

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE JAPANESE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION MODEL AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract: This article analyzes the distinctive pedagogical features of the Japanese preschool education model, its principles ensuring effectiveness, and the possibilities of adapting this experience to the national education system of Uzbekistan. The study highlights child-centered approaches, early development of independence and responsibility, as well as the formation of collectivism and social competencies. In addition, based on experimental projects implemented in the Namangan region, the prospects of integrating advanced foreign practices into the national education system are substantiated.

Keywords: preschool education, Japanese model, social competence, pedagogical approach, innovation, quality of education, independence, upbringing.

INTRODUCTION

In the current process of globalization, the modernization of the education system, especially improving the quality of preschool education, has become a strategic priority. The preschool education stage forms the foundation of a child's intellectual, social-emotional, and moral development. Therefore, studying the experience of developed countries, particularly the Japanese preschool education model, and adapting it to the national education system is one of the urgent scientific and practical tasks of today.

The Japanese preschool education system is distinguished by its child-centered approach, emphasis on collectivism, and early development of independence, responsibility, and self-care skills. In this model, the educational process is closely integrated with upbringing-oriented approaches, giving priority to the development of children's social adaptation and life competencies.

In recent years, reforms have been consistently implemented, and on September 30, 2024, Presidential Decree No. PF-152 titled “On additional measures to further improve the quality and effectiveness of preschool education”¹ was adopted. This document is significant for its focus on improving the quality of preschool education, introducing modern approaches into the educational process, and strengthening management efficiency.

In addition, based on Presidential Resolution No. 531 dated August 27, 2024, titled “On introducing a system for training candidates for the position of director of state preschool education institutions in managerial training courses, issuing managerial certificates to them, and appointing candidates to positions”², a new system for training directors of state preschool education institutions has been introduced. It establishes modern mechanisms for training candidates in managerial courses, certifying them, and appointing them to positions. This, in turn, serves to improve management quality in preschool education institutions.

As a logical continuation of these reforms, Presidential Decree No. PF-19 dated February 5, 2026, titled “On measures to further improve the preschool education and upbringing system”³ was adopted. The decree sets out tasks aimed at further improving the preschool education and upbringing system, enhancing the capacity of teaching staff, introducing innovative pedagogical technologies, and widely implementing advanced foreign experience, including the Japanese model, into practice.

Education and upbringing are continuous processes without interruption. A child’s future is directly connected to their current learning and educational experiences. Therefore, alongside national values and traditional pedagogical approaches, it is also important to implement advanced foreign methodologies in practice.

¹ O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2024-yil 30-sentabrdagi PF-152-sonli “Maktabgacha ta’lim sifati va samaradorligini yanada oshirish bo‘yicha qo‘shimcha chora-tadbirlar to‘g‘risida”gi Farmon

² O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2024-yil 30-sentabrdagi PF-152-sonli “Maktabgacha ta’lim sifati va samaradorligini yanada oshirish bo‘yicha qo‘shimcha chora-tadbirlar to‘g‘risida”gi Farmon

³ O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2026-yil 5-fevraldagi PF-19-sonli “Maktabgacha ta’lim va tarbiya tizimini yanada takomillashtirish chora-tadbirlari to‘g‘risida”gi Farmon

In Namangan region, in order to improve the quality of education, develop modern skills in learners, and implement advanced international experience, experimental pilot work based on the Japanese education model is being gradually introduced. Within the framework of this project, 17 general education schools and 18 preschool education institutions across the region have been selected. In these schools and kindergartens, effective approaches of the Japanese system are being tested, and children are provided with opportunities to develop their potential through new methods.

METHODOLOGY

This study scientifically examines the Japanese preschool education model, its distinctive pedagogical features, and the possibilities of implementing this experience in the national education system. During the research process, the content of the Japanese preschool education system, its organizational principles, and the factors ensuring its effectiveness are analyzed based on a comparative pedagogical approach. Furthermore, ways of integrating and harmonizing these features with the national education system are identified.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

During the past period, extensive work has been carried out in our country aimed at ensuring the healthy and well-rounded development of the younger generation, as well as introducing effective forms and methods of education and upbringing into the preschool education system.

The favorable conditions created for the development of public-private partnerships in the field of preschool education have become a solid foundation for further increasing the number of private preschool institutions and expanding the range of services they provide.

At the same time, the conducted analysis shows the need to address issues such as ensuring wider coverage of children in preschool education, equipping preschool institutions with modern educational and methodological materials and literary resources, and attracting qualified teaching and managerial staff to the sector.

With the aim of further improving the preschool education system, ensuring equal access of children to quality preschool education, developing the non-governmental sector of preschool education services, and utilizing foreign experience in preparing children for school education, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4312 dated May 8, 2019, “On approval of the Concept for the Development of the Preschool Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030” was adopted.

In the Concept for the Development of the Preschool Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, the target indicators for 2025–2030 are approved in accordance with Appendix 4. This document defines a system of indicators related to increasing preschool enrollment, improving the quality and effectiveness of education, strengthening the capacity of pedagogical staff, and modernizing infrastructure. It also stipulates that the Concept will be implemented step-by-step based on annual “Roadmaps” developed in accordance with achieved results and target indicators.

Currently, innovative approaches used in the Japanese preschool and primary education system are encouraging a global rethinking of education systems.

Researchers D.A. Axatova and X.A. Axatova, in their scientific studies, state that “attention to preschool education within the reforms of the education system of Uzbekistan is emphasized, highlighting the necessity of foreign experience. They also describe the specific and general features of Japanese preschool education, the content of preschool education, and the requirements set for it”⁴.

In Japan, the preschool education system includes the following types of institutions: public, prefectural, municipal; private; and kindergartens attached to schools and universities.

Hoikuen (保育園) – a public childcare center that accepts children from 3 months of age. These institutions are specially designed for infants and young

⁴ D.A.Axatova, X.A.Axatova. Maktabgacha ta’lim tizimini rivojlantirishda xorij tajribalarni va yangicha yondashuvni joriy etish istiqbollari yaponiya maktabgacha ta’limining o’ziga xos jihatlari.-B. 221-222.

children to support working mothers based on government policies. Necessary documents must be submitted to enroll a child in such a center.

Youchien (幼稚園) – a private kindergarten intended for older preschool children. Here, children learn singing, drawing, reading, and basic arithmetic. In more expensive institutions, English language instruction is also provided. In this way, children are fully prepared for school. It should be noted that the main purpose of kindergartens is not only education but also socialization, meaning that children are taught to interact with their peers and society as a whole.

Among private kindergartens, a special place is occupied by elite kindergartens affiliated with prestigious universities. In Japan, it is believed that if a child enters such a kindergarten, their future is secured. After reaching the appropriate age, the child enters a university-affiliated school and from there proceeds to university without entrance examinations. Admission to such institutions requires significant financial resources, and the child must pass very strict selection procedures.

In Japan, more than 80% of preschool education institutions are private kindergartens and childcare centers. There is generally little difference between public and private preschool education. Fees for both public and private kindergartens depend on parents' income—the higher the family income, the higher the kindergarten fee.

Each kindergarten also has its own uniform, including trousers, skirts, blouses, dresses, hats, and school bags. Wearing uniforms is mandatory. Being a preschool teacher in Japan is considered a prestigious profession; therefore, there are many male administrators and teachers working in preschool education institutions.

In the upbringing of Japanese children, five key aspects are given special attention:

Close mother–child relationship: This closeness is also reflected in daily life; mother and child often sleep together, and the mother carries the child for long periods.

Ikudzi system: god, servant, and equal. According to this system, a child is considered “god” until the age of 5, “servant” from 5 to 15 years, and “equal” from the age of 15.

Importance of family: In general, the mother is mainly responsible for child upbringing. She spends a lot of time with children. The family is a space governed by “amae,” where individuals are always supported and cared for.

Personal example: Japanese mothers rarely force children to do something they themselves have not demonstrated. Instead, they show examples first and encourage children to develop the desire to do the task themselves.

Attitude towards emotions: Before teaching a child to live in a collectivist society, it is important to explain how to recognize and respect the emotions and interests of others. Calmness, patience, and kindness are considered essential values.⁵

Researchers O.Xolov and S.A.To‘dayeva, in their studies, analyze the education systems of Japan and Uzbekistan. They note that Japanese education is distinguished by discipline, diligence, innovation, and a practice-oriented approach. Meanwhile, they highlight that the education system of Uzbekistan has been developing through significant reforms in recent years, including the introduction of a 12-year school system, the construction of new schools, and the development of preschool education”⁶.

Japan’s preschool education system, although formed relatively late in history, is one of the fastest developing sectors. The first kindergartens in the country were established under foreign influence and were gradually adapted to Japanese national traditions. The first group for young children in Japan was opened in 1871 in Yokohama, and in 1894 the first Japanese kindergartens in Tokyo were established by American women. In 1876, the first kindergartens based on the Froebel method began their activities.

From 1947 onwards, nurseries and kindergartens were legally organized

⁵ D.A.Axatova, X.A.Axatova. Maktabgacha ta’lim tizimini rivojlantirishda xorij tajribalarni va yangicha yondashuvni joriy etish istiqbollari yaponiya maktabgacha ta’limining o‘ziga xos jihatlari.-B. 221-222.

⁶ O.Xolov, S.A.To‘dayeva. Yaponiya ta’lim tizimi tahlili/Ustozlar uchun. 86-son 1–to’plam Dekabr-2025. -B.18-22.

within schools. The main focus of nurseries was the daily care of children, and they were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. However, starting from the 1960s, their programs became almost indistinguishable from those of kindergartens⁷.

This historical development shows how early attention to child upbringing has been established in Japan. Preschool education programs play a very important role as preparation for primary education. In kindergartens, children are taught skills such as independence, discipline, communication in a group, cleanliness, aesthetic education, musical activities, physical activity, and interaction with nature.

Kindergartens are divided into two types: *yōchien* (幼稚園), which are under the Ministry of Education and have an educational and upbringing-oriented approach, and *hoikuen* (保育園), which belong to the health and social welfare system and primarily focus on care and upbringing. Since the 1960s, the curricula of these two systems have become increasingly similar, resulting in a more integrated, effective, and high-quality preschool education system in Japan.

Currently, in Japan, it is common for children to attend kindergarten from the age of three. Teachers in both public and private kindergartens are required to have high qualifications and undergo specialized training in psychology and pedagogy. The number of children in kindergartens is limited, and teachers are assigned only a small number of children, which allows for individual attention.

Modern innovative approaches used in Japan's preschool and primary education system are encouraging the reconsideration of educational systems worldwide. For example, Japanese children are not evaluated with grades until the age of 10. At the same time, their educational outcomes are recognized as among the highest in the world. This success is based on five main pedagogical principles.

The first principle is respect before knowledge. Children are taught to respect every individual regardless of their social status or financial situation. In the educational process, personal qualities and manners are developed first,

⁷ Alisher Bolibekov. "Yaponiya maktabgacha ta'lim tizimining qiyosiy tahlili" 2024. 5-bet . (<https://ru.scribd.com/>)

followed by academic achievement.

The second principle is independence and responsibility. In Japanese kindergartens and schools, there are no janitors. Children themselves clean floors, organize classrooms, and put their clothes in order. This process develops independence, organization skills, and teamwork abilities.

The third principle is friendship with nature. Children grow plants in gardens, care for animals, and acquire environmental knowledge through practical experience. In this way, they learn about the environment not theoretically but through real-life practice.

The fourth principle is stress-free education. Japanese children are not exposed to strict control or exam pressure until higher grades. They learn through curiosity and creative activity and are encouraged to self-develop.

The fifth principle is character priority. Manners, honesty, accuracy, and responsibility are considered higher values than talent. Based on these principles, the Japanese education system focuses not only on academic skills but also on the development of human qualities.

The experimental project in Namangan shows that adapting advanced foreign pedagogical methods to local conditions can effectively stimulate children's creative, social, and emotional development. This, in turn, helps raise future generations who are not only knowledgeable but also responsible, independent, and cooperative individuals.

Furthermore, replacing traditional assessment systems with interest-based and creative learning increases children's motivation and desire for self-development. A friendly relationship with nature and learning ecological knowledge through practice help form environmental awareness and social responsibility.

As a result, implementing the Japanese experience in schools and preschools of Namangan region contributes to raising children as independent, responsible, cooperative, and socially adaptable individuals. This approach not only improves the quality of the national education system but also creates opportunities to

prepare personnel who meet international educational standards..

CONCLUSION

Thus, in the context of globalization, the modernization of the preschool education system—particularly the adaptation of advanced practices of the Japanese preschool education model into the national system—plays an important role in the personal and social development of children. Organizing the educational process based on humanistic principles, strengthening a child-centered approach, and ensuring the balanced development of collectivism and independence expand opportunities for forming social competencies in preschool-aged children.

The main outcomes of developing social competence in preschool education can be identified as follows:

- conscious assimilation of norms and values accepted in society;
- development of effective communication and social interaction with adults and peers;
- formation of independence, responsibility, and self-management skills;
- development of socio-emotional intelligence, empathy, and emotional sensitivity;
- strengthening participation in group activities and cooperation skills;
- formation of a positive and respectful attitude toward family, society, and work activities;
- development of a culture of safe behavior.

The principles of education reflected in the Japanese model—such as independence, responsibility, collectivism, respect for nature, and upbringing based on personal example—contribute not only to the development of knowledge in children but also to the formation of essential life competencies. These approaches transform the educational process into a stress-free, creative, and practice-oriented environment.

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