V.I. Andreeva, N.M. Yakovleva, M.V. Zvereva, N.V. Ippolitova, B.V. Kupriyanov, and S.A. Dynina, have examined pedagogical conditions from various perspectives, providing a range of interpretations.

Scholars exploring the challenges within the pedagogical system frequently use the term "condition," which they define in varying ways. For example, Yu. P. Babansky classifies conditions into two categories: internal conditions, which pertain to natural, social, industrial, and cultural elements, and external conditions, such as educational-material, hygienic, moral-psychological, and aesthetic factors [5]. In Borytko's view, a pedagogical condition refers to an external factor or situation that significantly influences the pedagogical process, one which a teacher intentionally designs to guide the process without guaranteeing a definite outcome [6].

In the work of researchers like V.I. Andreeva, A.Ya. Nayna, N.M. Yakovleva, and others, the concept of pedagogical conditions is presented from multiple perspectives. Those holding the first viewpoint see pedagogical conditions as a combination of pedagogical strategies and the potential offered by the material and spatial environment [7, 8]. These scholars define pedagogical conditions as:

- A combination of specific pedagogical strategies, content, teaching methods, and organizational approaches [7];
- The objective opportunities provided by the content, methods, forms, materials, and material-spatial environment, are aimed at accomplishing educational objectives [9];
- A set of measures or objective possibilities influencing the pedagogical process [8].

In contrast, another group of scholars associates pedagogical conditions with the broader structure of the pedagogical system, viewing them as essential components [10-13]. They define pedagogical conditions as:

- Elements within the pedagogical system include both internal factors, which support personal growth within the educational process, and external factors, which assist in the procedural aspects of the system, all contributing to its effective operation and evolution [10];
- Core characteristics of the pedagogical system, including the content, organizational structures, educational tools, and the nature of the teacher-student interaction [11-13].

The third perspective on pedagogical conditions is held by researchers who view them as a systematic approach to identifying and understanding the fundamental laws of the educational process, ensuring that the results of educational research are

measurable and reproducible [14]. According to this group, the validity of these conditions must be tested within the framework of a research hypothesis [14].

After reviewing the various definitions of “pedagogical conditions,” several key ideas have emerged that clarify the essence of the term:

1. Conditions are an integral part of the overall pedagogical system, contributing to its holistic development.
2. Pedagogical conditions encompass both educational and material-environmental factors that can either facilitate or hinder the system's functioning.
3. The structure of pedagogical conditions is comprised of both internal elements, which foster the personal development of those involved in the educational process, and external elements, which influence the procedural aspects of the system.
4. The success and efficiency of the pedagogical system depend on the careful selection and application of appropriate pedagogical conditions.

The analysis indicates that pedagogical conditions, which encompass the range of possibilities within the material-spatial and educational environment, serve as a crucial component of the pedagogical system, influencing both its personal and procedural dimensions, and ensuring its effective operation and growth.

## Results and Discussion

In this research, we conceptualize pedagogical and organizational conditions as a collection of actions within the educational process that prepare future primary school teachers to foster a healthy culture among schoolchildren (**Figure 1**).

Thus, the presence of pedagogical conditions can be understood through the varied objectives and specific tasks associated with a given study, along with the distinctive methodological and theoretical approaches within the realm of social variability in professional training.

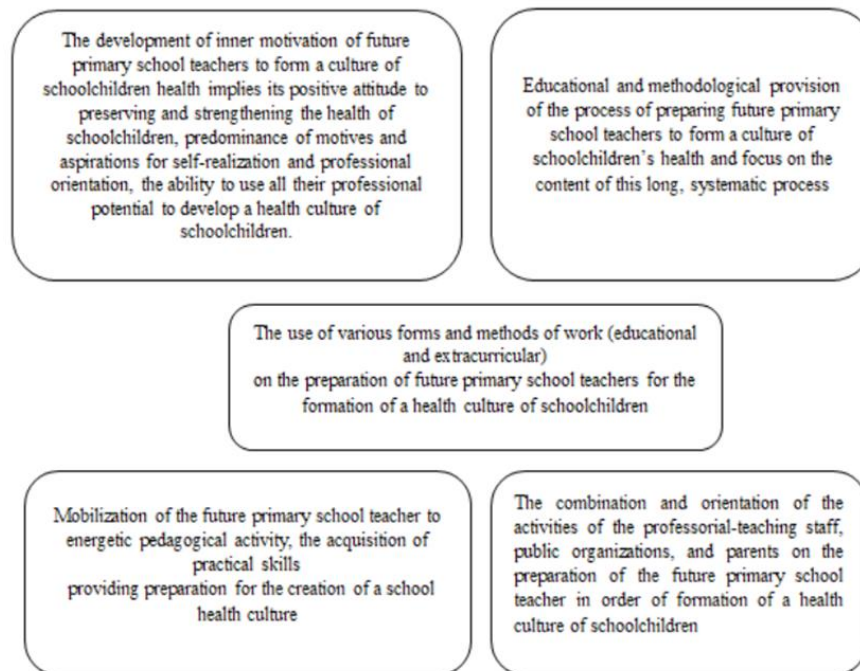
The first pedagogical and organizational condition focuses on enhancing the internal motivation of future primary school teachers in fostering a healthy culture for schoolchildren. This involves nurturing a positive attitude toward the preservation and promotion of schoolchildren’s health, prioritizing self-realization and professional development, and fully utilizing one’s professional capabilities to nurture a healthy culture.

The second condition pertains to the educational and methodological resources supporting the preparation of future primary school teachers to foster a healthy culture among schoolchildren. This is a long-term, ongoing process that needs constant development, self-improvement, and growth of abilities and is marked by increasing complexity in the subjects covered by the curriculum.

The findings from the study and a review of pedagogical and psychological literature suggest that the provision of educational materials plays a fundamental role in preparing future primary school teachers for instilling a healthy culture. This includes a variety of essential textbooks, instructional guides, methodical recommendations, and material resources. This condition is reflected in the mastery of intricate knowledge and skills, as well as in mastering the methods for organizing a healthy culture for schoolchildren, and the alignment of future teachers with the curriculum content, which gradually becomes more complex as the study progresses.

To define the content of training for future primary school teachers to develop a health culture, we analyzed model curricula currently used in educational practices.

The results of this analysis of official documentation revealed that the development of specific aspects of a health culture for future primary school teachers is incorporated into mandatory components, core subjects, and additional educational formats within the basic discipline cycle, as described in the model curriculum.



**Figure 1.** Framework for pedagogical and organizational conditions in training primary school teachers to promote a school health culture

The curriculum for the 5B010200 specialty – “Pedagogy and Methods of Primary Education” – includes a variety of subjects designed to prepare students for cultivating a healthy culture among schoolchildren. In the second year, students can choose from courses such as “Methods of Scientific and Educational Research,” “Training and Education of First-Graders,” “Impressive Reading Techniques in Elementary School,” “Classroom Teacher Methods,” and “Methods of Reading and Writing.” In the third year, the core subjects include “Methods of Teaching the Kazakh Language” and “Methods of Teaching Mathematics,” with elective options like “Methods of Teaching Fine Arts,” “Methods of Physical Education,” “Methods of Teaching World Knowledge,” and “Training and Education Features for Primary Students.” Upon analyzing the curriculum for the fourth year, including electives such as “Innovative Educational Process Technologies,” “Pedagogical Innovation,” and “Methods of Teaching Natural Sciences,” we identified the potential to integrate additional content on developing a health culture for schoolchildren into these courses.

The third key organizational and pedagogical condition emphasizes the application of a wide array of teaching strategies, both within and outside of the classroom, to prepare future primary school teachers to nurture a health-conscious culture in their students.

A theoretical review of the challenges related to preparing primary school teachers for the task of forming a health culture, coupled with feedback from seasoned educators in the field, indicates that the core of this preparation lies in the utilization of diverse teaching methods, both traditional and innovative. Despite this, the education system still falls short in prioritizing this issue. Therefore, it is imperative to enhance the implementation of both conventional and novel pedagogical strategies to better prepare teachers for fostering a healthy culture in schools.

The introduction of a three-level education and credit system, alongside increased involvement from both the state and society in educational reform, reflects a significant shift towards more innovative educational practices. The training of professionals who are globally competitive, continuously improving their expertise, and capable of conducting research, remains a central focus.

Teachers encounter numerous challenges in their roles, which require them to constantly reflect and innovate [15]. In this context, future primary school teachers must develop approaches that combine traditional methods with interactive techniques to effectively promote a healthy culture among schoolchildren.

The fourth pedagogical and organizational condition focuses on motivating future primary school teachers to engage proactively in their teaching roles and develop the necessary practical skills to foster a healthy culture for schoolchildren.

The application of this condition is built upon the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical experience. While experience serves as the foundation for learning, it is the theoretical knowledge that refines and enhances practical actions. The essence of this condition lies in equipping future primary school teachers with the understanding of how to structure and organize educational activities and teaching that contribute to fostering a healthy culture for schoolchildren, as well as empowering them to apply this knowledge effectively in practice.

One key aspect of this condition is the importance of engaging students in practical tasks that are crucial for instilling a healthy culture, as well as emphasizing the role of teaching practice. In addition to focusing on the content of this preparation, it is important to develop specialized elective courses that would provide future teachers with the necessary educational and methodological support in cultivating a healthy culture for schoolchildren.

As noted earlier, practical experience aligned with national educational standards plays a crucial role in preparing future primary school teachers for fostering a healthy culture in schools.

The 5th pedagogical and organizational condition calls for collaboration between teaching staff, community organizations, and parents to support the training of future primary school teachers in promoting a healthy culture among schoolchildren.

To achieve this, it is essential to organize parent meetings or individual consultations to understand the child's family dynamics, psychological well-being, school attitude, health issues, and specific medical concerns that may need attention. This information also extends to their physical activities and strategies for their smooth transition to school life.

Engaging parents through surveys allows teachers to gather critical information on factors that influence the establishment of a healthy culture for schoolchildren. Understanding the health and developmental status of each student helps teachers tailor their teaching strategies, creating a more effective environment for learning and enhancing teacher-student communication. This approach ultimately reduces any negative health impacts during the school process.

In the process of training future primary school teachers for the development of a healthy culture, an experimental study was conducted. This research relied on the theoretical model developed for preparing teachers to promote a student health culture, alongside the standard curriculum for the specialty 5B010200 – Pedagogy and Methods of Primary Education.

The study involved 16 control group students and 51 experimental group students (ET 1–17 students, ET 2–16 students, ET 3–18 students) from Karaganda State University, Taraz University of Innovation and Humanities, and Kazakh Women's National University. The experiment was conducted in three stages: diagnostic, formative, and final evaluation.

For instance, during the diagnostic phase, the focus was to assess the level of preparedness of second-year students at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. The aim was to evaluate their motivation and readiness to cultivate a healthy culture for schoolchildren. Interviews were conducted to assess their willingness and commitment to this responsibility.

The level of preparedness among future primary school teachers was assessed using a variety of research methods:

- Discussions with prospective primary school teachers;
- Administering a questionnaire focused on the creation of a school health culture;
- Observing the behaviors and thought processes of future educators;
- Analyzing written works, essays, and other academic outputs from the students.

To evaluate the initial preparedness of second-year students for the first indicator, they were asked to respond to a series of questions:

1. What qualities do you believe a modern primary school teacher should possess to effectively contribute to fostering a school health culture?
2. How do you perceive the role of school health culture in the development of students, and do you believe it should be prioritized?
3. In your view, is it important to establish a healthy culture for younger students?
4. Do you intend to apply methods for promoting the health culture of schoolchildren in your future teaching practices?
5. How do you perceive your teaching role concerning fostering a healthy culture for schoolchildren?

In response to the survey question about the qualities a contemporary primary school teacher should possess to meet the demands of promoting a school health culture, 38% of respondents highlighted the importance of continuous creativity, 37% emphasized proficiency in modern teaching methods, and 25% underscored the need for ongoing professional development. When asked about their opinion on the significance of building a school health culture, 48% of future teachers took a neutral stance, while 10% were in favor, and 42% regarded it as unimportant or ineffective. A notable 35% recognized the challenge it poses, with 23% agreeing on its importance. However, 42% suggested that only physical education teachers should take responsibility for fostering a healthy culture.

Regarding the question of whether they planned to apply health culture-building strategies in their future teaching, 49% of respondents acknowledged their intentions but admitted a lack of sufficient knowledge and skills, signaling the need for further development in this area.

The overwhelming majority, 93%, responded negatively to whether they viewed their pedagogical work as connected to promoting a health culture, while only 7% expressed a willingness to take on this responsibility.

Through analyzing the participation of future teachers in discussions and evaluating their perspectives, it became apparent that there was a lack of genuine engagement with the subject. Their responses were largely superficial and did not reflect a deep understanding of the importance of health culture in education. The answers lacked detailed reasoning, with many responses being predictable and not sufficiently reflective of the current state of health culture within the educational system.

## Conclusion

To improve the effectiveness of training future primary school teachers in fostering a school health culture, we recommend the following steps:

- Encourage the internal motivation of teachers to actively participate in promoting a school health culture;
- Enrich the curriculum by incorporating additional content into subjects like “Pedagogy,” “Theory and Methods of Teaching in Elementary School,” and “Methods of Teaching Mathematics” to prepare teachers for this task;
  - Enhance the preparation of students by adding supplemental materials to courses such as “Methods of Teaching World Knowledge” and “Physical Education” within the framework of the university’s educational program, as outlined in the model curriculum for 5B010300 – Pedagogy and Methods of Primary Education;
- Introduce the elective course “Pedagogical Foundations for Creating a School Health Culture” into the curricula of Kazakh Women’s National University, Taraz Innovation and Humanitarian University, and Karaganda State University;
- Apply a variety of teaching and extracurricular strategies during the 8th-semester practical training of fourth-year students to ensure they acquire the necessary skills to implement a school health culture;
- Mobilize future teachers to engage energetically in pedagogical activities that help them gain hands-on experience in promoting a school health culture;
- Align and coordinate the efforts of public organizations, teaching staff, medical institutions, and parents to provide comprehensive support for future teachers in cultivating a health-conscious school environment.

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