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## ADVANCED PRACTICES IN THE SYSTEM OF MUSIC AND ARTS EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

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### Abstract

This article examines the historical foundations and contemporary development of music and arts education in Uzbekistan, emphasizing the continuity between traditional pedagogical models and modern educational reforms. Special attention is given to the *ustoz–shogird* (teacher–disciple) principle, which historically served as the core educational paradigm in Central Asia and ensured the transmission of artistic mastery across generations. The study traces the evolution of arts education from medieval madrasah-based instruction and elite educational institutions to the transformations introduced during the Russian imperial and Soviet periods, culminating in post-independence reforms.

The paper analyzes the role of national cultural heritage in shaping current educational policies and highlights the balance between globalization and the preservation of national identity. The establishment of a comprehensive system of lifelong education, including specialized music and arts schools, extracurricular institutions, and higher education frameworks, is examined as a key factor in fostering creative potential and cultural continuity. The article argues that contemporary reforms in Uzbekistan aim to integrate traditional artistic values with modern pedagogical approaches, digitalization, and international standards, thereby strengthening the role of arts education in the formation of a harmoniously developed and spiritually enriched individual.

**Keywords:** *music education; arts education; Uzbekistan; cultural heritage; ustoz–shogird tradition; national identity; globalization; lifelong learning; educational reform; aesthetic education*

It is well known to the global scholarly community that the Central Asian region was one of the cradles of civilization, the birthplace of many forms of art, and a foundation for educational traditions, the core of which was the *ustoz–shogird* (teacher–disciple)

principle. Almost the entire system of education in the arts was concentrated on continuous instruction within *madrasahs*, where students – predominantly male – received a full course of education over a period of 10–15 years without leaving the institution.

This principle ensured high educational quality and resulted in the emergence of outstanding musicians, artists, architects, and poets. In turn, these masters continued their teachers' work by forming their own schools and training talented students.

In musical art, this tradition became known through the distinguished mentorship schools of Andijan, Margilan, Kokand, Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, Tashkent, and other cities and regions of the republic. A prominent representative of one such *ustoz* school was the renowned musician, People's Artist of Uzbekistan, and academician **Yunus Rajabi**.

Of particular scholarly interest are the content and methodology of *dabir* schools (*dabiriston* – elite education), the new-method schools of the Jadids, as well as the works and music-pedagogical views of the great scholars of the medieval East – **Al-Farabi**, **Ibn Sina**, Kay-Kavus, Urmavi, Maraghi, Jami, Kavkabi, Darvish Ali, and others. This educational system remained largely intact until the mid-twentieth century.

The period from 1865 to 1917 was marked by the conquest of the Uzbek khanates by Tsarist Russia and by the cultural and educational activities of the Jadids (Munavvarqori, Behbudi, Fitrat, Chulpon, Avloni, Ayni, Zafari, Shakuri, and others), who established new-method schools.

Between 1917 and 1924, the Soviet totalitarian system was established, leading to the formation of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic, the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic, and the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. From 1924 to 1991, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic was formed.

Alongside history, literature, geography, and other general education subjects, music and arts instruction was introduced into the curriculum. Specialized music education during this period in Uzbekistan began to acquire a large-scale, universal, and state-regulated character. People's conservatories were established. As part of the Soviet state, Uzbekistan adopted an educational system that paid limited attention to national traditions. With the achievement of political independence in 1991, Uzbekistan initiated reforms aimed at developing its own national education system.

The contemporary stage of Uzbekistan's development is characterized by a complex and steady process of reviving and strengthening national and spiritual foundations, emphasizing the special importance of traditional culture as a key factor in preserving ethnic consciousness and maintaining continuity with cultural heritage.

Returning to national origins, recognizing the depth and greatness of the cultural and spiritual heritage of ancestors who made an immense contribution to world civilization, and fostering a respectful attitude toward history and noble national traditions in every generation – while simultaneously understanding the necessity of mastering and integrating into the values of modern global civilization and spirituality – constitute the concrete foundation upon which policies of renewal and enhancement of national self-education, political maturity, and civic engagement are built.

Spiritual revival primarily implies the restoration and return to the people of the rich legacy of scientific ideas accumulated in the past. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" states that the Republic of Uzbekistan conducts state policy in education based on universal human values, historical experience, and centuries-old scientific and cultural traditions. Education encompasses both instruction and upbringing and aims to develop the intellectual and scientific potential of the republic, as well as to form a comprehensively developed individual who is aware of responsibility toward society, family, and the state.

Among the fundamental principles of state educational policy, alongside the priority of universal human values, is the principle of a national and cultural foundation of education. The creation of such a foundation represents a primary task for scholars and educators. The exceptionally rich material accumulated, refined, and systematized over nearly a millennium forms the fundamental basis upon which modern music and cultural education in the republic must be constructed. Music and cultural education must also take into account contemporary challenges that stimulate modernization in the fields of culture and the arts.

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been marked by globalization. Globalization, in all its manifestations, brings new opportunities and expanded horizons on the one hand, while posing new risks on the other. Social differentiation by age, social origin, income level, professional affiliation, ethnicity, and religion has generated multiple subcultures, thereby presenting the state with complex challenges in culture and arts education. These challenges primarily involve maintaining a balance between contradictory cultural tendencies – between cultural unification and the preservation of national identity.

At the state level, Uzbekistan recognizes the significance of arts education as an instrument of socialization that contributes to the formation of moral principles and ideals. Clear objectives and tasks have been defined for education in the sphere of culture and the arts. The system of general arts education includes extracurricular institutions – such as children’s creativity centers, studios, and clubs – general secondary education institutions (10,943 in total), children’s music and arts schools (325), specialized music schools, and others. Under administrative jurisdiction, 14 presidential schools, 9 schools for the development of creative abilities, and 3 specialized schools named after **Muhammad al-Khwarizmi**, **Mirzo Ulugh Beg**, and **Abu Ali ibn Sina** have been transferred.

During the years of democratic reforms, Uzbekistan has established an integrated system of lifelong education. In accordance with the National Program for Personnel Training, the new educational model includes the following stages: preschool education, general secondary education, secondary specialized vocational education, higher professional education (bachelor’s and master’s degrees), postgraduate education (institutional structures such as “research intern” and “senior research fellow”), advanced training, and professional retraining. Extracurricular education is presented as a separate component. This model enables individuals not only to maintain necessary professional competencies but also to continuously improve their qualifications throughout life. It establishes an effective educational mechanism centered on respect for the individual and on creating

conditions for the development of abilities, creative potential, and spiritual growth. The model incorporates principles of democratization, humanization, prioritization, national orientation, continuity of education and upbringing, and identification of gifted and talented youth. Its key actors include the individual, the state, society, lifelong education, science, and production.

On January 25, the President of Uzbekistan **Shavkat Mirziyoyev** signed the decree “On Measures for the Fundamental Improvement of the System of General Secondary, Secondary Specialized, and Vocational Education.” Beginning with the 2018–2019 academic year, compulsory general secondary and secondary specialized education has been implemented in general education schools, including specialized schools and boarding schools of arts and culture, specialized boarding schools for Olympic reserve training, as well as academic lyceums, based on a continuous 11-year cycle.

The modern education system is capable of ensuring a confident transition to the digital era, oriented toward productivity growth, new forms of labor, and evolving human needs. The informatization of education provides a foundation for transition to a new level, while digitalization focuses on preparing specialists who are in demand in the labor market, proficient in mobile and internet technologies, and oriented toward lifelong learning through e-learning.

Each component of this system operates under its own charter, curricula, programs, textbooks, teaching aids, and regulatory documentation. Overall governance and financial support are provided through sectoral ministries and agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Public Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation.

The core principles of management and organization of aesthetic upbringing and education include planning, centralization, accountability, responsiveness to societal needs, economic and methodological support, qualified staffing, effective integration of aesthetic and general education systems, and consideration of both national traditions

and contemporary global achievements in aesthetic education.

In order to comprehensively develop talents and raise the cultural level of the younger generation, create favorable conditions for broad engagement with the finest examples of national and world music and visual arts, fundamentally improve primary music education, modernize the material and technical base of children's music and arts schools, and ensure staffing with highly qualified educators and specialists in music

and arts, large-scale reforms have been initiated.

It should be emphasized that the main directions of these reforms in arts education are determined by the State Program for the Development and Improvement of Extracurricular Institutions. State-level recognition of the importance of education and the comprehensive development of creative abilities serves as a powerful stimulus in fostering a harmoniously developed and spiritually enriched younger generation.

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