FEATURES OF CIVIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS IN THE "SCHOOL–MAHALLA" SYSTEM IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract:
The article examines modern theoretical concepts of civic education and their adaptation to the context of Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to the "School–Mahalla" model as an integrative form of interaction between educational institutions, the family, and the local community. The key factors in the formation of civic identity are analyzed, including traditional values, digital transformation, and intercultural dialogue. It is shown that this model combines national educational traditions with universal democratic values and contributes to the development of socially responsible and civically mature individuals.

Keywords: civic education, identity, school, mahalla, values, tolerance, digital citizenship, youth, traditions, community.

ОСОБЕННОСТИ ГРАЖДАНСКОГО ВОСПИТАНИЯ ОБУЧАЮЩИХСЯ В СИСТЕМЕ «ШКОЛА–МАХАЛЛЯ» В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ

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Аннотация:
В статье рассматриваются современные теоретические концепции гражданского воспитания и их адаптация к условиям Узбекистана. Особое внимание уделяется модели «Школа–Махалля» как интегративной форме взаимодействия образовательных учреждений, семьи и местного сообщества. Анализируются ключевые факторы формирования гражданской идентичности, включая традиционные ценности, цифровую трансформацию и межкультурный диалог. Показано, что данная модель сочетает национальные воспитательные традиции с универсальными демократическими ценностями и способствует подготовке социально ответственных и граждански зрелых личностей.

Ключевые слова: гражданское воспитание, идентичность, школа, махалля, ценности, толерантность, цифровая гражданственность, молодежь, традиции, сообщество.

Introduction

Modern civic education is gaining particular significance amid global transformations, digitalization, political turbulence, and the revival of local identities. In recent decades, this issue has increasingly been viewed as a strategic resource for state stability, a guarantee of cultural continuity, and a necessary condition for the development of democracy and civil society [Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970]. International practice demonstrates that the formation of an active civic position among youth is becoming a key element of educational policy aimed at strengthening social cohesion and countering the risks of radicalization, apathy, and loss of trust in public institutions.

For the post-Soviet countries, including Uzbekistan, civic education acquires an additional dimension. On the one hand, it is linked with processes of national revival, the strengthening of historical and cultural traditions, and the modernization of social institutions. On the other hand, it is associated with the need to integrate into the global community and adapt to the challenges of the 21st century, among which are digital transformation, migration processes, information warfare, and increasing individualization [Slastenin et al., 2005; Heater, 2004]. Under these conditions, educating a socially responsible, critically thinking citizen who actively participates in public life becomes a priority of national education systems.

Civic education holds particular importance in Uzbekistan, where it is viewed not only as a pedagogical category but also as a sociocultural phenomenon closely connected with traditional institutions, especially the mahalla. The integration of school and mahalla creates a unique model of the educational process that combines local traditions with modern democratic practices [Khamroev, 2020; Abdurazakov, 2018]. This approach helps to form a stable civic identity among the younger generation, based simultaneously on universal values (democracy, human rights, tolerance, culture of peace) and national priorities (patriotism, collectivism, respect for elders).

The scientific relevance of the study lies in the need for a comprehensive analysis of modern theoretical concepts of civic education, their adaptation to the conditions of Uzbekistan, and the development of a model based on the interaction between school, family, and the local community. Particular attention is given to identifying methodological foundations that allow civic education to be viewed as an interdisciplinary phenomenon combining philosophical, pedagogical, cultural, and sociological approaches.

The purpose of the study is to provide a theoretical justification and reveal the features of civic education of students within the "School–Mahalla" system in Uzbekistan, as well as to identify prospects for its development in light of current global and national challenges.

To achieve this purpose, the following objectives have been defined:

1. To analyze contemporary theoretical approaches to civic education in international and domestic pedagogy.
2. To identify the factors determining the relevance of civic education in the context of Uzbekistan.
3. To describe the role of the mahalla institution in forming students' civic identity.
4. To examine the integrative "School–Mahalla" model as an innovative form of civic education.
5. To identify risks and limitations in implementing this model and to propose ways to overcome them.

Thus, the introduction sets the conceptual framework of the study and emphasizes its scientific and practical significance within the context of forming a new generation of citizens capable of active and responsible participation in the public life of the country and the global community.

Literature Review

Research on civic education in modern pedagogy is based on a wide range of theoretical approaches developed both in international and national scholarship. Analysis of scientific sources shows that civic education is interpreted as a multicomponent and dynamically developing process that includes cognitive, value-based, motivational, and activity-related dimensions [Gutmann, 1999; Heater, 2004].

In foreign pedagogy, the conceptual foundations of civic education were shaped by the ideas of John Dewey, who viewed democratic education as a precondition for the development of an active civic position grounded in experience and participation in social life [Dewey, 1916]. Paulo Freire made an important contribution by proposing critical pedagogy as a tool for forming conscious civic identity through dialogue, reflection, and social engagement [Freire, 1970]. Contemporary researchers emphasize that these approaches remain relevant in the context of globalization and digitalization, where education must develop young people's resilience to manipulation and their capacity for critical thinking [Livingstone, 2019].

In Europe, civic education is implemented within national educational systems. In France, the concept of *éducation à la citoyenneté* focuses on instilling republican values—liberty, equality, and fraternity—as well as preventing discrimination and radicalization [Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, 2018]. In Germany, the *Demokratie leben!* initiative emphasizes the development of civic competence and the prevention of extremism [BMFSFJ, 2020]. In Japan, civic education is integrated into the humanities and is based on traditions of collective responsibility, social harmony, and cultural dialogue [Kawaguchi, 2015].

The American pedagogical tradition is represented by the concept of Civic Education, which prioritizes the development of legal literacy, critical thinking, and students' ability to participate in governance. According to the recommendations of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), key areas include intercultural communication, digital networking skills, and practical involvement in school community life [NCSS, 2013].

In the educational scholarship of the post-Soviet space, distinctive theoretical schools have emerged. V.A. Slastenin viewed civic education as a process of shaping a humanistic orientation of personality, emphasizing the importance of the sociocultural environment and systematic interaction among school, family, and society [Slastenin et al., 2005]. G.K. Selevko developed a classification of pedagogical technologies for civic education, including project-based learning, collective activities, and discussion practices [Selevko, 1998]. A.V. Yasvin focused on the school environment as a factor that can either hinder or stimulate students' civic activity [Yasvin, 2001].

In Uzbekistan, research in this field is oriented toward integrating traditional educational practices with modern approaches. Particular attention is given to the mahalla, considered a unique mechanism of socialization that transmits moral values, collective norms, and civic responsibility [Khamroev, 2020; Abdurazakov, 2018]. Contemporary Uzbek scholars emphasize that the synthesis of mahalla traditions and digital educational practices provides a foundation for shaping a stable civic identity among youth [Aliev, 2021].

International organizations also contribute to the development of civic education. UNESCO and OSCE implement intercultural dialogue programs in Central Asia aimed at fostering tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and legal culture among schoolchildren [UNESCO, 2022]. UNICEF stresses the importance of children's rights and the development of participation skills as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

Thus, the literature review highlights several key trends:

• Civic education is understood as an interdisciplinary field that integrates philosophical, pedagogical, and cultural approaches.

• International experience demonstrates a variety of models, yet all are grounded in the values of democracy, human rights, and social responsibility.

• In Uzbekistan, a distinct model of civic education is emerging, based on the mahalla institution and the integration of traditional and innovative educational practices.

• A crucial direction in contemporary civic education is the development of digital citizenship, including media literacy, critical thinking, and the ability to resist radical ideologies.

These considerations provide the foundation for further theoretical and methodological analysis of civic education within the "School–Mahalla" system, as well as for developing effective practical solutions that account for the specifics of Uzbek society and global challenges.

Research Methods

Since the study is theoretical and methodological in nature and does not rely on empirical data, it is based on a set of scientific methods that ensure a comprehensive analysis of civic education within the "School–Mahalla" system.

1. Analysis and synthesis of scientific literature.

The work draws on studies by international and national scholars in the fields of philosophy of education, pedagogy, sociology, and cultural studies [Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970; Slastenin et al., 2005; Selevko, 1998; Heater, 2004]. Source analysis made it possible to identify the main trends in the development of civic education, while synthesis allowed the integration of universal and national perspectives into a coherent conceptual framework.

2. Comparative method.

To reveal the specifics of the Uzbek model of civic education, comparative analysis with international experience was conducted. Programs from the United States (Civic Education, NCSS), France (éducation à la citoyenneté), Germany (*Demokratie leben!*), Japan (Moral and Civic Education), as well as UNESCO and OSCE projects aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue were studied [UNESCO, 2022; BMFSFJ, 2020]. This made it possible to identify universal values and national features of civic-educational practices.

3. Systemic approach.

Civic education is considered as a holistic sociocultural system that includes school, family, mahalla, civil organizations, and state structures. Systemic analysis allowed the "School–Mahalla" model to be viewed as an integrative mechanism connecting formal and non-formal education.

4. Axiological and cultural approaches.

The study relies on an axiological methodology emphasizing the values of justice, tolerance, patriotism, and a culture of peace [Gutmann, 1999]. The cultural approach made it possible to identify the significance of local traditions (the mahalla, Islamic spiritual culture) and their adaptation to the conditions of digitalization and globalization [Yunusov, 2020].

5. Learner-centered and activity-oriented approaches.

These methods were used to analyze students' involvement in real forms of civic participation: school self-governance, volunteering, discussions, and project activities. The learner-centered perspective allowed the child to be considered not as an object but as a subject of the educational process [Yasvin, 2001].

6. Content analysis of regulatory documents.

Key strategic documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan were analyzed: the Law "On Education" (2020), the national Strategy "Uzbekistan–2030" (2023), presidential decrees on the development of the mahalla (2021–2023), and on the digitalization of the educational environment (2024). Content analysis made it possible to identify the legal foundations of the "School–Mahalla" model and to determine its institutionalization.

7. Expert assessment method.

The study incorporates conclusions of researchers, analytical materials from the Agency for Mahalla Affairs and the Ministry of Public Education, as well as reports by international organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO), which serve as expert evidence [26; 27]. This ensured a comprehensive evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the model.

The application of these methods provided a multi-level analysis of civic education, revealed key regularities of its development in Uzbekistan, and defined the theoretical and methodological foundations of the "School–Mahalla" model.

Results (English Translation)

The results of the study make it possible to identify the key features of civic education for students within the "School–Mahalla" system in Uzbekistan. An analysis of theoretical approaches, regulatory documents, and national practice indicates that this model has high integrative potential, merging the school, family, and mahalla into a unified educational system.

1. Main findings of the analysis

• Civic education gains strategic importance under conditions of globalization, digitalization, and   increasing   social   risks.

• The integrative "School–Mahalla" model combines traditional institutions (mahalla, family values, Islamic spiritual culture) with contemporary democratic and digital practices.

• Functions of the model: formation of civic identity, development of legal culture, socialization through community participation, prevention of deviant behavior.

• Subjects of education: school, family, mahalla, civil organizations, and state structures operate   as   a   single   coordinated   system.

• Digital transformation: platforms such as "Mahalla–School Hub," ZiyoNET, and others enhance interaction between school and community and broaden the forms of youth engagement.

2. Structural and Functional Model of Civic Education

Below is a schematic representation of the "School–Mahalla" model, illustrating the key stakeholders and the main directions of educational interaction:
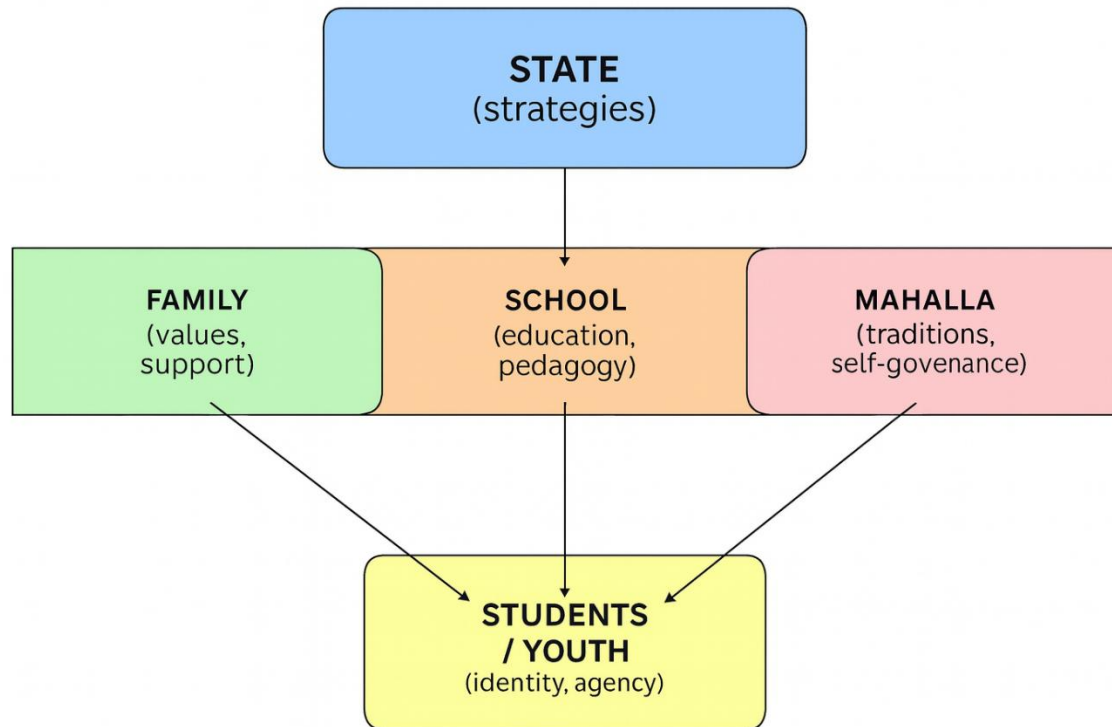
Explanation of the Figure

The figure presents the structural and functional model of civic education within the "School–Mahalla" system.

At the center of the model is the student / youth — the main subject and object of the educational process. The formation of their civic identity is ensured through the interaction of several social institutions:

- The State provides the regulatory and legal framework as well as strategic guidelines for the development of education. Through laws, presidential decrees, and national programs, it defines the direction of educational modernization and the role of civic education.
- The School performs a key role in the educational process: it develops knowledge, legal and political culture, media literacy skills, critical thinking, and the ability to participate in public life.
- The Family transmits traditional values, behavioral norms, and social support, ensuring continuity between generations and embedding the child within national culture.
- The Mahalla functions as a unique institution of the local community, integrating students into real practices of civic participation, collective projects, and social initiatives.

The relationships among these actors are reciprocal: the school interacts with both the family and the mahalla, and together these three institutions create an educational and developmental environment aimed at fostering responsible citizenship.

Thus, the "School–Mahalla" model reflects the synergy of traditional and modern educational practices, in which each component fulfills its own function while their integration ensures the harmonious development of students' civic identity.

Discussion

The analysis of the obtained results allows us to consider the characteristics of civic education within the "School–Mahalla" system in a broader scientific and practical context.

First of all, the model demonstrates several strong aspects that ensure its stability and effectiveness:

- Integration of traditional educational practices (the mahalla institution, family values) with modern approaches, including digitalization and innovative pedagogical methods.
- A multi-level structure of educational actors (the state, school, family, mahalla), which creates conditions for synergy and increases the effectiveness of civic education programs.
- Formation of a holistic civic identity among youth, combining universal humanistic values (human rights, democracy, tolerance) with national and cultural priorities (patriotism, respect for elders, collectivism).

At the same time, several limitations have been identified, requiring pedagogical and organizational reflection:

- Heterogeneity of mahallas in terms of infrastructure, human resources, and population engagement, which complicates the unification of practices.
- Risk of formalism in educational activities due to insufficient training of teachers and mahalla representatives.
- Possible ideologization of civic education, where traditional practices might conflict with the principles of inclusiveness and human rights.
- Resource and personnel constraints hindering the implementation of digital initiatives and the monitoring of effectiveness.

Comparative analysis with international models shows that in most countries (USA, Germany, France, Japan), civic education is integrated through school subjects, student self-government, volunteering, and social projects. The Uzbek model, however, is distinguished by its deep socio-cultural grounding — the mahalla acts as a mediator between school, family, and society, making the model unique within the post-Soviet space.

Particular attention should be given to digital transformation. As modern researchers note [Livingstone, 2019; Ribble, 2012], the internet environment is both a space of opportunities and risks: media literacy and digital citizenship must be viewed as essential components of civic education. In Uzbekistan, the integration of platforms ("ZiyoNET", "Mahalla–School Hub") opens new perspectives but requires methodological and technical support.

An important factor ensuring the stability of the model is the intercultural and interfaith dimension. In a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society like Uzbekistan, civic education should promote cultural dialogue, tolerance, and the prevention of extremism. The involvement of religious leaders and community elders strengthens the value-based impact, but requires a balance between secular principles and cultural traditions.

Thus, the discussion shows that the "School–Mahalla" model has high adaptability and potential for scaling, but its further development depends on:

- preparing teachers and social workers for interdisciplinary collaboration;
- institutionalizing the role of the mahalla and its elders as partners of educational institutions;
- developing national indicators of civic maturity and a monitoring system;
- providing regulatory and resource support from the state.

The model can be viewed not only as a local pedagogical practice but also as a strategic direction for the development of civic education in Uzbekistan, contributing to the creation of a stable, just, and inclusive society.

Conclusion

The conducted study made it possible to identify the specific features of civic education within the "School–Mahalla" system and to outline the key directions for its further development.

First, in contemporary conditions civic education acquires strategic importance, extending beyond the pedagogical process and becoming a factor in the sustainable development of society. In the context of globalization, digitalization, and sociocultural transformations, the formation of civic identity ensures continuity of traditions, strengthens social cohesion, and promotes democratic values.

Second, the analysis of international and national approaches has shown that despite the diversity of models, all strategies are based on common principles: respect for human rights, development of critical thinking, social participation, and readiness for dialogue. The Uzbek "School–Mahalla" model represents a unique synthesis of universal values and local traditions, which makes it particularly relevant for a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society.

Third, the integrative "School–Mahalla" model ensures cooperation among the school, family, mahalla, and the state, creating a unified educational environment. The involvement of students in social practices, volunteer projects, and school self-governance contributes to the development of not only knowledge and skills but also stable civic qualities such as responsibility, patriotism, tolerance, and legal culture.

Fourth, digital transformation opens new opportunities for civic education but simultaneously generates risks — radicalization, superficial perception of information, and reduced empathy. In this regard, the development of digital citizenship and media literacy among young people becomes particularly important.

Fifth, the intercultural and interfaith dimensions make the "School–Mahalla" model inclusive and resilient to contemporary challenges. Respect for traditions, intercultural dialogue, and cooperation with religious organizations allow national spiritual heritage to be harmonized with the principles of a secular state.

Thus, the "School–Mahalla" model can be regarded as a promising pedagogical platform capable of fostering the formation of a harmonious, socially responsible, and civically mature individual. Its further development requires systematic methodological, regulatory, and resource support, as well as scientifically grounded mechanisms for monitoring effectiveness.

The contribution of this model lies not only in addressing the local needs of Uzbekistan but also in its potential to be presented internationally as an example of successful adaptation of global civic education strategies to a national cultural context. This confirms its significance for building an open, inclusive, and just society capable of responding to the challenges of the 21st century.

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