

# RESEARCH ARTICLE ON IMPROVING THE APPRECIATION AND RISE STATUS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN UZBEK SOCIETY

Tasheva Zarina Djumayevna

MA-EDIN Graduate Student at Tashkent Webster University  
and ESL Teacher at Both Public and Private Schools

## Abstract

Teaching has always been an inseparable part of any society; consequently, teachers have played an essential role for the development of the social life of the community. Depending on different circumstances the social status of teachers varied from time to time, from country to country. This case study focused on the analysis of status of teacher career pathways in Uzbekistan, identifies challenges in improving the status of public-school teachers and provides recommendations on effective reforms in Uzbekistan, by exchanging the experience of other countries performing well in education rankings.

**Keywords:** Teaching, education, public school teachers of Uzbekistan, rise the status of teachers, strategies of appreciation improvement, salary progression, necessary condition.

## Introduction

It is common knowledge that the quality of education cannot exceed the quality of teachers who play a great vital role in students' learning. It is evident that decreasing motivation of teachers influences on quality of education. However, the status of teachers at public schools has dropped to certain extent over the last few years in Uzbekistan. Staffing classroom with motivated and qualified teachers has become a vulnerable issue for the Government of Uzbekistan. Teaching careers have faced several reforms over the decade. Innovation of education, creating a more attractive career structure, offering better salaries for teachers, good facilities and classrooms can be efficient solutions to increase the status of teachers in our country.

This research involves an interview conducted with public school teachers who are mainly not satisfied with their social status, working conditions, professional development, their salary, administrative duties and huge amount of paperwork (bureaucracy). The study is designed in the following way. First, I review an article on teacher career structure and discuss reforms carried out in foreign countries in terms of teachers' career. Then, the reforms related to teaching career in Uzbekistan are analyzed. Next, the challenges of current teaching reforms in public schools in Uzbekistan are examined. Finally, the case study giving some recommendations is given as a conclusion.



## Methods

Several types of approaches of investigation, such as descriptive, qualitative and quantitative methods are used in complementary form in this case study research, where interviews and surveys are organized with public school teachers, students, as well as collected data analysis and observations of articles, and official records about the improving appreciation of public-school teachers and their social status.

## Literature Review

The problems of appreciation and status of teachers in Uzbekistan have become one of the very frequently discussed issues recent years. One of such sources - Uz-Report, 2019 “Project Survey”, analyzed the results of respondents about opting for a teacher career and showed that how teachers appreciated by many people. According to the survey teaching has become increasingly attractive, with many children aspiring to become teachers in Uzbekistan. The Uz-Report project conducted a survey on the role of teachers in society in 2019, in which more than 4.5 thousand respondents participated. According to the Ministry of Public Education, more than a half (around 59%) of respondents suggested they would like to choose a teaching profession in the future. At the same time, 21% of them expressed a desire to work in public schools, 8% in private schools and 7% in private training centers. When asked why they wanted to become teachers, 10% of respondents mentioned the rise in teacher wages, and 8% mentioned the rise in teachers’ social position. An additional a third (34%) of participants indicated that they enjoy working with kids. 10% of participants ranked the status of teachers in society as “excellent,” 28% as “good,” and 45% as “satisfactory.” The position of teachers in society is regarded as “low” by about 16% of respondents.

Thousands of young specialists graduate from pedagogical institutions in our country every year. Besides that, there are a number of teacher-training and retraining centers and courses dealing with the solution of the problem connected with the deficiency of teachers in public schools at present time. However, as N. Uralova (2022) writes “The teacher shortage is so profound that in October 2021, the cabinet of ministers allowed third-year students at pedagogical universities to begin teaching their own classrooms at public schools”. The author tried to depict all problematic issues and solutions in current public schools in her research article, and showed how these challenges can influence on working teachers. One of the causes for the deficiency of teachers is a low monthly salary paid to public school teachers. According to Uralova, officially, teachers earn around \$200 per month, according to the state statistics committee, compared to about \$615, on average, that labor migrants earn in Russia, as one survey last year found. The private outfits, on the other hand, offer salaries that start at twice the public-school wage. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some prestigious study centers and private schools in Tashkent pay between \$600 – \$1000 per month. It is a huge sum of money given the minimum wage in Uzbekistan is UZS 822 000,00 (approx. \$75) a month. Moreover, the author of this article suggests poor working conditions of public-school teachers.

As A. Odilov (2023), a senior teacher of Turin Polytechnical University in Tashkent, examines in his article that “The Uzbek government is implementing a range of financial incentive



programs for educators to uplift those who perform well and those who serve in underprivileged environments.”

## Results and Discussion

### What can be done to make being a teacher in the public-school system an attractive job?

- Increasing salaries
- Improving working conditions
- Professional development
- Promote work-life balance
- Career advancement
- Benefits for social services
- Reducing Bureaucracy
- Community and Parental engagement
- Reducing Corruption

**Increasing salaries and benefit competitive pay:** Make sure that the pay for teachers is commensurate with other occupations that demand similar degrees of training and accountability. Comprehensive benefits, such as paid time off, retirement plans are provided by benefits packages.

**Improving working conditions classroom resources:** Invest in the classroom supplies, technology, and facilities to create a conducive learning environment. **Class size reduction:** Aim to reduce student to teacher ratios to allow for more personalized instruction and less stress for teachers.

**Professional development ongoing training:** Provide access to continuous professional development opportunities that help teachers grow their skills and advance their career. Establish mentorship of new teachers, pairing them with experienced educators who can provide guidance and support.

**Promote work-life balance providing flexible schedules:** allow for more flexible work schedules

**Career advancement opportunities:** Help create clear pathways for career advancement, including specializations and opportunities for further education.

**Benefits for social services:** Provide financial support during the holidays, such as Navruz, New Year, Teachers’ Day, Memorial Day and in summer holiday, as this period are simply unpaid. Receiving 50% discounts for utilities, such as electricity, heat, water, gas. Additionally, establishing 50% discounts for using public transportation, train, plane tickets.

**Reducing Bureaucracy:** Minimize unnecessary administrative tasks to allow teachers to focus more on teaching and less on paperwork. Increasing the number of support staff to help with administrative tasks, freeing up teachers’ time.

**Community and Parental engagement:** strengthen relationship between schools and the community, encouraging parental involvement and support for teachers.

**Reducing Corruption:** Corruption can be widespread at public schools, even if it is controlled effectively by the government. Corruption in education can lead to low education and poorly qualified teachers in public schools.



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## Conclusion

Making a teaching career more appealing can be an attractive way to elevate the standing of the field because career structures that provide instructors with more vertical and horizontal career prospects are the most promising for boosting teacher motivation.

This study examined the issues and offered recommendations to decision-makers regarding the structure of teacher careers. It does this by analyzing the effectiveness of current reforms and drawing lessons from the experiences of other nations, emphasizing the criteria that must be met for positive outcomes. Lastly, we have the following:

First, the amount of salary is a key to increase the appeal and status of the teaching profession. The recent teacher career reforms that introduced a differentiated salary scheme for teachers was initially appreciated by teachers, but low level of base salary and higher requirements for salary increments negatively affected teacher attraction, motivation, and retention. The Government should shift its efforts from increasing the salary of teachers comparable to the average salary in the economy towards increasing the relative attractiveness and fairness of pay of the teaching profession compared to other professions requiring a similar level of qualification.

Secondly, we discover that within a school and/or a region, there are few opportunities for advancement in a teaching career structure. Even though the public education system offers more senior management roles, the low pay and unfavorable working circumstances make them unappealing. Furthermore, teachers are not given any avenues for career advancement in academic fields. Teachers' jobs and responsibilities do not often diversify as they advance vertically in their careers; in fact, most tasks stay the same. Getting into management roles frequently means leaving the classroom. Therefore, it makes the career uninteresting and unattractive, and it poses hazards that worsen learning results of setting up classrooms with inexperienced educators and/or school administrators teaching abilities. The government should act to create carefully thought-out career arrangements. Job structure, professional expectations, and pay, so strengthening the capabilities of instructors and provide sustained inspiration.

Third, while certification 50% of bonus offers an appealing substitute for pay advancement by recognizing and incentivizing high-achieving educators, it only evaluates subject-matter expertise; it ignores other critical competencies for successful instruction, including pedagogy, curriculum, student behavior, learning outcomes, classroom management, effective communication, and feedback. This calls for the implementation of a thorough assessment system in the future that complies with teacher professional standards.

Lastly, the career ladder structure ought to strongly prioritize ongoing professional development opportunities for educators and facilitate cooperation and professional growth inside schools.

Because of these circumstances, many teachers are quitting their jobs in public schools to work for private companies or as independent contractors. For similar reasons, recent college graduates also choose to stay away from public schools. The Education Ministry must move to update the curriculum and make the subjects taught in schools relevant, even though it is too soon to tell if the government's efforts to recruit and retain teachers will be successful. Students



are not motivated to learn until that time; their only goal is to prepare for tests. To stop the current downward trend and restore the importance that instructors and students place on public education, the following actions can be taken:

The first step, as was mentioned earlier, if the government wants to keep teachers in public schools should be to address pay rather than just promising or symbolically raising it. A fair wage should not be contingent on meeting certain requirements that some instructors may meet but others may not. To support public school teachers' socioeconomic standing and reputation, the minimum pay ought to be sufficient.

There should be a maximum of 25 pupils in each class. When there are more than 35 pupils in a room and classes change every 45 minutes, neither the teacher nor the students can succeed. There should be a timely completion of a sufficient number of school buildings. In order to support a contemporary, participatory teaching method, public schools ought to have the necessary resources.

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