

# Innovative Socio-Cultural Project Development Realized by The Leaders of Folklore Groups to Preserve and Develop the National Folk Culture



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**Abstract:** *The article is devoted to innovative socio-cultural project development as a way of preserving and developing folk culture. In the modern world, far from traditional culture, folk rituals and art must penetrate life itself, as it was two hundred years ago, and accompany daily events and activities. Innovative socio-cultural project development contributes to this. The conceptual justification for the implementation of the laws and principles of innovation was carried out by M.M. Potashnik, L.S. Podymova and A.V. Khutorskoy. The essence of innovation was revealed by F. Bezrudnyi, V.S. Dudchenko and O.S. Sovetova. A special area of cultural innovation is the ethnocultural sphere; its features were considered in the works by N.G. Mikhailova, L.L. Khristiansen and A.S. Iareshko. The study reveals the features of project development in the field of culture and leisure, which consist in the fact that it is aimed at updating existing or developing and introducing new technologies significant for culture and priority artistic and spiritual values. The authors have systematized modern projects in the field of folk culture related to the creation of audiovisual products, organization of festivals and celebrations based on the materials of regional song folklore, artistic and creative recreation of folk clothes, jewelry, crafts and ceremonies, stage productions, as well as new forms of cultural activity, including quests, cities of folk crafts, virtual travel. The study may be useful to teachers and methodologists in developing educational programs in universities of culture and art, to social and cultural workers in organizing and conducting socio-cultural projects related to folk culture, to heads of ethnocultural centers and amateur and professional groups in conducting artistic and creative activities, as well as scientific researchers of modern sociocultural processes. The novelty of the study is associated with its conclusions. Based on the fact that the socio-cultural sphere has acquired both a non-commercial and commercial nature today, a head of a folklore collective must be an economically and legally competent specialist, whose activity correlates with the laws of cultural- and socio-historical, as well as modern, processes and experience of social communication and interaction. For*

*successful development of innovative thinking in leaders of folk groups and institutions in the cultural sphere, scientifically based information is needed, concerning both structural and procedural characteristics of innovative thinking and socio-psychological determinants of its development and implementation.*

**Keywords:** *innovation, culture, socio-cultural project development, the leader of the folklore group, folk art culture.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The understanding of modernity is fundamental to scientific discourse in Russia and abroad. There is much evidence that the modern historical period is characterized by the extinction of sacred values, as well as the destruction of traditional constituents. It is possible to describe modernity as an entire crisis in which traditional folk culture fully suffers. The revival and preservation of traditional values are increasing and play a magnificent role in maintaining conventional values. Society is actively resisting the destructive tendencies of the post-industrial paradigm of existence, as well as civilizational destruction and the transition to a new world outlook. Folklore groups and ensembles appear everywhere in Russia. Folk music festivals of various levels and scopes emerge. Russian experts organize a lot of scientific and practical conferences, ethnocultural expeditions, workshops, creative meetings and seminars [1].

There is a growing body of literature indicating that progressive cultural professionals clearly need to find new forms of folk education to preserve their cultural heritage [2]. And here the role of professional specialists in traditional art is extremely large and diverse, i.e. they are responsible for fixing (recording) works of authentic folk art, organizing accessible archives and storing them. They decode the materials, create the collections of folklore, studying them and popularizing them through modern channels. What is more important is that they oversee the final distribution of regional folklore in modern mass culture. As far as folk songs are concerned, cultural professionals curate the process of musical creative activity of folk groups, the development of various ensembles of diverse styles, statuses, and functions. They play an important communicative role in the process of transmitting folklore to new generations of listeners. Consequently, of much importance to the promotion of folklore culture are leaders' deep knowledge of music and necessary guidelines for its understanding.

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Cultural leaders are accountable for the understanding of natural existential conditions, the acquisition of regional folk-song traditions, and ultimately, the organizational and managerial work.

All these issues constitute the professional competence of a modern cultural expert, related to the key components that are necessary for a successful career.

In the history of the modernity development, innovations play a pivotal role that permeates all spheres and levels of social reality and human life activity, including people's spiritual sphere [3]. Today, the sphere of values, goals, and priorities of the social-spiritual development is becoming the focus of acute problems and intractable contradictions. And in this regard, the study of the psychological nature, mechanisms, and factors of innovative thinking of cultural leaders is very modern, acute and relevant [4].

For these purposes, it is necessary to develop an innovative approach to socio-cultural project development. The leaders of folklore groups may apply this approach to the preservation and development of folklore culture. Within the framework of the national and regional cultural policy, as well as a result of a public initiative, large-scale cultural and recreational projects are a distinctive part of Russian cultural landscape based on Russian folklore material. The implementation of innovative projects allows simultaneously not only to solve many problems of the economic development of a region, but also to raise the cultural prestige of the entire country. Innovative project development began in Russia in 2005 with the introduction of national projects in the field of education and culture. The basis of national projects was a system for analyzing contemporary problems of the Russian nation and a clear formulation of approaches which contribute to solving these problems.

Evidence suggests that innovative project development acts as a reflection of new technologies. It often results in a cultural product provided with substantial financial resources. However, the implementation of the product is not always successful [5]. A distinctive feature of the cultural sphere in Russia is the fact that even qualified specialists in socio-cultural project development are not able to predict how the project will be met by the public, how it can enter the established leisure practice [6].

Predictive and strategic analysis and plans, designing innovations and programming more effective activities are the keys to developing effective cultural products and services that meet the requirements of the time [4]. The dominant feature of Russia is the fact that the roles of organizers and sponsors of large-scale initiatives in the design of new forms of cultural activities and leisure traditions are mainly performed by state, regional authorities or business representatives.

## II. METHODS

The study of cultural innovative processes stems from the cultural approach formulated by F. Bezrudnyi [5], V. Dudchenko [3], E. Egorova [7], O. Sovetova [8], I. Tarasova [9], V.A. Zavadskii [10], T.G. Kiseleva [11], V.M. Chizhikov [12]. They developed a scientific understanding of the essence of socio-cultural activities, their laws, functions, and main principles. In the research works devoted to the

problems of socio-cultural activities, experts accumulated enough theoretical material for the analysis of socio-cultural innovation as a special phenomenon of modern culture. The innovation component emerges from the technology of cultural activities [13, 14], socio-cultural project design [2, 6], educational process [15, 16]. Of much importance is the area of cultural innovations in the sphere of ethnocultural field. Their essential features are described in the works of N.G. Mikhailova [17], A.S. Iareshko [18], et al.

Regarding the concept of "cultural sphere", its main constituents are as follows: the sphere of creation, preservation, the transmission of ideas, knowledge, ideas, and aesthetic values of society [13]. The sphere of culture can be represented as the scope of organizational activities creating material and nonmaterial benefits, to satisfy certain cultural, spiritual and leisure needs of an individual or group of people, regardless of their professional affiliation [14].

In Russia, the institutions of culture and art include museums, houses, palaces of culture, theaters, cinema organizations, media (television, radio, periodicals) [11]. As far as the essence of leisure is concerned, it embodies a social category reflecting the activities of an individual in his free time, providing recreation and his further spiritual development. The heads of cultural institutions that ensure the creation of conditions for the spiritual and moral development of society must meet several specific requirements arising from the characteristics of the cultural activity itself and its specific subjects. These requirements are as follows:

1. The cultural environment that is being formed in society is gradually transforming from the environment of consumption to the environment of involvement, collaboration, and human development. These processes make it necessary to establish and develop a special type of control, i.e. a facilitating management,

2. Management in the socio-cultural sphere stems from the specific organization and regulation of group activities that ensure the reproduction of the social and cultural life of people. Management also implies the development of strategic and current goals and objectives of socio-cultural development of the relevant region.

The methodological basis of this research emerges from the theory and methodology of organizing and implementing group creative activities of a folklore singing ensemble. Many of the conclusions stem from the practice of preserving and enhancing the national artistic heritage, the revival of the country's regional song traditions. The concept of the study is developed in support of the findings and achievements of modern scientists, highlighting the mechanisms and tools for the formation of professional competence of managerial personnel in the field of culture and art. The current study indicates the principles and results of modern socio-cultural and ethnographic activities of groups and institutions of folk-art culture. We also outline the management theory and methodology of organizing the activities of folklore ensembles and choirs. The study generalizes the socio-cultural changes in modern society related to new professional goals and objectives of folk-art culture experts [17].

The methods of research are the analysis of scientific literature in the field of folklore, cultural studies, psychology, sociology, teaching theory, and ethnopedology.

The focus of the authors' attention is directed at the socio-cultural activities, as well as the synthesis of modern experiences in organizing and managing the creative activities of folklore groups.

### III. RESULTS

The concepts of culture and society are fundamental to the entire understanding of human life. The sphere of culture is a complex social and economic system of society, connected with other systems by a multitude of explicit and implicit links. These links include cultural activities in the socio-political and financial life of the country. In the professional-managerial and scientific-theoretical terms, culture appears as a kind of space entering the spiritual, social, and economic spheres. There are two main ways of using the concept of culture, i.e. a value approach and a scientific descriptive approach [19].

The implementation of various socio-cultural projects emerges from the need to revive, preserve and enhance the traditions of folk-art culture. One of the most common ways to implement socio-cultural projects is the organization of festivals. Through festivals, the organizers involve different segments of the population into creative work. The study indicates that they primarily attract children and young people because they develop cultural exchanges among the festival participants, creating a new wave of positive emotions from folk art traditions and true values, drawing the attention of young people to art, identifying talented young people and the impact of the younger generation on the development of culture [8].

With the help of festivals, the leaders of folklore groups receive a universal means for the promotion and development of various genres of folk art. "All the aesthetic categories – beautiful, tragic, ugly, scary, funny, sublime, etc. – are enclosed in the musical-poetic content of folk songs and are embodied in the sonic qualities of their performance" [1]. All this can be presented at folklore festivals, which are a synthetic type of public events. They may include concert performances of vocal, instrumental, choreographic, decorative and applied art. The program of festivals may function as workshops, seminars, round tables, meetings, contests, etc. Holding festival events helps solve the problems of leisure and employment of many children and adolescents, protecting them from the negative impact of the street environment and criminals [15]. Evidence suggests that in Russia, mass festivals have long won universal love and turned into truly folk festivals. Festivals of folk art on the Day of Russia, the Day of National Unity, on Russian Christmas, which are specially designed to preserve and popularize folk art, have become traditional. Folk and professional choirs, folklore ensembles and instrumental groups, whose repertoire includes works of various genres of folklore, follow the manner of performance of their region and participate in folk competitions. This paper indicates that periodic festivals are one of the most popular and effective varieties of cultural events in Russia. The network of international festivals, e.g. "Russian Carnival" in London,

plays an important integrated role as a prestigious field for international artistic exchange, demonstrating the best achievements of national cultures [18]. The festival can function both as a one-time and as a systematically repeated cultural event. Evidence suggests that the practice of performing arts festivals as one-time actions in recent years is not widespread in Europe.

Regarding the emotional aspect of festivals, it is important to note that joy and creative freedom make festivals more accessible to various groups of audiences than traditional concerts in cultural institutions. Most of the Russian population seldom attend cultural events in opera and concert philharmonic halls. Many young people feel alien and vulnerable in the "temple of culture", and, therefore, they do not share the idea of going to an opera and philharmonic house. However, the situation changes drastically when it comes to widely publicized cultural events that are attractive to all groups of the population. The research indicates that there are representatives of different social groups among the visitors to festivals rather than regular concerts. Alternatively, for cultural organizations, including folklore groups, such "going out to the people" serves as a pretext for new creative solutions, experiments, which creative teams do not dare to undertake under normal conditions.

This study provides new insights into project development technologies. Project development in the field of culture and leisure is characterized by the fact that it is aimed at updating existing technologies or at developing and introducing new technologies that are significant for culture. They generate necessary links, prioritize artistic and spiritual values [9]. The goals, objectives, and the content of projects in different types of leisure activities have their own characteristics related to the production of a service or cultural product. The leaders of folk groups develop projects related to the field of folk-art culture which are as follows:

- the design of audiovisual products (commercials, feature films and documentaries, screensavers);
- holding festivals, competitions, and celebrations contextualizing regional song folklore;
- the artistic and creative reconstruction of folk clothes, ornaments, folk crafts, and rituals;
- stage productions (theater, stage, show);
- the production of printing products (books, notes, ethnographic reference books, magazines);
- restoration (protection of cultural heritage);
- experimental projects in new areas of cultural activities (quests, cities of folk crafts, a virtual journey into the past of Russia).

This study has indicated that the technological process of innovative design includes the following stages: the analysis of a problem situation, the development of goals, tasks for its resolution, the design and introduction of new forms of leisure, and other activities [12]. When creating a project, special attention should be paid to combining managerial, organizational, strategic, and technical aspects. It is necessary to harmonize them with the components of the artistic, creative, spiritual and moral plan. In cultural project development,

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it is important to synchronize the methods of individual creativity (executed by scriptwriters, composers, chief directors) with artistic performances (implemented by artists, singers, musicians), whose activities create a new cultural and leisure product.

### IV. DISCUSSION

The current study found that the project approach in the field of socio-cultural activities highlights the key issues in the field of culture. Projects indicate areas of long-term activities [3]. At the same time, of much importance is the task to simultaneously realize projects and to modernize the socio-cultural sphere itself. Innovative design helps businesses rely on promising cultural projects, constructive ideas, bright personalities, dynamic public organizations. All these constituents stem from the analysis of the demand of various social groups, including low-income and socially unprotected strata [15]. The second half of the 20th century exacerbated the problems of understanding authentic folklore in art and in a musical creative context. According to Khristiansen, "Humanity does not know one single "best", "most noble" manner of singing. The manner of singing and the phonetics of the language are organically linked as the elements of folk musical speech. The latter emerged and develops in a complex process of folk music and poetry, reflecting the national character of the masses, their thoughts, and tastes. The basic norms of musical speech arising in folk art acquire the power and significance of its objective laws. Among these laws is the choice of the people's singing manner" [1]. The progressive cultural figures became aware of the need to find new forms of folk education for people and, most importantly, preserve their cultural heritage. This trend was reflected in the emergence and development of folk education system of music schools. This idea has been ripening for many decades in the minds of progressive cultural figures [16]. Evidence suggests that in a crisis, cultural institutions are in the process of mastering various humanitarian technologies and, above all, their strategic approaches. The strategic activities of traditional cultural institutions include project activities. This is a fundamentally new approach for Russia. It combines operational activities which include ongoing and repeating processes. Consequently, the method of calendar-thematic planning no longer meets the requirements of today's time, the needs of the audience. Project activities can serve to increase work efficiency, since they are not possible without studying the audience's needs, their distinctive characteristics, working for the result. The scope of the activities may include the organization of an event, building a creative team, a new activity or a methodological center.

As far as the role of new methodological cultural centers in Russia is concerned, it is necessary to mention that they are developing regional innovative projects to generate a creative experimental laboratory for the reconstruction of forms and activities contextualizing the traditional cultural material of Russia. The project targets the reviving of regional traditions, as well as partially lost artistic crafts (weaving, pottery, weaving, artistic processing of leather and fabrics), genres and types of folk music (singing, playing instruments, family and calendar rituals and holidays), as well as organizing the

training of these types of crafts and arts. The methodical centers organize social and cultural events and activities, prepare projects for the Russian Foundation for Basic Research grant competition, hold contests, competitions, festivals and city holidays based on the musical material of regional folk music.

Work in a project mode is a good way to organize the work of an institution, allowing you to achieve a targeted goal directly, to realize the project goal without extra resources. The criteria for choosing a strategy are competitiveness, efficiency, focus on human capital, creative freedom. Within the project approach, the activities of a team or institution are divided into relatively independent units, each of which has its own goals, its own team, and material support or common resources. The project allows the institution to be more flexible, competitive in changing socio-cultural conditions.

Initially, the organizers identify the direction of an activity and then develop the projects and follow their strategies. The direction is the key idea, and the project is a plan of actual steps. Since there are many variants of the embodiment of an idea, a wide variety of projects can be carried out within the framework of the direction being implemented. In Russia, the implementation of projects in the sphere of culture and leisure is carried out by the leaders of folklore groups, ethnocultural centers, and institutions of folk-art culture. They carry out work devoted to three types of socio-cultural activities: holding festivals and celebrations with the aim of transferring the folk art traditions to new generations, the preservation, and support of cultural and creative heritage of different regions of Russia; information and research activities; educational and training activities. The programs of institutions and groups are aimed at involving young people in activities that contribute to the formation of national cultural values, the development of folk traditions and the transfer of socio-historical experience to the new generation. They also target training, development, and education based on regional song folklore, mastering the skills of preserving and developing musical folklore traditions in the modern sociocultural environment, developing the new forms of transmission of artistic and creative heritage. Regarding the factors influencing the development of creativity in Russian society, it is important to describe the innovation potential. G.P. Shchedrovitskii, for example, notes that mental activities are closely connected with creative approaches which help fulfill such cultural tasks as to organize activity games, innovative design seminars, pieces of trainings, etc. [20]. Innovation activities of leaders of cultural institutions or creative teams require special attention to the program-project approach. Its subject is the systems of practical activities, which in turn can be identified, described and transformed. It must include the process of creative thinking and practical implementation of the issues related to the subject of transformations. At present, experts develop the technologies of "cultivation" of a new innovation-project orientation of a cultural leader who performs as a key element of managed social development [20].

## V. CONCLUSION

The most obvious finding to emerge from the study is the idea that for the implementation of innovative activities, the leader of a folklore team needs an appropriate management structure. According to the cultural policy of the state, the goals of managing the sphere of folk art are as follows: the preservation, creation and distribution of the ideas, knowledge, aesthetic and artistic values of folk art, as well as meeting the needs for social, cultural, and leisure-time services based on folklore material. The result of the leader's activity is a certain artistic and creative product or service that satisfies spiritual needs while using the free time of people [16].

Professional-managerial culture of a cultural leader emerges from the variable combination of two types of knowledge which are as follows [12]:

operational knowledge, which is focused on the implementation of specific actions and determines the professional outlook of the manager;

meta-knowledge associated with the mechanisms and tools of management activity, its structure, rapid professional adaptation, the productivity of the implementation of abilities.

Another important finding is the fact that the professional competence of the leader of the folklore group is determined by its orientation towards cultural reproduction and cultural design activities. These activities result from the leader's collaboration with people, his abilities for public performances, improvisation, intellectual and creative self-expression. The management of communities or institutions of the cultural sphere is the essence of harmonious activity, which is based on spiritual principles, personality, human resources. All these constituents operate as a set of organizational relationships outlined by a certain socio-cultural activity.

Proceeding from the fact that the sociocultural sphere today works both as the noncommercial and commercial products, the leader of the folklore group must be an economically and legally competent expert, whose activities are measured with the cultural, social, historical and present-day laws. A critical role belongs to his effective social communication and interactions. Considering that the key figures of the cultural production process are people of creative labor, the process of regulating and coordinating their activities should be based on motivational and stimulating factors. In order to keep the best ideas and their developers in the institution of culture, it is necessary to create conditions for the development of the entrepreneurial spirit, enriched with the climate of innovation. The study has outlined that the leaders of folklore groups and cultural institutions need scientifically based information for their successful development. The scientific information must describe the structural and procedural characteristics of innovative thinking and the socio-psychological determinants of creative development and actualization.

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