



THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DEPENDENCE ON THE TEACHER AT HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY ESTABLISHMENTS

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Abstract

This research focuses on evaluating student autonomy and the teacher-student relationship in Uzbekistan. Understanding students' dependency on teachers is essential for improving the effectiveness of lesson planning and fostering independent learning. The study aims to clarify the level of student dependency and provide a structured approach to gradually developing learner independence.

While similar studies have been conducted by scholars such as Zimmerman, B. J., and Quin, D., there has been limited research in Uzbekistan on this topic. Many students struggle with becoming independent learners when transitioning to university, highlighting the need for a structured approach to autonomy development.

While scholars like B. Zimmerman and D. Quin have explored self-regulated learning and autonomy in Western contexts, there appears to be limited localized research on how Uzbek students adapt to the demands of independent learning at the university level.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze student autonomy and propose effective classroom strategies that support students in adapting to independent learning. To achieve this, the research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys and interviews. The findings will contribute to creating a more student-centered educational environment that gradually reduces reliance on teachers while enhancing self-regulated learning skills.

Keywords: Student autonomy, self-regulation, time-management, IELTS, TESOL, TKT.



Introduction

It is a well-known fact that the behavior of the students, as well as their attitude towards their teacher vary in different age groups. Identifying the changing autonomy of students assist the teachers to organize the lessons more effectively. It also allows teachers to understand more about the psychology of their target students.

Generally, transition from teacher dependence to independent learning is considered to be a hard process. Some of the commonest problems they face during this transition are time-management issues, lack of self-discipline, reduced teacher availability, social and emotional challenges. Previous studies have been done by several scholars on this field, but so far little has been done about this topic among Uzbek teachers and students. In Uzbekistan, most of the time freshmen who started their education after coming from complete teacher dependence seem to fail in academic progress.

This research primarily aims to compare the level of teacher dependence among high school and University students and, also, to identify the factors which influences students' dependence on teachers in both educational settings, along with possible strategies to overcome the challenges they face during the transition from high school to university. This research can positively affect the educational settings by helping the educators and institutions support students in becoming more independent learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the most important factors influencing students' academic success and teachers' performance is students' dependence on their teachers. In high schools, students rely heavily on teachers for guided instructions, encouragement and feedback. However, at the university level, they must transition into independent learners, eventually becoming fully self-directed. This shift can be challenging, as many students struggle with the sudden reduction in direct teacher support. "Students who rely too heavily on their teachers often struggle with independent learning, leading to difficulties in transitioning to higher education" (Koomen, Verschueren, & Pianta, 2020, p. 15). As in school settings, much of the responsibility falls on teachers, including time management, delivering explanations, providing instructions, classroom management, and grading.



This literature review examines the concept of teacher dependence and student autonomy, exploring how teacher-student relationships shape learning experiences at different educational levels. It also discusses the challenges students face when transitioning from high school to university and the strategies that can support their academic independence. By analyzing existing research, this review highlights key factors influencing student reliance on teachers and suggests ways to foster greater self-directed learning.

Evaluating the teacher dependency level means studying the student autonomy. If the teacher fosters the science of student autonomy, it means that he or she know how to give the right guidance on the right time. Fostering student autonomy requires teachers to gradually reduce direct supervision and encourage self-directed learning strategies (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 68). Once the student enters the university, they step on to the real adult life and self-regulation. In University education mastering the independent learning is of utmost importance, as most universities aim to help individuals continue learning beyond formal education. Moreover, at university by engaging the students in conducting research and different projects, they aim to foster the critical thinking skills and by this way preparing the students for their future career.

In Uzbekistan, tutoring classes are highly popular among high school students, as they seek direct guidance from expert teachers in their respective fields. Even after entering university, many students continue to rely on additional instruction to obtain qualification certificates, largely due to their limited time management and self-regulation skills. For instance, students at English language faculties, despite majoring in the subject, often enroll in language courses to prepare for internationally recognized certifications such as IELTS, TESOL, and TKT. This highlights the ongoing dependence on structured guidance even at the higher education level.

METHODS

In this study, a mixed research method was employed to determine the dependency levels of students studying in both schools and higher education institutions. Mixed research refers to the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis.



As part of the study, interviews and surveys were conducted with a selected group of students. The interview method was used to obtain in-depth insights into students' experiences, thoughts, and perceptions (qualitative approach). Meanwhile, the survey method was employed to collect quantifiable data, enabling statistical analysis and generalization of findings (quantitative approach). By integrating both methods, this research ensures a more holistic understanding of students' dependency levels, capturing both numerical data and detailed personal perspectives.

In this research study, a total of 100 high school and university students participated in the survey. It is important to note that due to time constraints, we were only able to include 50 ninth graders from high school and 50 senior year university students from the English language faculty of NSU. Additionally, in order to respect the preferences of many participants, both the survey and interviews were conducted anonymously to ensure their comfort and encourage more honest responses.

For the survey, participants were asked to respond using the Likert-scale method, which allowed for the measurement of their attitudes, perceptions, and dependency levels in a structured and quantifiable manner. Furthermore, in addition to the survey, interviews were conducted with 20 randomly selected university students from the survey participants. These interviews aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives regarding the research topic.

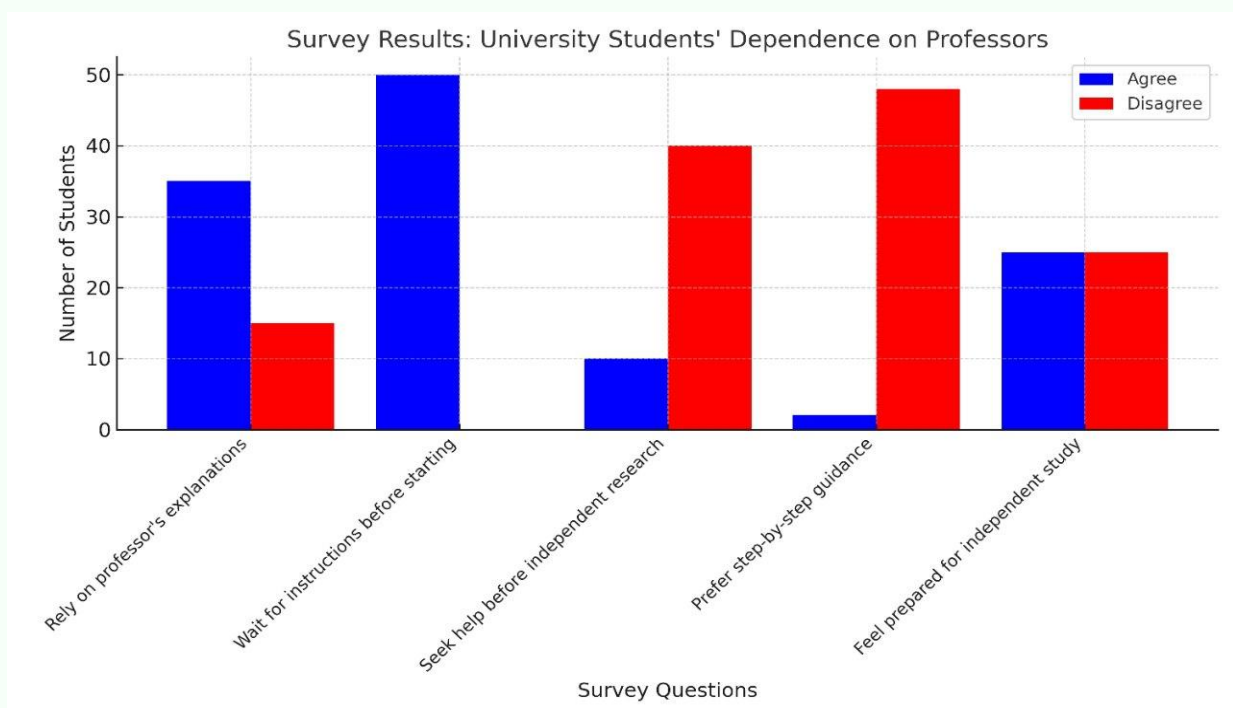
By combining both survey data and interview responses, the study sought to obtain both quantitative and qualitative insights, ensuring a more comprehensive analysis of students' dependency levels in different educational settings.

RESULTS

According to the results of the survey conducted in this study, high school students exhibit a higher level of dependency compared to university students, particularly in areas related to time management and self-evaluation. This finding aligns with the perspectives presented by Zimmerman (2002), who emphasizes that self-regulated learning is a developmental process in which students gradually gain the ability to set goals, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies accordingly. High school students, having had limited exposure to autonomous learning environments, often rely more heavily on teachers and structured guidance,

whereas university students, through increased academic independence, progressively develop stronger self-regulatory skills and decision-making capabilities. These differences in dependency levels highlight the transition from externally guided learning to self-directed learning, which is a crucial aspect of academic growth and personal development.

The bar chart below shows the more specific breakdown of the results for university students.



Based on the collected survey data, the responses of university students regarding their dependence on professors were as follows:

Statement 1: “I rely on my professor’s explanations instead of studying or researching independently.”

35 students (70%) agreed.

15 students (30%) disagreed.

Statement 2: “I wait for my professor’s instructions before starting assignments or academic tasks.”

All 50 students (100%) agreed, indicating a strong tendency to rely on professor guidance before beginning academic work.

Statement 3: “When I don’t understand something, I first seek help from my professor rather than trying to find answers on my own.”

10 students (20%) agreed.

40 students (80%) disagreed, suggesting that the majority of students attempt independent problem-solving before consulting their professor.

Statement 4: “I prefer to receive step-by-step guidance from my professor rather than working independently.”

2 students (4%) agreed.

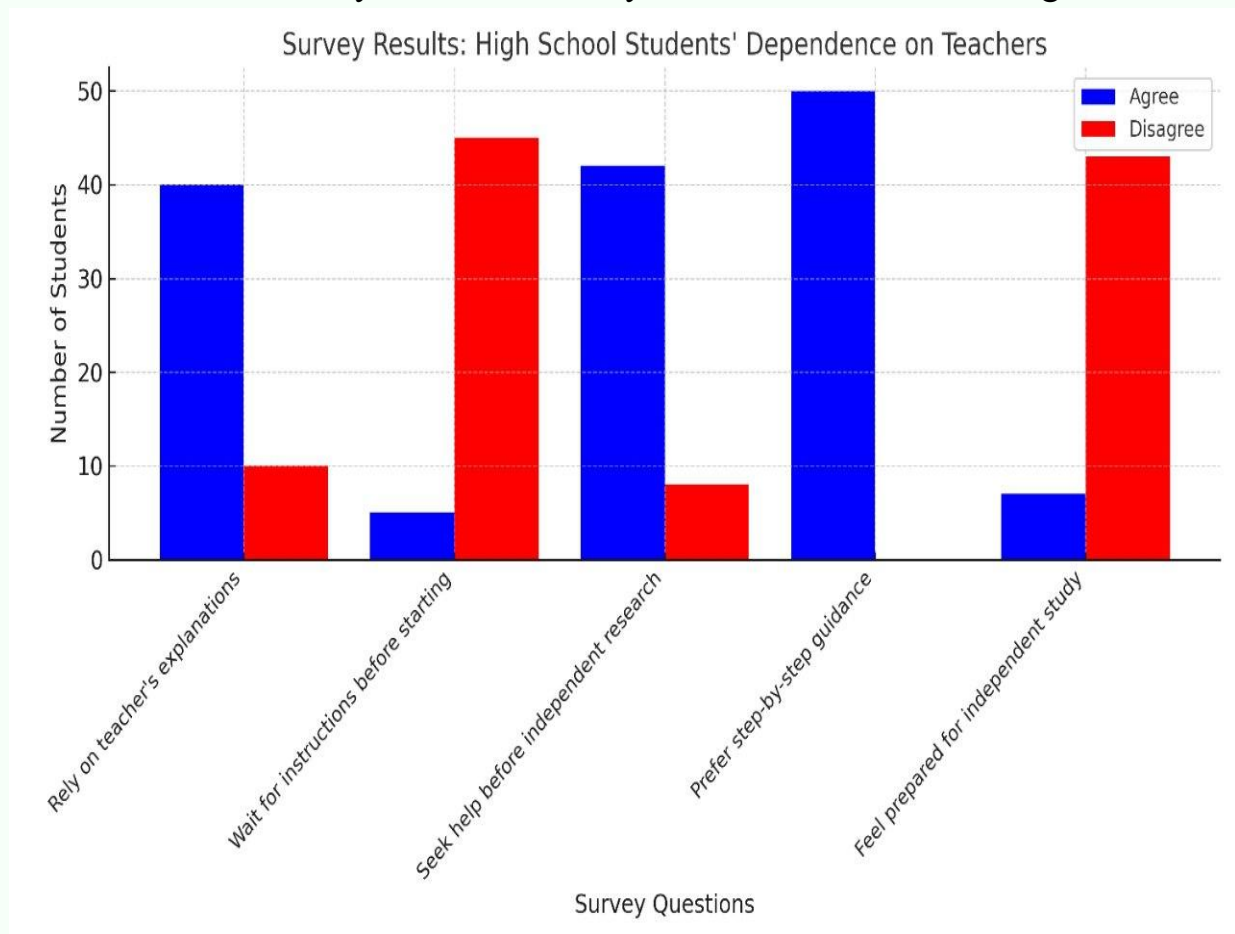
48 students (96%) disagreed, demonstrating a clear preference for independent learning over step-by-step instruction.

Statement 5: “My university experience has prepared me to study and manage academic tasks independently without constant professor support.”

50% of students (25 students) agreed.

50% of students (25 students) disagreed, indicating a split perception regarding university education’s role in fostering academic independence.

Surprisingly, survey results from the ninth grader students almost illustrate the reverse of the University students. Below you can see the results for high schoolers:





Survey Results for High School Students

Based on the collected survey data, the responses of high school students regarding their dependence on teachers were as follows:

Statement 1: “I rely on my teacher’s explanations instead of studying or researching independently.”

40 students (80%) agreed.

10 students (20%) disagreed.

Statement 2: “I wait for my teacher’s instructions before starting assignments or academic tasks.”

5 students (10%) agreed.

45 students (90%) disagreed, indicating that most students feel comfortable starting assignments without direct teacher instruction.

Statement 3: “When I don’t understand something, I first seek help from my teacher rather than trying to find answers on my own.”

42 students (84%) agreed.

8 students (16%) disagreed.

Statement 4: “I prefer to receive step-by-step guidance from my teacher rather than working independently.”

All 50 students (100%) agreed, suggesting a strong preference for structured guidance.

Statement 5: “My high school experience has prepared me to study and manage academic tasks independently without constant teacher support.”

85% of students (43 students) disagreed.

15% of students (7 students) agreed, indicating that only a small portion of students feel adequately prepared for independent study.

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Based on the conducted interviews, several key challenges were identified in students’ transition from high school to university. The most significant difficulties included time management struggles, lack of self-discipline, and the need for individualized attention from professors. Students found it difficult to adjust to the independent learning environment of university life after being accustomed to structured guidance and constant supervision in high school.



One of the most commonly reported issues was time management, as students struggled to meet deadlines without direct monitoring from teachers. Quدراتova Marjona, an English Language and Literature student at NSU, described her experience as follows: “In high school, even the smallest homework tasks were constantly monitored, so I always completed my assignments on time. However, when I started university and was given deadlines of a week or longer, I found myself unable to keep up.”

These findings highlight the importance of developing student autonomy before entering university. Both high school and university students should focus more on self-regulation and independent learning strategies to ease this transition. Additionally, high school teachers should assign tasks that encourage independent thinking and self-management, rather than fostering complete dependence on teacher supervision.

Another challenge was the shift in student-teacher dynamics. Ismoilova Mohinur, also an English Language and Literature student at NSU, shared her experience: “I struggled a lot during my first three months at university because I had become overly dependent on my teachers in high school. The most surprising part was that by the end of the semester, even the lecturer did not know my name.”

This stark contrast between high school and university learning environments demonstrates how students’ roles and responsibilities change drastically. While high school provides a structured, teacher-guided system, university demands self-discipline, proactive learning, and independent problem-solving. These findings suggest that preparing students for autonomy in high school could ease their transition into higher education and improve their ability to manage academic responsibilities effectively.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that high school students in Uzbekistan are highly dependent on their teachers for academic guidance and support. As a result, many students experience significant challenges in adapting to the independent learning environment at the university level. This research highlights the importance of gradually fostering student autonomy in high school to ensure a smoother transition to higher education.



The implications of this study are particularly relevant for both high school and university educators. By gaining a deeper understanding of student autonomy, teachers can design more effective learning activities and assignments that encourage students to take greater responsibility for their learning. High school educators should integrate strategies that gradually reduce students' reliance on teachers, allowing them to develop essential self-regulation and time-management skills before entering university. Similarly, university instructors should adopt a more supportive approach for first-year students, offering structured guidance before expecting them to become fully independent learners.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research was conducted on a relatively small scale, involving only one university and one high school, with a total of 100 student participants. Therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all educational institutions in Uzbekistan. Future research should expand the scope of the study by including a larger and more diverse sample from multiple universities and high schools across different regions. Additionally, further research could explore gender-specific differences in student autonomy to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how male and female students adapt to independent learning.

In conclusion, developing student autonomy should be a key focus in the Uzbekistani education system. High school teachers should gradually encourage students to take ownership of their learning by assigning tasks that promote independent thinking and problem-solving. At the university level, instructors should provide structured support for freshmen, guiding them towards autonomy in a step-by-step manner rather than expecting immediate independence. By implementing these changes, both high school and university educators can play a crucial role in preparing students for the academic challenges of higher education and fostering lifelong learning skills.

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