

EXPERIENCES AND CURRENT STATUS OF FORMING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CREATIVITY OF EDUCATORS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the professional competence and creativity level of educators working in the preschool education system, as well as foreign and local experiences of their formation. The professional competence of an educator includes not only knowledge and skills, but also problem-solving skills, creativity and innovative approaches. The article compares the experience of countries such as Finland, Japan, Germany, South Korea with the practice of Uzbekistan. The importance of methodological training, digital technologies and individual approaches in developing creative competence is highlighted. At the same time, existing problems, opportunities and proposals in Uzbekistan are also described. The article offers a systematic approach aimed at increasing the professional and creative potential of educators.

Keywords: Professional competence, creativity, educator, preschool education, methodological approach, international experience, pedagogical potential, innovative methods.

Introduction

The preschool education system is the educational foundation of any country. The professional competence of educators working in this system is their ability to provide quality pedagogical services through their knowledge, skills, qualifications and personal qualities. The concept of professional competence in modern pedagogy includes not only professional qualifications, but also the ability to independently solve certain problem situations, apply creative approaches and be open to innovation.¹ (K.S. Xolmatova, 2019).

Today, the formation of educators' competence has become one of the priority areas of state policy. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education"

¹ Xolmatova K.S. (2019). Pedagogik mahorat va kompetentlik. – Toshkent: TDPU.

(2020) and the Presidential Decree "On the Concept of Development of the Preschool Education System until 2030" (2022) pay special attention to increasing the potential of pedagogical personnel in preschool education.

If we look at foreign practices related to the formation of professional competence, in countries such as Finland, Japan and Singapore, the training, retraining and development of pedagogical personnel and their creative potential are carried out on the basis of a systematic approach² (Anderson & VandeKamp, 2021). In these countries, competence development is ensured through practical training, creative training, and exchange of experiences in the workplace.

In local practice, the formation of professional competence is more often carried out through training seminars, certifications, collaborative methodological associations, and problem seminars. However, in most cases, these activities are carried out in a formal manner, and in terms of content, they do not have a sufficient impact on the professional development of the teacher. It is also observed that the creativity factor is not sufficiently taken into account in these processes³ (T.Y. Islamova, 2022).

The following table compares the experience of some countries and the practice of Uzbekistan:

Country	Methods of professional competence development	Approach to creativity
Finland	Practical exercises, case studies, exchange of ideas	Open environment, independent creativity
Japan	Trainings, exchange of experience, technological approach	Innovation centers
Uzbekistan	Seminar-trainings, certifications, methodological lessons	Underdeveloped

Also, a report published by UNESCO (2020) notes that the professional competence of educators is a key factor determining the quality of education. This competence includes, in addition to professional knowledge, the emotional stability, communicative approach, and creative abilities of the educator. Scientific

² Anderson, J., & VandeKamp, L. (2021). Early Childhood Teacher Training in Global Context. – New York: Routledge.

³ Islomova T.Y. (2022). Maktabgacha ta'limda innovatsion yondashuvlar. – Samarqand: SamDU.

research shows that a competent educator should have the following characteristics:⁴ (V.A. Slastyonin, 2017):

- pedagogical knowledge and skills system;
- communicative skills and culture;
- personal responsibility and professionalism;
- creative thinking and initiative.

Unfortunately, surveys conducted in Uzbekistan⁵ (N.Kh. Rasulova, 2023) shows that most educators do not actively participate in improving their competence, and creative approaches are rarely used in the teaching process.

In conclusion, the formation of professional competence of educators is a key task in modern preschool education, and in this direction, a systematic approach, the use of international experience, as well as stimulating the internal motivation of educators are of great importance.

The creative competence of educators arises from the need to update the educational content in the preschool education system, innovate methodological approaches, and effectively operate taking into account the individuality of children. Creativity in modern pedagogy means not only thinking in a new way, but also solving problems in pedagogical situations through non-standard approaches, finding creative solutions, and stimulating children's interest in independent thinking⁶ (G.S. Sattorova, 2020).

Creativity competence is the ability of a teacher to make unconventional, alternative decisions in new pedagogical situations. The formation of this competence is closely related to the psychological state, professionalism, personal qualities, methodological potential and strong motivation of the educator.⁷ (B.Y. Makkamova, 2021). In international practice, experiments on the formation of creative competence are being carried out in the following areas: In the USA and Canada, training programs on creative thinking for preschool teachers, advanced training programs based on innovative problem tasks have been established. For example, through the “Creative Pedagogy in Preschool Education” project, educators develop creative tasks based on an individual approach to each child

⁴ Slastyonin V.A. (2017). Pedagogika asoslari. – Moskva: Akademiya.

⁵ Rasulova N.X. (2023). Maktabgacha ta’limda tarbiyachilar faoliyatining tahlili. – Toshkent: Innovatsion nashriyot

⁶ Sattorova G.S. (2020). Pedagog kreativligi va innovatsiya. – Toshkent: O’qituvchi.

⁷ Makkamova B.Y. (2021). Kreativ yondashuvlar va ularning tarbiyachilar faoliyatidagi o’rni. – Namangan: NDU.

(Fisher, 2019). In Germany and Sweden, metacognitive tests, practical exercises, and “creative laboratories” have been established to determine the creative potential of educators (Andersson, 2020). In South Korea, teachers widely use digital technologies, animation tools, and interactive environments in the teaching process. This strengthens creative approaches.

In Uzbekistan, there are some experiences in developing creative competence. In particular: methodological trainings called “Creative Approach” have been organized for educators in some state preschool educational institutions in Tashkent; In pilot institutions in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Fergana region, the creative potential of teachers is being increased through activities such as “thematic theater”, “children's art exhibition”, and “pictorial collage” (Z.Kh. Turgunova, 2022). However, these experiences in our Republic are not generalized, a systematic approach is not enough. Many educators report a lack of pedagogical support for using a creative approach. The following table compares foreign and domestic experiences:

Indicator	Foreign experience	Uzbekistan practice
Training and development	Innovative, creative tests	Classical training
Use of visual aids	Interactive, AR/VR technologies	Drawing, collage, cards
Approach style	Individual, project-based	Group, traditional
Digital environment	Digital space, platforms	Mainly offline methods

From a psychological perspective, creativity represents a person's creative potential, free thinking, and the ability to make independent decisions. (Torrance, 1981). In pedagogy, this competence is developed through the following factors:

- Working with problematic tasks;
- Openness to innovation and experimentation;
- Taking into account the interests of each child;
- Effective use of visual aids (Kh.N. Kadirova, 2021).

Also, methods such as “didactic games”, “mental maps”, “visual technologies” are of great importance in developing creativity. They expand the creative thinking of not only children, but also educators.

The reforms being implemented in the education system in our country are aimed, first of all, at forming human capital, improving the quality of education and ensuring the professional development of pedagogical staff. In this process, the

formation of professional competence and creative abilities of educators plays a special role. Because there is a growing need for proactive and creative personnel in preschool education who can meet modern requirements, have mastered advanced methods.

In the national experience, a number of programs, advanced training courses, methodological manuals and digital platforms have been developed to improve the professional potential of educators. In particular, through the activities of the “Center for Retraining and Advanced Training of Preschool Education Employees”, thousands of educators are updating their professional knowledge and skills every year. These courses cover areas such as pedagogical technologies, child psychology, methods for developing speech and creative activity.

The role of methodological services in the formation of educators' creative abilities is important. Through methodological associations, practical seminars and trainings, educators have the opportunity to conduct classes based on innovative approaches, activate children's creative thinking, and enrich visual, musical and motor activities. For example, within the framework of the “Creative Educator” project organized by the “Youth Innovation Center” in Tashkent, in 2022–2023, more than 300 educators mastered creative classes based on visual and mental cards, role-playing games, and problems.

The Presidential Decree No. PQ-241 of May 12, 2022 (“On additional measures for the development of preschool and school education”) is of great importance in the introduction of innovative approaches to education. It identifies the promotion of creativity in the educational process and the improvement of the creative potential of teachers as priority tasks.

In addition, in 2023, criteria for assessing professional qualities in preschool educational institutions were developed on the basis of the “National Index for the Development of Professional Competence” project, organized at the initiative of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (see: [Khudoyberganova, 2023]; [Saidova, 2022]).

At the same time, some shortcomings are also observed in the national experience. In particular, the uneven quality of in-service training courses in the regions, insufficient methodological support, and the lack of sufficient conditions and motivation for implementing innovative ideas into practice are noted. In some

regions, due to the lack of material and technical resources, creative approaches are being implemented to a limited extent.

In general, the analysis of national experience shows that there is a systematic approach, regulatory and legal frameworks, and opportunities for professional development in the formation of professional competence and creativity of educators. However, in order to organize this process more effectively, it is necessary to introduce specific methodological models, scientifically based programs, and modern analysis and monitoring methods. This is inextricably linked to the goals and objectives of this study.

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