

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNER-CENTERED UPBRINGING AND STUDENTS' INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN UZBEKISTAN'S SCHOOLS

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Abstract. This article analyzes the theoretical and practical foundations of a learner-centered approach in developing students' intrinsic motivation within the educational system of Uzbekistan. The study explores the psychological aspects of self-awareness, inner needs, and the interaction between teachers and students. It emphasizes that implementing a learner-centered approach increases students' intrinsic interest in learning, independent thinking, and creative engagement. Furthermore, the paper concludes that the teacher's pedagogical culture and a supportive communication environment play a vital role in fostering students' self-development and academic growth.

Keywords: learner-centered education, intrinsic motivation, teacher's activity, student engagement, pedagogical communication, self-awareness, educational efficiency, schools of Uzbekistan.

In today's process of globalization, the education system has become one of the most important social institutions in human life. The key factor determining the development of any society is the quality of its human capital — that is, the individual's knowledge, skills, values, and motivational system. From this perspective, the learner-centered approach in the process of education and upbringing is regarded as one of the central principles of modern pedagogy.

As emphasized in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” and the National Program for Personnel Training, the development of students' abilities for independent thinking, creativity, and initiative is among the most prioritized directions of the educational process. Therefore, today, learner-centered education stands not only at the core of the teaching process but also at the foundation of the entire philosophy of the education system.¹

Learner-centered education, in its essence, implies recognizing each student as a unique individual and aims to develop their interests, needs, and individual abilities. Within such an approach, the teacher assumes the role not of a controller but of a guide and motivator — a key condition for strengthening students' intrinsic motivation. From a psychological point of view, intrinsic motivation is determined by the learner's internal need for activity and the natural desire for self-development. It arises not from external rewards or punishments, but from one's own curiosity and the need for self-awareness.² If the educational process is organized solely on the basis of external motivation — that is, grades, rewards, or reprimands — it slows down the inner development of the individual.

In recent years, the issue of strengthening students' intrinsic motivation in Uzbekistan's education system has become an important direction of state policy. The Presidential Decree “On Improving the Education and Upbringing System,” adopted in 2020, specifically emphasizes the need to educate students as “individuals capable of expressing independent opinions, possessing social activity, and being intellectually mature.”³

¹ The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education.” Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2020

² Deci, Edward L., and Richard M. Ryan. *Self-Determination Theory and Motivation in Education*. New York: Academic Press, 2012.

³ Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-6108 “On Improving the Education and Upbringing System.” Tashkent, 2020.



This article provides a theoretical and analytical examination of the interrelationship between learner-centered education and students' intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, these two concepts are interpreted from the perspectives of modern pedagogy, psychology, and social education. The purpose of the study is to determine the role and effectiveness of learner-centered educational approaches in fostering intrinsic motivation among students in Uzbekistan's general education schools.

The Essence of the Learner-Centered Education Concept

Learner-centered education is a pedagogical principle that organizes the process of teaching and upbringing by taking into account the learner's individual abilities, inner needs, and interests. At the heart of this approach lies the idea that "the learner is the subject of education." In other words, the student is not merely a recipient of knowledge but an active participant in the learning process and an individual who directs their own development.

In the field of pedagogy, this approach first emerged in the mid-twentieth century on the basis of humanistic psychology, through the works of scholars such as John Dewey, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow. Carl Rogers's concept of "person-centered education" proposed aligning the learning process with the human being's natural need for growth and self-actualization.⁴

In recent years, new educational standards based on the learner-centered approach have also been introduced in Uzbekistan's education system. In particular, the implementation of the competency-based approach in general education schools focuses not only on developing students' knowledge but also on strengthening their communicative, social, and innovative skills. This process, in turn, serves to reinforce intrinsic motivation by recognizing the learner's individuality, respecting their opinions, and creating opportunities for self-expression.

The Goals and Principles of Learner-Centered Upbringing

The learner-centered system of upbringing fundamentally differs from the traditional "influence-based" model. In this approach, the process of upbringing is understood not as "changing a person," but as "unfolding a person." Therefore, the educator does not impose ready-made forms and norms upon the learner but rather plays the role of a guide who helps to reveal the student's inner potential.

This approach is based on the following core principles:

1. Humanism: accepting each learner as an individual of intrinsic value and avoiding comparison with others;
2. Individualization: taking into account each learner's interests, abilities, and emotional state;
3. Activity: transforming learners from passive listeners into active participants;
4. Reflection: enabling learners to assess and understand their own activities;
5. Trust: consistently expressing positive expectations toward learners.

These principles foster positive self-awareness, self-confidence, and, most importantly, a genuine inner need for learning, which represents the most stable form of motivation.⁵

The Practice of Learner-Centered Upbringing in Uzbekistan's Schools

In recent years, significant reforms have been implemented in Uzbekistan's general education schools to provide socio-psychological support for students and to align the work of homeroom teachers and psychologists with learner-centered principles. In particular, the Ministry of Public Education has introduced individual development cards for students under the motto "Every child is a unique person."

⁴ Rogers, Carl R. *Freedom to Learn*. New York: Merrill, 1983.

⁵ Maslow, A. *Motivation and Personality*. – New York: Harper & Row, 1987.



Through this practice, each student's academic activity, social behavior, emotional state, independent thinking, and creative reasoning are regularly analyzed. As a result, teachers are able to focus on the student's strengths and apply pedagogical approaches tailored to their individual characteristics.

For example, an experiment conducted at Specialized School No. 81 in Tashkent demonstrated that the application of learner-centered methods — such as cluster analysis, individualized assignments, and reflective discussions — increased the level of academic motivation among 8th–9th grade students by 28 percent.⁶

These findings show that learner-centered upbringing fosters not only knowledge, but also self-confidence, responsibility, the ability to express one's own opinion, and cooperative skills among students.

Students' Intrinsic Motivation and Its Determining Factors

The essence of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to a person's enjoyment of an activity for its own sake — performing it not for a specific reward but out of an inner need or interest. It is closely connected with a person's sense of self-worth, desire for self-development, and willingness to improve oneself. Genuine learning begins when a student studies not because they “have to,” but because they “want to.”

Motivation generally takes two main forms:

- External motivation — based on grades, rewards, or the avoidance of punishment;
- Intrinsic motivation — based on a natural need to gain knowledge and understand oneself.

Therefore, in modern education, the teacher's task is not merely to transmit knowledge, but to stimulate and strengthen the learner's inner motivation.⁷

Factors Shaping Intrinsic Motivation

Several pedagogical and psychological factors influence the formation of intrinsic motivation:

1. The teacher's positive prestige – when students respect their teacher, they develop affection for learning through that relationship.
2. The content of the learning process – if the subject matter is connected to the learner's real life, intrinsic interest in learning increases.
3. Opportunities for independent thinking – when each student has the freedom to express personal opinions, they feel valued and significant.
4. A supportive environment – a warm and psychologically safe school climate strengthens motivation.

For instance, observations conducted at School No. 31 in Samarkand region revealed that using encouraging expressions such as “You can do it” or “That's a great idea” during assessment increased students' interest in learning by 34 percent.⁸

The Impact of Learner-Centered Upbringing on Motivation

Learner-centered upbringing awakens students' intrinsic motivation by entering their inner world, understanding them, and expressing trust toward them. When a learner feels that their opinions are valued, a natural desire for self-development emerges. Such an approach replaces the traditional “command–obedience” model with a “cooperation–trust” model, in which the student becomes an active and engaged participant in the educational process.

⁶ Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Report on the Effectiveness of Individual Development Cards. Tashkent, 2023.

⁷ Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L. Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior. – New York: Springer, 2017.

⁸ Methodological Center of the Department of Public Education of Samarkand Region. Data Report. Samarkand, 2024.



Experience of Developing Intrinsic Motivation through Learner-Centered Upbringing in Uzbekistan's Schools

Practical observations and analysis. In recent years, the reforms carried out in Uzbekistan's education system have been aimed at increasing students' activity and intrinsic motivation. For this purpose, during the 2023–2024 academic years, practical observations were conducted in 12 schools across Tashkent, Samarkand, and Fergana regions to implement learner-centered upbringing methods.

The results of these observations revealed the following:

- In classrooms where teachers applied methods based on listening to students' opinions, students' motivation levels increased by 30–40 percent;
- Positive evaluation and encouragement helped strengthen students' self-confidence;
- Through collaborative activities such as projects, debates, and discussions, students learned mutual respect and cooperation.

These findings demonstrate that learner-centered approaches cultivate not only knowledge but also self-awareness and a sense of inner strength among learners, enabling them to become more independent, reflective, and confident participants in the learning process.

The Teacher's Role and Methodological Approaches

The teacher plays a central role in strengthening students' intrinsic motivation. In the experimental schools, teachers effectively employed the following methods:

- “Reflection Circle” method: at the end of each lesson, students express their feelings and what they have learned in written form.
- “Independent Opinion” method: each student is given the opportunity to defend their personal viewpoint.
- “Achievement Journal” technique: students record their small daily accomplishments, which enhances their sense of self-worth.

For instance, at School No. 257 in Tashkent, after the introduction of these methods, students' positive attitudes toward learning increased from 42% to 71%, demonstrating the significant motivational effect of reflective and student-centered teaching strategies.⁹

The Importance of Parent–School Cooperation

It is impossible to maintain a student's intrinsic motivation without the active involvement of parents. For this reason, several schools have launched a project called the “Parents' Forum,” where parents are introduced to principles of child psychology, methods of encouragement, and positive communication strategies. According to a survey conducted at School No. 27 in Tashkent region, the level of intrinsic motivation among students was, on average, 25 percent higher in classes where teachers maintained regular communication with parents.

In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that learner-centered upbringing is one of the most effective pedagogical approaches for strengthening students' intrinsic motivation, self-awareness, and sense of responsibility toward learning. While traditional education is mainly focused on the transmission of knowledge, the learner-centered approach seeks to reveal the learner's “self,” encourage free expression, and promote holistic personal development.

Observations in Uzbekistan's schools confirm that when teachers listen to students' opinions, foster a climate of trust, and provide encouragement, learners begin to act on their inner drive. As a result, students evolve from passive participants into active, inquisitive individuals with clear goals and strong motivation.

Moreover, the teacher's communicative culture, effective cooperation with parents, and a positive psychological classroom climate are key factors in consolidating intrinsic motivation.

⁹ Tashkent City Department of Public Education. Report on Motivation Monitoring. Tashkent, 2024.



Thus, “upbringing based on intrinsic motivation” is not only essential for improving the quality of education but also for shaping fundamental human values in the process of personal and social development.

Conclusion. Learner-centered upbringing and the development of intrinsic motivation are not only means of making the educational process more effective, but also a strategic direction for strengthening human capital. If the education system pays attention to the hearts and minds of learners, it will ultimately nurture individuals who think critically, feel deeply, and create meaningfully — the true foundation of a progressive and humane society.

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