



The Establishment And Activity Of Private Schools In Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

One of the key reforms aimed at modernizing the education system in Uzbekistan has been the development and institutionalization of the non-state education sector. In the context of large-scale educational transformations carried out within the framework of the "New Uzbekistan" development strategy, private schools have emerged as an important component in ensuring diversity, competitiveness, and quality in general secondary education. This article examines the main socio-economic, demographic, and institutional factors that contributed to the emergence of non-state general secondary schools in Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to the goals and functions of private schools, including their role in meeting growing educational demand, introducing innovative teaching methods, and integrating international educational standards.

The study also analyzes state policies and regulatory mechanisms aimed at supporting the non-state education sector, such as licensing procedures, legal guarantees, and public-private partnership initiatives. Based on statistical data and official reports, the article explores trends in the growth of private schools and changes in student enrollment over recent years. The findings highlight the increasing contribution of non-state schools to the national education system, while also identifying existing challenges and prospects for their further development within Uzbekistan's educational reform agenda.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an important factor for any country to achieve sustainable development through the development of human resources. The government of Uzbekistan has always paid attention to the education sector as one of its priority issues. In today's globalized world, international trends and foreign experience in the field of education are spreading to all regions. Uzbekistan has introduced various aspects of international experience into its education system, and the emergence of non-state educational institutions has become one of the important reforms in this process. This reform was carried out in order to create competition in the education system, and it was intended that it would serve to improve the quality of education by allowing state and non-state schools to compete in the same environment. In addition, private schools have the opportunity to introduce more innovations into the educational process due to their high material base.

The emergence and development of the private sector in the education system of Uzbekistan is also considered part of the policy implemented in the economic sphere, paving the way for the introduction of market mechanisms into the education system. The expansion of the private school network in new Uzbekistan paved the way for the introduction of private ownership into the education sector and paved the way for the formation of competition in this sector, along with other sectors of the economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The history of the emergence and development of the private sector in the education system of Uzbekistan was studied, first of all, on the basis of regulatory legal documents. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law "On Education" of 1997 and the "National Program for Personnel Training", the Law "On Education" of 2020, decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers on the provision of non-state educational services and other documents served as important sources for covering the topic. This issue was also studied in studies conducted by scientists in the field of social sciences during the years of independence, in which various aspects of the activities of private schools were studied (Mamasaidov, 2023; Jurayev, 2025; Ne'matov, 2025).

The research used document analysis, statistical data analysis, historical-comparative analysis and other historical methods. The actual results of the data reflected in the documents were analyzed based on the data of the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the regional departments of preschool and school education. The experience of other countries in the field of private education was also used.

RESULTS

To begin, one of the main functions of any state in the social sphere is to ensure the general education of the population. Given that the general secondary education stage is a compulsory stage of education, creating conditions for obtaining quality education at this stage is one of the tasks of the state. This task can be implemented not only directly through state educational institutions, but also by supporting non-state education. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" of 1997 also stipulates that the state shall ensure the development of state and non-state educational institutions (Government of Uzbekistan (GU), 1997a). The "National Program for Personnel Training", adopted simultaneously with this Law, provides for the development of various types of state and non-state educational institutions as one of the reforms in the field of continuing education (GU, 1997b). The new version of the Law "On Education" adopted in 2020 also defines the concept of a non-state educational organization. According to it, this concept is used in relation to a legal entity that provides educational services on the basis of a license or notification procedure that grants the right to carry out activities to provide educational services in accordance with state educational standards, state educational requirements and curricula (GU, 2020). This indicates that non-state educational institutions are also required to comply with state educational standards in the provision of education. Article 31 of this Law is dedicated to non-state educational institutions and specifies that they operate on the basis of a license, adhere to state educational standards, issue state-recognized diplomas and certificates to their graduates, and undergo attestation and state accreditation in accordance with established procedures.

Non-state educational institutions are required to obtain a license in order to operate. According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Improving the Procedure for Licensing Activities in the Field of Providing Non-State Educational Services," starting from April 1, 2018, activities related to the provision of non-state educational services have been subject to licensing by the State Inspectorate for Supervision of Education Quality (GU, 2018). This created opportunities for legal entities to provide non-state educational services by obtaining the required license.

Article 50 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted in its revised edition in 2022, establishes the obligation of the state to ensure the development of both state and non-state educational institutions (GU, 2023). The core essence of this provision lies in the obligation of the state to create organizational and legal conditions, as well as to provide material support for the establishment and operation of non-state educational institutions that are no less favorable than those ensured for the development of state educational institutions. Consequently, broad privileges and preferences have been granted to private educational institutions, contributing to the active development of this sector (Tashkent State University of

Law, 2023). State support for non-state schools is manifested through measures such as the simplification of licensing procedures, the provision of preferential loans, and the granting of tax incentives.

The Presidential Resolution of February 2, 2024, titled “On Additional Measures to Accelerate Reforms in the Education Sector,” has also played an important role in supporting the activities of non-state educational institutions. According to this resolution, creating the necessary conditions to further increase the share of the private sector in education, including the introduction of effective mechanisms for its financial support, has been identified as one of the key areas of activity of the newly established Project Office “Center for Projects in the Education Sector” (GU, 2024).

In the education system of Uzbekistan, attention is being paid not only to the independent activities of private educational institutions but also to cooperation in the form of public–private partnerships. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Public–Private Partnership,” adopted on May 5, 2019, is aimed at the comprehensive reform of the education system, reducing state monopoly in education, expanding private education, establishing mutually beneficial cooperation between higher education graduates and employers, creating a competitive environment between state and private educational institutions, and, above all, improving the quality of education. The adoption of this law is closely linked to the strategy initiated by President Sh. Mirziyoyev since 2017, which seeks to bring about fundamental transformations in all spheres of society, with particular emphasis on comprehensive reform of the education system as the main “engine” of all reforms. This strategy prioritizes strengthening the connection between education and societal, economic, and developmental needs, effectively aligning the education system with the demands of consumers, namely society and production. In simple terms, the necessity to reform the education system is explained by the broad changes that have taken place in the country since 2017 (Jurayev, 2025). The development of public–private partnerships in the education system of Uzbekistan is considered an integral part of the reforms aimed at advancing the non-state education sector.

An analysis of open data provided by the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan helps to assess the role of non-state schools within the general secondary education system. According to these data, while 26 non-state general secondary educational institutions were operating nationwide in the 2016/2017 academic year, their number increased to 295 by the 2023/2024 academic year. From a geographical perspective, the highest number of private schools was concentrated in the city of Tashkent (59 institutions), whereas the lowest number of non-state schools (3 institutions) was recorded in the Navoi region.

The number of teachers employed in the non-state sector increased proportionally with the growth in the number of schools. In the 2016/2017 academic year, 606 teachers were employed in private schools, while by the 2023/2024 academic year this figure had risen to 7,740. Similarly, student enrollment in non-state general secondary educational institutions also showed a steady increase, reaching 64,103 students in the 2023/2024 academic year (National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan). The increase in the number of private schools is closely linked to the simplification of licensing procedures; as a result, 145 non-state schools were operating in 2020 (Ne'matov, 2025). The growth in the number of private schools can also be observed at the regional level. For instance, in the Samarkand region, 36 non-state general secondary schools were established between 2017 and 2024. (Preschool and school administration of Samarkand Region, 2025). These figures demonstrate the trends associated with the increasing number of private schools.

Goal 41 of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026 sets the task of increasing the number of private schools alongside the construction of new schools. In addition, by expanding the conditions and opportunities for organizations providing non-state educational services, the Strategy establishes the objective of increasing their share to 8 percent by 2026, including reaching 3 percent by 2022 (GU, 2022). From this, it can be concluded that serious attention is being given to increasing the share of private schools.

Among the goals that need to be achieved in the near future to elevate secondary education to a new stage is the increase in the share of the private sector. Accordingly, greater involvement of the private sector in general secondary education is envisaged, with the aim of increasing the number of non-state general secondary educational institutions to 1,000 and tripling the share of students enrolled in them. In addition, priority is given to constructing at least 100 schools annually on the basis of public–private partnerships (Mirziyoyev, 2024). Implementing these plans will create opportunities to expand the network of general secondary education institutions and adapt it to modern requirements. Furthermore, the Concept for the

Development of the Public Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 includes specific plans to increase the number of non-state general secondary schools. According to this Concept, the number of non-state general secondary schools is expected to reach 100 in 2023, 237 in 2025, and 500 by 2030. These figures indicate not only a growing share of the private sector within Uzbekistan's general secondary education system but also its contribution to creating a high-quality education system through the introduction of competition in the sector.

It is well known that non-state educational institutions hold a significant place in the education systems of developed countries. For example, they account for 12 percent of general schools in Germany, 17 percent in France, 18 percent in the United States, 20 percent in the United Kingdom, and 30 percent in Ireland, Spain, and the Netherlands. In contrast, in Uzbekistan, such educational institutions constituted only 1.7 percent in 2022 (Mamasaidov, 2023). The objectives aimed at increasing this percentage serve to improve the education system by drawing on the experience of non-state schools in foreign countries.

CONCLUSION

The increase in both the number and share of non-state schools creates an opportunity to elevate the general secondary education stage to a new level and to incorporate the most significant achievements of global experience. Non-state schools, having a certain degree of autonomy in designing their curricula compared to state schools, are better positioned to introduce innovative approaches to teaching. However, they may also exacerbate social inequality, as their student body predominantly consists of children whose parents can afford tuition fees.

Additionally, non-state general secondary schools face challenges related to the availability of qualified teaching staff. Many of their teachers have limited pedagogical experience, despite possessing strong skills in working with modern technologies and foreign languages. While these competencies are valuable, the relative lack of experience in classroom management and student engagement remains one of the key challenges for private schools.

Alongside the achievements of the non-state education system, it is necessary to implement measures to mitigate these challenges. In particular, it is advisable to provide grants for educating gifted students, ensure that teachers in non-state schools receive social protection equivalent to that in state schools, and introduce international accreditation systems to assess school effectiveness.

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