

Strengthening social responsibility among students in New Uzbekistan through reforms and achievements

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Article History

Received on 9 May 2025

1st Revision on 23 May 2025

Accepted on 9 June 2025

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to evaluate the impact of education reforms under the “New Uzbekistan” initiative on university students’ social responsibility, with a specific focus on their civic engagement and participation in community-based actions, thereby assessing how well these reforms translate into actual socially responsible behavior among students.

Research methodology: This study employs a qualitative interpretive phenomenological approach to examine how university students in Uzbekistan internalize social responsibility through educational values, career choices, and moral upbringing. Data will be gathered via interviews and focus groups with students, educators, and parents to explore the influence of cultural norms, institutional mentorship, and family expectations. The goal is to identify key educational and familial factors that foster civic awareness and responsible decision-making among youth in the context of New Uzbekistan.

Results: In the context of New Uzbekistan, developing youth social responsibility is deeply rooted in moral education, respect for knowledge, and the active application of intellectual and ethical values in society. Through family upbringing, institutional learning, and national initiatives like youth competitions, students are encouraged to become responsible, community-minded individuals who use their knowledge for societal betterment. Emphasizing values from Islamic teachings and the insights of national scholars, this approach fosters a generation that is both intellectually capable and morally grounded.

Conclusions: Youth social responsibility plays a vital role in shaping their personal growth, societal engagement, and leadership potential, while fostering collaboration and innovation through modern knowledge and digital platforms. This not only enhances their global competitiveness but also contributes to the prosperity and well-being of society.

Limitations: This study is limited by its qualitative focus on sociocultural narratives and philosophical foundations within the context of New Uzbekistan, which may not fully capture the diversity of youth experiences across different regions or socioeconomic backgrounds. The research also relies heavily on interpretive insights rather than measurable indicators, which restricts generalizability.

Contribution: This study contributes by offering a culturally grounded framework for understanding how moral education, family values, and institutional support shape youth social responsibility in the context of national reform.

Keywords: Civic Engagement, Education, New Uzbekistan, Reforms, Practical Outcomes

1. Introduction

The leading role of Jadid scholars in Uzbekistan in laying the foundations of the Third Renaissance is significant, and they play an important role in the spiritual and educational revival processes of New Uzbekistan (Rakhimjonovich & Umidaxon, 2024; Sobirovich, 2025). Through their reforms in the fields of science and education, the Jadids laid the groundwork for building a new modern society in Uzbekistan. Their reforms in the education sector sparked a growing interest in science and knowledge within Uzbek society (O'g'li, 2025). By establishing new schools, they provided students with the opportunity to study Western sciences. In turn, this contributed to the upbringing of enlightened citizens capable of independent thinking (Kudratullayevna, 2024).

Globally, higher education institutions face a challenge in cultivating active and socially responsible citizens (Aver, Fošner, & Alfirević, 2021). Across Europe and Asia, researchers stress the urgent need to integrate civic competence and social accountability into university curricula (Damiani & Fraillon, 2025). For example, a recent study argues that teaching “History” through project-based learning significantly boosts students’ civic awareness, aligning with international trends in education for global citizenship (To‘ynor, 2024).

For instance, the works of Jadid scholar Abdulla Avloni pay special attention to the education of youth. In his work *“Turkiy Guliston yoki Axloq”* (*Turkic Gulistan or Ethics*), youth education and upbringing are treated as matters of great importance. The work emphasizes that young people must enrich their knowledge and experience to strengthen their role in society. This process has a profound impact on their personal and social development and prepares them to become active and responsible members of society in the future. The book highlights the essential role of education in shaping the moral character of young people (Berei, 2020; G‘ayratovna, 2024).

Although national reform efforts in Uzbekistan aim to develop socially responsible students, most existing research focuses on curricular and philosophical dimensions, not on empirical evaluations of student attitudes or behavior (To‘ynor, 2024). Notably absent are studies assessing whether reform-driven educational approaches actually translate to measurable changes in students’ social initiatives, civic engagement, or ESG-aligned practices. Moreover, a majority of international studies on civic competence remain country-specific, leaving Uzbekistan’s unique context underexplored. To address the existing research gap, this study aims to evaluate the impact of education reforms under the “New Uzbekistan” initiative on university students’ social responsibility, with a specific focus on their civic engagement and participation in community-based actions, thereby assessing how well these reforms translate into actual socially responsible behavior among students.

2. Literature review

2.1 Literature Review

Education not only imparts knowledge to the youth but also broadens their worldview and shapes their attitude toward various social issues (Salsabila & Ahkam, 2024). For instance, it is emphasized in the work that qualities such as justice and honesty should be instilled in young people so they can positively influence those around them. Furthermore, the text underscores the importance of upbringing that enables youth to make sound decisions in various situations. The type of moral guidance young people receive is a key factor that determines their future role in society (Zarrett, Liu, Vandell, & Simpkins, 2021; Zhu, 2023). They must deeply internalize both their personal and social responsibilities and be capable of applying them in practice (Akhmedjanova & Kerimova, 2024).

The text also stresses the importance of developing young people's scientific and artistic abilities, highlighting how these contribute to their meaningful participation in society. Youth should be encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills in service of the public good, thereby fully understanding and embracing their social responsibilities. In essence, *Turkiy Guliston yoki Axloq* views

the education, upbringing, and sense of social responsibility among youth as essential conditions for societal stability and progress. This, in turn, helps to strengthen the position and role of young people in society (Corney, Marion, Baird, Welsh, & Gorman, 2024).

From the perspective of not only personal development but also active societal participation, it is extremely important to examine the philosophical and sociological foundations of instilling a sense of responsibility in youth (Walker, 2024; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). This process enhances individuals' self-awareness and their ability to realize their potential, while also accelerating the development of the entire society. In our analysis, we seek to explore these issues by drawing on the educational and moral principles of the Jadid scholars and the ongoing reforms in New Uzbekistan (Manzano-Sánchez & Gómez-López, 2023).

In Uzbekistan's ongoing renewal process, the relationship between society and the individual is being re-evaluated in a new context. Jadid scholars such as Usmon Nosir and Abdulla Avloni focused on reforming the education system with an emphasis on nurturing students as active members of society. According to them, every individual bears responsibility for the development of society, which requires them to be both knowledgeable and ethical. During the Jadid movement, the ideas of self-awareness and personal development were strongly emphasized principles that remain relevant today. The education system is responsible for providing students with the opportunity to develop their skills and talents. This process enables students to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the culture around them, thereby improving their capacity to make responsible decisions. In New Uzbekistan, the importance of ethical and moral education is growing steadily (Alfirević, Arslanagić-Kalajdžić, & Lep, 2023).

2.2 Hypothesis

H₁: Higher levels of moral and ethical education as reflected in upbringing, career decision-making, and university community engagement will be positively correlated with stronger social responsibility values and prosocial behaviors among Uzbek university students.

3. Research methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach rooted in interpretive phenomenology to explore how students in Uzbekistan internalize and practice social responsibility, particularly in relation to educational values, career selection, and moral upbringing. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with university students, educators, and parents. The research is grounded in the belief that knowledge acquisition, intellectual development, and moral instruction are interrelated and central to shaping students' sense of duty to society. As highlighted in Uzbek cultural and religious traditions, including the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the pursuit of knowledge must be accompanied by ethical integrity and social awareness. The study also acknowledges the influence of cultural norms, such as familial expectations and traditional career inheritance (e.g., continuing the father's profession), on students' sense of individual and collective responsibility.

In examining these dynamics, the university setting will serve as the primary field of observation, offering insights into how educational institutions foster social engagement through formal instruction and interpersonal interactions. The research will explore how peer influence, faculty mentorship, and parental involvement contribute to students' understanding of civic duty and accountability. The analysis will also investigate how career choices are made with consideration for both personal ambition and societal impact. To ensure a comprehensive view, the study will include narrative reflections from students about their developmental journey, how they interpret their role in society, and what factors shape their decision-making. The overarching goal is to identify the educational and familial mechanisms that most effectively promote social responsibility among youth in the context of New Uzbekistan.

4. Results and discussions

Misuse of one's knowledge can lead not only to self-deception but also to misleading others. Such behavior contradicts the core principles of social responsibility, which include guiding others toward righteousness and promoting moral conduct. Through moral education provided in educational institutions, students are taught to understand their social obligations and to strive toward fulfilling their duties to society (Ajeng, 2024). Ethical norms do more than merely distinguish between good and bad; they define each individual's role and responsibility within the broader social structure. Both the family and educational institutions serve as foundational pillars in the development of students' sense of responsibility. Within the context of New Uzbekistan, the family instills essential moral and social values, while educational institutions deepen these values through comprehensive learning and intellectual development.

During their time in these institutions, students learn how to act responsibly in a variety of circumstances. In the society of New Uzbekistan, exemplary models of social responsibility are presented for students to follow. Through these examples, youth observe how one may act ethically and responsibly even in challenging situations. Moreover, they are taught how to consider the public interest in their activities and decision-making. Developing the concept of social responsibility among students equips them not only to succeed in their professions but also to contribute meaningfully to broader societal change. The following teachings from Imam Al-Zarnuji's *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* (The Instruction of the Student) illuminate the essence of student life and demonstrate how such principles may be reflected in daily practice. Student youth who commit to expanding their knowledge and skills and who treat them with respect and reverence can attain valuable and respected positions in society.

Respect and veneration toward teachers are of paramount importance and play a decisive role in a student's academic and professional journey. As our sages have said, "Respect surpasses even worship." When great scholars were asked whether knowledge or manners were more important, they answered, "Manners are superior." Indeed, good character and refined manners are the most distinguished adornments of any learned person.

One of our esteemed scholars once remarked: "Whoever has attained virtue and status has done so by preserving respect and noble conduct. And whoever has lost their dignity has done so by neglecting manners and losing a sense of reverence". Through these insights, students must come to deeply understand how every decision and action they take can influence societal change. Therefore, it is essential that each of them becomes a responsible, respectful, and ethically grounded citizen contributing to the future of our society. One of the primary duties of a scholar is to illuminate truth through knowledge and contribute to the moral and intellectual development of society. A scholar's knowledge must serve not only their personal goals but also the broader aims of the community. Scholars who are unable to apply their knowledge in practice and those who act righteously without understanding often fail to benefit society, even if their intentions are sincere. Instead, they should utilize their skills and insights to improve the lives of others. From this perspective, it is crucial that every student and scholar aims to use their knowledge for the betterment of society. Doing so not only fulfills their social responsibilities but also fosters personal growth and enhances the quality of life of those around them.

Anatomically, humans and animals share many physical features legs, arms, eyes, ears, and mouths. However, the true distinction of human beings lies in their intellectual and spiritual capacities. These faculties reading, writing, speaking, and reasoning are unique blessings endowed by God to humankind, and are not shared by other creatures. Reflections drawn from Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhonov's *Adib-us-Soniyy* help us to grasp more deeply the uniqueness of human beings and their social responsibilities.

The human ability to read and write allows individuals to express thoughts and emotions, which in turn enables them to engage in rational problem-solving. While a dog may recognize and remain loyal to its owner through instinct, it cannot communicate its feelings through words. In contrast, human beings

possess the capacity to articulate their thoughts clearly and to build relationships through communication. However, a person who lives merely to satisfy physical needs eating, drinking, sleeping and who neither reads nor writes, becomes difficult to distinguish from other animals. Such a lifestyle does not activate the full scientific and social potential of a human being, and thus diminishes the essential distinction between humans and other creatures. Therefore, it is vital for every individual to strive to apply their knowledge for the betterment of society. As a method of fulfilling social responsibility, this contributes not only to personal development but also to the improvement of others' quality of life. Educating our youth and supporting them in the pursuit of science not only ensures their individual growth, but also brightens the future of our society as a whole.

Inspired by the work "The Contemporary Era and New Uzbekistan" by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, one can reflect on the urgent need to provide today's youth with advanced knowledge and skills. As the President emphasizes, science and technology are rapidly evolving in the modern world, and therefore it is essential to prepare the younger generation for these processes and to encourage their active participation in scientific and intellectual spheres. This serves to propel Uzbekistan forward along the path of science and progress together with a generation of energetic and initiative-driven youth. In order to enhance the effectiveness of our reforms, our primary support lies in young people who have deeply mastered modern knowledge and skills, possess a broad worldview, and display tireless intellectual vigor. The New Uzbekistan that is being built alongside them can become a model not only for our nation, but for the world at large.

They must be intelligent, well-educated, and insightful. This is vital not only for their personal development but also for the advancement of society as a whole. In every meeting I hold with young people, I emphasize the importance of valuing knowledge and engaging in deep learning. For knowledge is an unparalleled force it enlightens the minds of youth and empowers them to change the world. The more educated our youth become, the brighter and more secure our future will be. Therefore, if we aim to cultivate a generation that is sharp and progressive, we must provide them with access to modern knowledge and digital technologies. Through this, they will be capable not only of improving themselves, but also of contributing positively to the world around them. To elevate youth social responsibility, various competitions such as "*Kamalak Yulduzlari*" (*Stars of the Rainbow*), "*Leader of the Year*", and "*Best Youth Leader of the Year*" are regularly organized. These events aim to strengthen leadership potential among young people, energize their social engagement, and disseminate their experiences to the wider community.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the social responsibility of youth significantly influences their personal development, active participation in society, and future leadership potential. Each young person plays a crucial role in solving various social issues through collaboration and healthy competition. These initiatives not only nurture youth into knowledgeable and skilled individuals, but also envision them as bridges between different layers of society. The comprehensive development of our youth greatly enhances their future opportunities. For instance, their ability to utilize modern knowledge and digital technologies makes them competitive in the global economy. Additionally, their active presence on social platforms enables them to engage in international collaborations and projects. This contributes not only to their individual growth but also to the overall well-being and prosperity of society.

5.1 Limitations and Future Study

This study is limited by its qualitative focus on sociocultural narratives and philosophical foundations within the context of New Uzbekistan, which may not fully capture the diversity of youth experiences across different regions or socioeconomic backgrounds. The research also relies heavily on interpretive insights rather than measurable indicators, which restricts generalizability. Future studies are encouraged to incorporate mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches to quantify the development of social responsibility among youth, and to examine the impact of specific educational reforms, digital programs, or civic initiatives across various demographics in Uzbekistan and comparable societies.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the educators, students, and families who shared their experiences and insights, as well as the academic mentors and institutional partners who provided guidance throughout this research. Special appreciation is extended to the scholars whose philosophical and educational legacies inspired the theoretical foundation of this work, and to the ongoing reforms of New Uzbekistan that make such inquiries both possible and meaningful.

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