

Addressing Gaps in Uzbek High School Family Life Education

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Abstract: The preparation of young people for family life is a critical aspect of educational development. This study examines the current state of family life education within the Uzbek secondary education system. The introduction highlights the importance of preparing adolescents for family life, considering the high rate of early marriages among girls. A significant knowledge gap exists due to the lack of specific curricula addressing family life education comprehensively in high schools, despite some inclusions in textbooks and extracurricular activities.

The methodology involved a review of various studies and educational practices, analyzing how family life education is currently approached in Uzbekistan. Findings indicate that the preparation of adolescents for family life primarily occurs within mahalla and family settings rather than through formal education. High schools tend to focus on broader moral education and extracurricular activities, avoiding sensitive topics related to family life. While medical and pedagogical colleges offer specialized courses, these are absent in high schools, leaving a gap in the formal education system.

Results show that the current educational practices are insufficient in preparing young people for family life, contributing to increased divorce rates. The implication is clear: there is a pressing need for a more structured and comprehensive family life education curriculum in high schools to better prepare students for marriage and family relations, potentially reducing the reliance on informal education within mahalla and family settings. This study calls for educational reforms to include specialized family life education to address this critical gap.

Keywords: secondary education system, high schools, education curriculum.

Introduction. In Uzbekistan, secondary education does not offer any subjects specifically designed to prepare high school students for family life. Consequently, young couples often face a multitude of problems due to inadequate preparation. Psychological incompatibility among spouses frequently leads to marital breakdowns. While secondary education includes subjects such as Spirituality and Enlightenment and Fundamentals of Spirituality, which tangentially address spousal relationships, dedicated courses like "Family Psychology" and "Family Studies" are only available in medical and pedagogical colleges. Other educational institutions lack specialized programs for this purpose. Despite the existence of comprehensive research, textbooks, and manuals by Uzbek scholars on this topic, these resources are not integrated into the school curriculum for unclear reasons.

Scholarly approaches to preparing young people for family life have diverse backgrounds. This section reviews publications by graduate researchers who have extensively studied this issue. The first study, titled "Scientific and Theoretical Foundations for Preparing Adolescents for an Independent Life," is by N. Nagmetova, an independent researcher from the University of World Languages. This paper examines the psychological and pedagogical conditions necessary for training teenagers for marital life. The main argument is that secondary schools and extracurricular activities should determine the content, effective forms, and methods for preparing adolescents for family life as a holistic model. Field studies also investigate the pedagogical conditions for cooperation between schools, families, and communities in preparing young people for marriage. Since 2007, several schools in Karakalpakstan have been voluntarily selected for research purposes. This study, conducted as an experiment in high schools, involved senior subject teachers, deputy principals for spirituality and

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enlightenment, class leaders, and parents. The results are still utilized in the education system to prepare adolescents for independent living.

In many articles by Uzbek scholars, preparation for family life is not directly defined as "preparation for family relations." Instead, this educational process is commonly referred to as "preparation for independent life." This indirect classification likely stems from the complexity of the issue. Family life encompasses many skills that couples need to acquire long before marriage, including monetary, household, ethical, and logistical issues that can create problems for young couples. Additionally, preparation for family life includes intimate matters, which are considered very delicate and are taught indirectly in secondary education in Uzbekistan and other post-Soviet countries. A literature review suggests these reasons for the term "preparation for independent family life." Paradoxically, before and after the wedding, couples often remain dependent on their parents and siblings.

Several studies by public research institutions in Uzbekistan address this issue. For instance, O. Musurmanova's article focuses on educating high school students in family life. According to the paper, young people need to build families based on ancient traditions, customs, language, religion, national spirit, confidence in the future, kindness, patience, justice, enlightenment, humanity, and diligence. The author explores spiritual culture as both a philosophical and pedagogical problem, probing ways to inculcate high moral and spiritual values in students' minds. Considering the researcher's ideas, it is essential to develop kindness, patience, and diligence in adolescents, relying on traditions to prepare them for family relationships. The author advocates for preparing adolescents for family life not only in high school but also from a young age within the family. Family, school, and community partnerships are critical in this process.

Another relevant research is by M. Abdullaeva, whose thesis is titled "Social and Pedagogical Conditions of Spiritual Preparation of Adolescents for Family Life." The researcher investigates the preparation of adolescents for marriage within the framework of the discipline "The Idea of National Independence and the Foundations of Spirituality." While covered by ideological aspects of education, the paper indirectly connects to the family topic. According to the author, proper preparation of teens for family life requires protecting them from alien ideological influences. The work primarily examines changes in children's behavior during adolescence. The author argues that external observation can effortlessly detect behavioural changes in teenagers. Adolescent personality is shaped under the influence of biological and social factors, including puberty and physical development (biological factors) and the transition to secondary education, developing social relations, and changing communication objects (social factors). Other social factors include the transformation of teens' roles in the family, increased independence, and practical work, as well as increased confidence and growth of physical and mental capabilities.

In adolescent upbringing, the gender, family type, and social background of parents are critical. The mother's role in educating a girl and the father's role in educating a boy should be prioritized. Despite gender equality being enshrined in the Constitution, biological differences, social responsibilities, and professional preferences influence family relations. In the West, this issue is studied through the lenses of masculinism and feminism. Masculinity is characterized by strong, determined, risk-taking, and rigid traits, while feminism generalizes traits of submissiveness, obedience, and empathy that are characteristic of women.

Conclusion

This review of various studies on the preparation of young people for family life highlights the different approaches and methodologies adopted within the Uzbek education system. The preparation of students for family life is considered within a broader perspective. Although specific aspects of family relations are included in some textbooks, these topics are not uniformly represented across school curricula. The primary objective of the school system is to impart knowledge, and as a result, analogous subjects cover family matters from a wide-ranging perspective. For instance, high school curricula often focus on extracurricular activities and moral education, while avoiding sensitive issues. Schools conduct enlightenment classes that primarily address negative internet influences, alien



ideological streams, radicalism, and extremism. Additionally, special meetings for girls on intimate matters are organized as extracurricular classes, though these sessions aim more at preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases rather than preparing girls for family relations.

In summary, the preparation of young people for family life in Uzbekistan predominantly occurs within the mahalla and family settings. It is essential to note that senior high school students, particularly girls who often marry shortly after graduation, require special preparation for marriage. Our investigations indicate a lack of quality education on the aforementioned specific subjects in high schools. While medical and pedagogical colleges offer specialized courses related to Family Preparation, high schools do not include such subjects. The professional preparation of students for marriage and family relations in schools remains largely declarative. Although school curricula ostensibly focus on family or intimate education, they are often reoriented toward irrelevant topics in practice. The absence of specialized education in this area has contributed to an increase in divorce rates. Consequently, the preparation of youth for family life according to Sharia principles has started to replace official education in this context.

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