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FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALLY ACTIVE CIVIC COMPETENCE IN SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract. This article analyses, from theoretical and systemic perspectives, the factors that affect the development of socially active civic competence among general secondary school students. Competence is interpreted as an integrative unity of knowledge, skills, values, motivation, social experience, and reflection. The ideas of justice, respect for the law, service to the public good, and the enlightened individual, as embodied in the national spiritual and pedagogical heritage, are presented as the value foundations of civic education.

Keywords: socially active civic competence, influencing factors, civic education, social upbringing, democratic school climate, family and mahalla, student participation, social project, media literacy, reflection.

In the context of New Uzbekistan, educational outcomes are measured not only by how much information a student has acquired, but also by the student's ability to apply knowledge lawfully, responsibly, and proactively for the benefit of society. Rapid information flows, expanding digital communication, and a growing diversity of interests and opinions require students to understand rights and responsibilities, verify evidence, respect the views of others, reach agreement, and participate in addressing collective problems.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes citizens' right to participate in the management of public and state affairs and provides a legal basis for the state to encourage young people's active participation in social, economic, political, and other spheres [1]. The Law "On Education" identifies the humanistic and democratic character of education, the primacy of national and universal values, openness, and the integration of state and public governance as fundamental principles [2]. These provisions require civic competence to be regarded not as an optional element of school education, but as a systematic educational outcome.

The source material emphasises that the competence-based approach is an important direction of educational reform and that a competent person is distinguished by the ability to apply knowledge independently in unfamiliar situations, adapt to the social environment, and evaluate his or her own activity. The Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 likewise calls for a gradual transition from theoretical instruction to education oriented towards practical skills [19]. Such readiness does not appear only upon entry to higher education; its foundations are laid in general secondary school. Accordingly, this article aims to provide a theoretical rationale for the factors affecting the development of socially active civic competence in school students, classify them by level, and formulate observable criteria and pedagogical recommendations for school practice.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development provides the study's methodological foundation [9]. According to this theory, a child's development is not merely the product of personal characteristics. It occurs through the interaction of immediate settings such as family and classroom, the connections among those settings, institutions that indirectly influence

the child, societal values, and social change over time. Examining civic competence from this perspective makes it possible to view the entire educational ecosystem without treating any single factor as absolute.

The study draws on UNESCO's cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural domains of global citizenship education [12]; the Council of Europe's model of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding for democratic culture [13]; the findings of the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2022 [14]; and OECD analyses of civic education and child participation [15; 17; 18].

The Concepts of "Competence" and "Competency" The term *competence* refers to the set of requirements and authority needed for a person to act effectively in a particular field, whereas *competency* describes the degree to which the person demonstrates those requirements in a real situation. Although the two concepts are often used in closely related senses, distinguishing them clarifies the logic of assessment: an educational standard defines competence as an intended outcome, while students' decisions and actions reveal their actual competency.

J. Raven interprets competence as the coordination of numerous cognitive, emotional, and volitional components that enable effective activity [8]. This approach is particularly important in civic education. Memorising articles of the Constitution does not, in itself, ensure that a student can communicate constructively, take initiative, or defend the public interest. Knowledge produces competent conduct only when it is integrated with value-based attitudes, practical skills, intrinsic motivation, and experience. On this basis, the author proposes the following definition: socially active civic competence in school students is an integrative personal capacity that unites socio-legal knowledge with the values of justice, human dignity, and the common good; evidence-based communication; lawful initiative; digital responsibility; and reflective assessment of the consequences of one's actions.

Civic competence is manifested through six interrelated components. Weakness in any one component limits the effectiveness of the others:

1. **Cognitive component:** knowledge of the Constitution, rights and responsibilities, state and civil-society institutions, social processes, and information sources.
2. **Value-emotional component:** human dignity, justice, tolerance, belonging to the homeland, empathy, and respect for the rights of others.
3. **Motivational-volitional component:** the desire to contribute to the public good, initiative, perseverance in the face of difficulty, and responsibility for outcomes.
4. **Communicative component:** listening, questioning, argumentation, respectful dialogue, consensus-building, and non-violent conflict resolution.
5. **Activity-based component:** identifying problems, planning solutions, distributing team responsibilities, and implementing lawful projects and volunteer activities.
6. **Reflective component:** evaluating one's position, interests, mistakes, and the consequences of one's actions, and adjusting subsequent action in response to feedback.

Westheimer and Kahne explain the outcomes of civic education through three types of citizen: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the justice-oriented citizen [16]. This classification shows that a school's work should not be limited to discipline and charitable

deeds. Students must also learn to organise collective initiatives and analyse the social causes that give rise to a problem.

Among Eastern thinkers, Abu Nasr al-Farabi, in *The Virtuous City*, associates social well-being with enlightened governance, noble purpose, and cooperation among citizens [4]. In *Kutadgu Bilig*, Yusuf Khass Hajib brings together justice, reason, contentment, and responsibility in public service [5]. These ideas help students understand citizenship not only as the exercise of rights, but also as a responsible commitment to the common welfare.

In the *Code of Temur*, Amir Temur accords priority to law and order, consultation, discipline, and responsibility in public affairs [6]. In *Mahbub ul-Qulub*, Alisher Navoi presents justice, concern for the people, integrity, and moral maturity as criteria for social relations [7]. When this heritage is used in the classroom not merely as a maxim or historical fact, but as a criterion for analysing contemporary situations, it connects values with practical civic conduct.

The educational influence of national heritage does not arise automatically. If texts are presented as idealised slogans and students are not given an opportunity to ask questions or compare interpretations, their impact remains declarative. Problem-based questions are therefore needed to connect a historical idea with a current legal norm, a real situation in school life, and the student's personal choice.

In this study, *influencing factors* are understood as the totality of personal, familial, pedagogical, peer-related, digital, institutional, and sociocultural conditions that directly or indirectly affect students' civic knowledge, values, motivation, and practical participation. A factor does not mechanically determine an outcome; its influence depends on the student's age and prior experience, the alignment of different environments, and pedagogical mediation.

The factors affecting socially active civic competence in school students may be analysed as follows.

1. Normative-Axiological and Cultural-Historical Factors Current legal norms define the purpose and boundaries of civic education: human dignity, equality before the law, the rule of law, and participation. The existence of a legal text, however, does not mean that its content is automatically transferred into student behaviour. A rule becomes a credible value only when it is expressed consistently in the classroom, school governance, and teachers' conduct. National traditions of respect for elders, neighbourhood solidarity, and collective endeavour, including *hashar*, can strengthen social responsibility. At the same time, interpreting respect as the abandonment of critical questioning, or solidarity as the concealment of personal views, may weaken active citizenship. The teacher's task is to harmonise national values with constitutional rights, human dignity, and responsible dialogue.

2. The Family and Mahalla Environment The first model of civic experience is formed in the family. Listening to a child's opinion, explaining the reasons for a decision, distributing household responsibilities fairly, and establishing shared rules together demonstrate the everyday meaning of rights, responsibility, and participation. Relationships based solely on commands reinforce external obedience while limiting independent decision-making and the ability to express reasoned disagreement. The mahalla provides a natural social setting in which students can work with people of different ages and professions on genuine problems. Neighbourhood improvement, support for people in need, environmental campaigns, or reading initiatives become civic learning

when they move beyond one-off events and include inquiry, planning, allocation of responsibilities, evaluation of results, and public reporting.

3. A Democratic School Climate and the Teacher as a Role Model Consistency between the values taught at school and everyday practice is a decisive factor. If students are taught about justice but assessment criteria remain unexplained, or if they are demeaned for expressing an opinion, the hidden curriculum contradicts the formal curriculum. Conversely, clear rules, transparent procedures for considering complaints, respectful dialogue, and explanations of the reasons for decisions turn legal culture into lived experience.

The ICCS 2022 study found a positive association between civic knowledge and an open classroom climate—an environment in which students can freely discuss social and political issues, hear different perspectives, and substantiate their views [14]. This result should not be interpreted as a direct causal law, but as international evidence of the importance of school climate. According to A. Bandura's social cognitive theory, people learn not only through direct instruction, but also by observing the behaviour of others and evaluating its consequences [10]. A teacher's willingness to apologise for a mistake, revise an opinion in light of evidence, treat every student fairly, and keep promises is therefore a powerful model in civic education.

4. Curriculum Content and Pedagogical Technologies Civic competence cannot be developed fully within a single subject. History develops understanding of causes and consequences; law explains norms and protection mechanisms; the native language develops evidence-based speech; literature supports ethical choice and empathy; geography reveals global interdependence; and information technology develops digital safety and source-verification skills. Interdisciplinary planning integrates these elements into a coherent civic task.

UNESCO views global citizenship education as a unity of cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural domains [12]. The Council of Europe model likewise identifies values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding as interdependent outcomes [13]. Classroom instruction must therefore go beyond providing information and give students opportunities to adopt and defend a position, cooperate, and analyse the results of their actions. Cases, debates, mock trials, problem situations, projects, and service-learning are effective methods. For example, when investigating waste around the school, students collect evidence, identify stakeholders, study legal and economic constraints, propose a solution, and assess the result. Such a task requires them to apply knowledge in a genuine social context.

OECD analysis shows that effective civic education moves from one-way transmission of knowledge towards experience, student-centred activity, and engagement with the community [15]. The educational value of participation diminishes, however, when a project is reduced to a photo opportunity or execution of a ready-made plan. Students must have genuine authority in choosing the problem, making decisions, and assuming responsibility for the outcome.

5. Genuine Student Participation and Self-Governance Student councils, the "Student Platform," mentoring, subject clubs, volunteer groups, and class meetings can serve as practical laboratories for civic competence. Yet it is essential to distinguish symbolic participation from

meaningful participation. If adults determine the agenda, candidates, and decisions in full, the experience fosters formalism rather than a sense of agency.

ICCS 2022 found that many students in participating countries took part in elections for class or school representatives, yet their direct influence on school decisions was lower than their rate of participation in voting [14]. This difference shows that an election mechanism alone is insufficient; an elected body must have clearly defined responsibilities and accountability.

6. Psychological and Motivational Factors Social engagement cannot be sustained over time through constant supervision or rewards. E. Deci and R. Ryan's self-determination theory identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential needs underlying intrinsic motivation [11]. When students have a voice in selecting a problem, possess the skills needed to perform the task, and occupy a valued place in the group, they experience initiative as personally meaningful rather than as an external demand.

A sense of self-efficacy, including civic efficacy, is also important. A large and abstract task may reinforce helplessness, whereas a small task that produces a tangible outcome generates the experience that "I can make a difference." Teachers should increase complexity gradually, treat mistakes as material for analysis rather than grounds for punishment, and associate outcomes with collective cooperation rather than individual heroism.

7. Peers and the Communicative Environment Peers exert a strong influence during adolescence. In a classroom where cooperation, mutual support, and acceptance of different views are established norms, students are not afraid to take initiative. Where ridicule, factionalism, bullying, or social exclusion prevail, civic engagement may be perceived as risky.

Rotating roles in small groups, active listening, "I-message" techniques, mediation, and negotiation exercises develop communicative competence. The aim is not to eliminate conflict entirely, but to manage it while preserving human dignity. A democratic society depends not on people who all think alike, but on citizens capable of reaching lawful agreement across differing interests.

8. The Digital Information Environment and Media Literacy The digital environment gives students access to information about public issues, helps them find like-minded people, and enables them to promote initiatives. At the same time, disinformation, manipulative content, hate speech, disclosure of personal data, and information bubbles can undermine the quality of civic decision-making. Media literacy is therefore not an optional addition to civic competence, but a contemporary precondition for it.

Students should develop the habit of identifying the author and purpose of a message, locating the primary source, checking the date and context, distinguishing fact from opinion, assessing whether an image has been altered, and considering the consequences of redistribution. When digital participation is taught together with legality, respectful communication, and personal-data security, it contributes to responsible citizenship.

9. Socio-Economic, Territorial, and Inclusive Factors Opportunities for civic participation are not equal for all students. Differences in access to books, the internet, transport, free time, safe public spaces, and supportive adults affect the quality of participation. ICCS 2022 reports a consistent association between socio-economic background and civic knowledge [14]. This pattern must be explained not only in terms of student ability, but also with reference to unequal access to resources and experience.

The voices of girls, students with disabilities, students living in remote areas, and members of minority social groups may be formally equal yet less likely to be heard in practice. An inclusive approach is not limited to inviting someone to an event. It requires physical and informational accessibility, adapted tasks, safe communication, and a genuine opportunity to influence decisions.

10. Institutional Cooperation and Pedagogical Governance If civic education is treated solely as the responsibility of the class teacher or history teacher, its activities become fragmented. Responsibilities and accountability must be clearly distributed among the school administration, subject teachers, psychologist, librarian, parents, the mahalla, youth organisations, and local authorities. The purpose of cooperation is not to take students to a prearranged event, but to create safe and genuine social experience for them.

Periodic diagnosis and reflection are essential to governance: Which groups participate in decisions? Whose voice is not heard? How many proposals have been implemented? Was a rejected proposal explained? Who benefited from the project? These questions assess the quality and fairness of participation rather than merely counting events.

The outcome thus depends not on a simple sum of factors, but on relationships through which they reinforce or weaken one another. The cognitive component of civic competence can be taught relatively quickly, while value-related and behavioural components require sustained experience. It is therefore scientifically unfounded to present a one-off spiritual or educational event as a durable outcome. From a chronosystem perspective, observation should focus on students' progression from small initiatives to broader social projects, their ability to correct actions after mistakes, and their consistency in upholding the same value across different situations.

Developing socially active civic competence in school students is a multifactorial and long-term pedagogical process. It requires the integration of knowledge, values, motivation, communication, practical participation, and reflection. It cannot therefore be regarded as the product of one subject, one teacher, or one-off event.

The study identifies the normative-axiological environment, national heritage, family and mahalla, democratic school climate, teacher modelling, interdisciplinary pedagogical technologies, genuine student participation, intrinsic motivation, peer relationships, the digital information environment, social equity, and institutional cooperation as key factors. Their influence is interdependent and contingent upon context. The most important pedagogical condition is to transform the civic values taught at school into norms governing the school's own daily life. When students are heard, influence decisions, analyse mistakes and conflicts safely, create tangible results for the public good, and evaluate their own conduct, socially active civic competence develops from declarative knowledge into a stable personal quality.

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