

SPECIAL ARTICLE

A Study of the Values of the “Independence Generation” in Post-Soviet Central Asia

Focusing on Uzbekistan during the Karimov regime (1991-2016)

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the values of the youth in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Those born during the era of strong nationalism following Uzbekistan’s independence in 1991 grew up under an education system conducted in Uzbek rather than Russian. This study identifies this group as the “Independence Generation” or the “youth generation” of Uzbekistan and explores how their values differ from those of their parents’ generation, often referred to as the “socialist generation.” The analysis draws on statistical data from the 2008 report “The Youth of the New Uzbekistan: Life Positions and Value Priorities” (published by Ijtimoiy Fikr). The priorities and values of the Uzbek Independence Generation in their personal lives directly shape their core values in broader social contexts. The study reveals that the main values cherished by this generation include health, love, family happiness, interesting

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and well-paying work, and friendships. Young people emphasize intelligence, responsibility, and self-confidence as essential qualities for realizing universal human values. Additionally, they strive for success in life and believe they can achieve it in fields of personal interest. About half of the youth surveyed had long-term goals, such as running their own business, pursuing education, or creating a happy family. However, the study also identifies challenges faced by the youth, with approximately half already experiencing material prosperity but also expressing concerns about economic insecurity, difficulties in starting a family, and fear of unemployment. The Independence Generation views a successful life as one grounded in moral actions and attitudes, with family formation and child-rearing seen as central life goals. Given Uzbekistan's youthful population, with an average age of just 27.8 years, the future of the nation will likely be shaped by this generation. The academic significance of this study lies in its potential to inform further research on the values and identity of Uzbek youth. It also aims to serve as foundational material for comparative studies on the Independence Generations across the five Central Asian countries that gained independence during the same period.

KEYWORDS: nation-building in Uzbekistan, Uzbek youth, Independence Generation, moral, successful life

ANNOTATSIYA: Ushbu tadqiqotda postsovet davlatlardan biri bo'lgan O'zbekistondagi yoshlarning qadriyatlari o'rganildi. Mustaqil davlat qurish jarayonida kuchli millatchilik hukm surgan 1991-yilgi mustaqillikdan so'ng tug'ilganlar rus tilida emas, o'zbek tilida ta'lim olib ulg'ayishdi. Ushbu tadqiqotda bu guruh O'zbekistonning "Mustaqillik avlodlari" yoki "yosh avlod" deb nomlandi va ularning qadriyatlari "Sotsialistik avlod" deb ataluvchi o'z ota-onalari qadriyatlaridan qanday farq qilishi o'rganildi. 2008-yildagi "Ijtimoiy fikr" respublika jamoatchilik fikrini o'rganish Markazining "Yangi O'zbekiston yoshlari: hayotiy pozitsiyalar va qadriyat ustuvorliklari" statistik ma'lumotlariga asoslanib, tahlil qilindi. O'zbekiston "Mustaqillik avlodlari" hayotidagi ustuvorlik va qadriyatlar ijtimoiy hayotning asosiy qadriyatlariga tayanadi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatdiki, bu avlodning asosiy qadriyatlari sog'liq, sevgi, oilaviy baxt, qiziqarli va yaxshi haq to'lanadigan ish va do'stlikdir. Yoshlar aql-zakovat, mas'uliyat va o'ziga ishonchni umuminsoniy qadriyatlarni ro'yobga chiqarish uchun zarur bo'lgan muhim fazilatlar sifatida ta'kidlaydi. Bundan tashqari, ular hayotda muvaffaqiyatga intilib, o'zlari qiziqqan sohalarda

muvaqqiyatga erishishlari mumkinligiga ishonadilar. So'rovnomada ishtirok etgan yoshlarning qariyb yarmi o'z biznesini yuritish, ta'lim olish yoki baxtli oila qurish kabi uzoq muddatli maqsadlarga ega. Shu bilan birga, tadqiqot yoshlar oldida turgan qiyinchiliklarga e'tibor qaratdi: ularning taxminan yarmi allaqachon moliyaviy farovonlikni boshdan kechirmoqda, ammo iqtisodiy yetishmovchilik, oila qurishdagi qiyinchilik va ishsizlik qo'rquvi haqida tashvish bildirganlar ham mavjud. Jamoatchilik fikri so'rovi natijalari ham O'zbekistonning “Mustaqillik avlodlari” axloqiy xulq-atvor va munosabatlarga asoslangan hayotni muvaqqiyatli hayot deb bilishini, oila qurish va farzand tarbiyasiga hayotning asosiy maqsadi sifatida qarashini ko'rsatdi. O'zbekiston aholisining o'rtacha yoshi 27,8 yoshligini hisobga olsak, mamlakat kelajagini aynan shu yosh avlod orqali bashorat qilish mumkin. Ushbu tadqiqotning ilmiy ahamiyati uning o'zbekistonlik yoshlarning qadriyatleri va o'ziga xosligi bo'yicha keyingi tadqiqotlar uchun asos bo'lishidadir. Shuningdek, u xuddi shu davrda mustaqillikka erishgan beshta Markaziy Osiyo davlatlarining “Mustaqillik avlodlari”ni qiyosiy tadqiq qilish uchun asosiy manba bo'lib xizmat qiladi.

KALIT SO'ZLAR: O'zbekistonda davlat qurilishi, o'zbekistonlik yoshlar, Mustaqillik avlodlari, odob-axloq, muvaqqiyatli hayot

1. Introduction

This study aims to examine the values of youth in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Uzbekistan underwent a series of political, social, and economic transformations. Unlike the Soviet era when Russian was the lingua franca, independent Uzbekistan immediately reinstated Uzbek as the national language, and all public education transitioned to Uzbek. The ongoing process of converting the Uzbek alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin script is scheduled for completion in 2025. Moreover, the shift from a socialist system to a free-market economy led to rapid changes in post-Soviet Uzbek society.

In particular, the so-called “Independence Generation,” encompassing those born after 1991, has been exposed to a markedly different environment

than their parents.³ Growing up amidst the nation-building process, they experienced a period permeated by strong nationalism and a new education system. It is reasonable to assume that their values have undergone significant shifts as a result. With a young population and a median age of just 27.8 years, the future trajectory of Uzbekistan can be projected by understanding the values and perspectives of this generation (Ashurov, 2011, p. 2).

This study focuses on the values of young people in post-Soviet Uzbekistan during the Karimov era (1991-2016). To achieve this, we analyze a survey conducted in Uzbekistan in 2008.⁴ This survey, the first of its kind since Uzbekistan's independence some 18 years prior, investigated topics such as national values and morality, perceptions of a successful life, family and marriage, healthy living, leisure activities, and national and universal human values. This research holds significant sociological value as it explores how the values of Uzbek youth, who experienced rapid changes such as independence, regime transition, and nation-building, have evolved. It also examines their attitudes towards upholding traditions and embracing new changes.

Admittedly, the survey, conducted in 2008, has limitations in representing the current values of Uzbek youth due to the time gap. However, considering that the Karimov regime, Uzbekistan's first government, lasted for approximately 26 years and that the foundation for value education for the "Independence Generation" was largely established during this period, this study serves as a crucial first step in understanding the current generation of young people who constitute 60% of Uzbekistan's population. Furthermore, given the challenges in conducting public opinion surveys in Uzbekistan due to its long-standing strong presidential system, and the fact that this is the only survey on "values" conducted in Uzbek society to date, the results of this survey warrant academic investigation.

3 In this study, the generation in their 30s and 40s today, who were born after independence and received their primary and secondary education in independent Uzbekistan, will be referred to as the 'Independence Generation.'

4 Data from a 10-year monitoring survey on the spiritual and moral values of Uzbek citizens by the Ijtimoiy Fikr Public Opinion Research Center in Uzbekistan.

2. Post-Soviet Central Asia—Education in Uzbekistan

During the Soviet era, life in Central Asia was largely homogenous. Cities and rural landscapes looked alike, everyone followed the Soviet education system, and television programs were predominantly in Russian. Everything was standardized and uniform, following the Soviet model. Therefore, immediately after independence, the urban and rural landscapes, as well as the lifestyles of people in Central Asian countries, were not significantly different.

However, as decades passed after independence, differences gradually emerged between countries and their people. This divergence stemmed from the varying policies each country’s leadership focused on, leading to disparities in the revival of traditions, degree of openness, and level of economic development. The generation that was born and raised amidst these changes now constitutes over half of Central Asia’s population: the “Independence Generation.” This young generation is influenced by the traditions of the older generation while also displaying curiosity towards new ways of life.

Kazakhstan, for instance, with its high degree of openness and a significant Russian population, has cities that resemble those in Europe. Its youth are heavily influenced by Russia and the West in their attitudes and perspectives on life. Conversely, in closed countries like Turkmenistan, even the younger generation largely maintains traditional ways of life, experiencing a reality not too dissimilar from that of the older generation.

Uzbekistan can be seen as occupying a middle ground between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in terms of openness. This is because, in the early years of independence, Uzbekistan opted for gradual rather than rapid opening in its economic and social spheres. Consequently, among Uzbek youth today, one can observe a lifestyle that blends both traditional and modern identities, positioned somewhere between the two (Lee, 2022, p. 239).

2.1 Educational Principles and Policies of Independent Uzbekistan

The decree “On the Approval of the National Educational Standard for General Secondary Education,” enacted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan on August 16, 1999, aims to reform the education system. According to the decree, general secondary education institutions must

prioritize students' personalities, abilities, and interests. Furthermore, subjects like sociology, philosophy, national ideology, history, law, literature, and art must incorporate knowledge about national and universal human values.

The appendix to the decree “On the Approval of the National Educational Standard for Higher Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan” outlines the following learning objectives in courses such as History of Uzbekistan and World History: understanding events in one’s own society and the world, developing the ability to express opinions on these events, acquiring in-depth knowledge of Uzbekistan’s independence process and achievements, national symbols, the national flag, the national anthem, the country’s political system, national values, and diplomatic relations with other countries, and gaining a deep understanding of global challenges and their solutions. Through subjects like Fundamentals of the State and Law, Law, and Fundamentals of the Constitution, young people also acquire knowledge about Uzbekistan’s humane, democratic, and legal civil society, national ideology and values, the adoption, structure, and content of the Constitution.

In Uzbekistan, education on national and universal human values begins even before a child is born and continues after birth through family, kindergarten, primary, secondary, and higher education. This value education system can be examined by age group as follows:

First, value education within the family begins before a child is born. The parents’ own values play a crucial role in this, as a child born into a family with healthy values is more likely to develop those same values. Home education, starting from the day a child is born, significantly influences their value formation. From the age of one, children begin to form their first impressions and understanding of their society and culture through interactions with various toys and through verbal and non-verbal communication with family members and other members of society. Therefore, Uzbekistan places particular emphasis on early childhood education within the family. During this period, national and universal human values are primarily instilled through lullabies sung by mothers or by the recounting of traditional Uzbek culture and internationally renowned fairy tales. Furthermore, as 80% of Uzbekistan’s population adheres to Islam, Islamic thought plays a significant role in educating about universal human values (Mirzaev, 2023, p. 847).

Second, value education in early childhood education institutions is particularly crucial for a child’s value formation. At this stage, children

perceive the world through various toys. Therefore, desirable values are instilled through interactions with toys and through play and interaction with other children.

Third, value education continues in primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. In these institutions, young people learn universal human values such as love for their family and hometown, respect for elders (a cornerstone of Uzbek traditional culture), respect for children, honesty, integrity, courtesy, and humility. The national ideology of the Republic of Uzbekistan focuses on creating a free and prosperous homeland and a free and prosperous life. Furthermore, the country’s primary goals are to instill in young people values such as national development, peace, national welfare, comprehensive human development, social cooperation, interethnic harmony, and religious tolerance, and to educate them as upstanding citizens of Uzbekistan.

The aforementioned decrees highlight the following key aspects of independent Uzbekistan’s educational principles:

- Universal values for Uzbek citizens both at home and in school to establish a strong national identity for independent Uzbekistan.
- The role of Islamic thought in universal values.
- The importance of family and community, as well as respect for elders, as emphasized in traditional culture.

3. Youth Policy during the Karimov Regime (1991-2016)

According to 2024 statistics, Uzbekistan has a significant youth population, with 60% of the total population falling within the youth demographic.⁵ This includes 2,745,971 individuals aged 0-2; 1,401,050 aged 6-7; 5,269,255 aged 8-15; 1,147,865 aged 16-17; 1,050,788 aged 18-19; 2,543,972 aged 20-24; 2,969,454 aged 25-29; 3,183,745 aged 30-34; and 2,965,162 aged 35-39.

Following its independence in 1991, Uzbekistan experienced rapid transformations in economic, social, political, spiritual, cultural, and technological spheres. With the collapse of Soviet ideology, one of the most

⁵ The official website of the Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan: <https://www.stat.uz/en/official-statistics/demography>.

critical tasks was to establish a new national ideology and moral foundation for the newly independent nation. Developing the concept of national independence was particularly crucial, as Uzbekistan had no prior experience as a sovereign state before 1991. Therefore, amidst the monumental shift towards “independence” and the “birth of a sovereign nation,” education for the citizens of this new republic held immense significance. Policies were formulated under the direct guidance of the president, beginning with a committee chaired by the first president, Islam Karimov, on August 6, 2000.

The committee’s first undertaking was the establishment of the National Philosophical Society of Uzbekistan in 2000. This society prioritized incorporating the ideology of national independence into the education system. Subsequently, textbooks, curricula, and other educational materials for primary and secondary schools were revised to include concepts such as “independence,” “sovereignty,” and “citizen.” The objective of this new education system was to instill national and universal human values in the citizens of Uzbekistan, particularly the youth.

President Karimov dedicated significant effort to redefining national values for the new republic. He authored several books elaborating on ways to cultivate national values in young people, including *Uzbekistan for a Great Future*; *Uzbekistan: National Independence, Economy, Politics, Ideology*; *Youth is the Foundation of Uzbekistan’s Development*; *Let Us Leave a Free and Prosperous Homeland for Ourselves*; and *Homeland is Sacred Like Heaven*.

President Karimov often emphasized in public addresses that “the future of Uzbekistan depends on the upbringing of its youth.” He prioritized fostering a sense of devotion to the homeland, high moral standards, spirituality, enlightenment, and a conscientious work ethic among young people. He directed these values to be incorporated into the public education curriculum. He also asserted, “We must always be concerned and contemplate how to ensure that our youth are morally mature and physically healthy.”

However, due to the pervasive influence of nearly 70 years of Soviet education, a new organization was deemed necessary to facilitate the learning of a new identity and values for the citizens of the independent nation, especially the youth. To instill these newly formed national values, President Karimov established the youth social movement known as Kamolot. This government-supported organization aimed to nurture a physically and morally healthy young generation. This organization was reorganized in 2017 as the Youth Union of Uzbekistan by presidential decree of Shavkat

Mirziyoyev, the current president of Uzbekistan. Currently, this union carries out projects such as comprehensive support for youth, systematic reform, and protection of youth rights. According to the presidential decree of Mirziyoyev on June 27, 2018, a program called Youth – Our Future was developed. Currently, many activities are being carried out in the Governor and Youth system through this program.

4. 2008 Survey on the Values of Uzbekistan’s “Independence Generation”

The Ijtimoiy Fikr Public Opinion Research Center⁶ conducted a decade-long survey on the emotional and moral values of Uzbek citizens. The survey aimed to understand the political, socio-economic, moral, educational, and legal consciousness of Uzbek citizens after independence and to analyze their national and universal human values based on this understanding. The survey was conducted in May 2008, and the respondents were 1,300 individuals over 18 years of age residing across the country who expressed a voluntary and active willingness to participate in the survey. The analysis of the survey was based on statistics from the Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The survey questions covered the following topics: “national values and morality,” “a successful life,” “family and marriage,” “a healthy life,” “leisure activities,” and “national and universal human values.”

4.1 National Values and Morality

According to the survey results on national values, the majority of young people (73.1%) recognized moral qualities such as kindness, respect for elders, hospitality, generosity, friendliness, dignity, humility, wisdom, and diligence as universal human values. Additionally, a significant portion of the respondents (28.1%) considered human rights and freedom, love for one’s country, patriotism, peace and stability, democracy, and political values as universal values. Cultural, artistic, and religious values were also regarded as universal values.

⁶ Ijtimoiy fikr public opinion survey website: <https://ijtimoiyfikr.uz/oz/>. For statistics from the survey, see Ijtimoiy Fikr (2021).

The majority of respondents believed that traditions and rituals passed down through generations are grounded in national values. Moreover, most respondents viewed equality for all individuals, moral qualities, hospitality, diligence, humility, respect for elders, and respect for children as national values.

National and universal human values are closely related to the moral characteristics of the people. The study revealed that the national value system is based on moral qualities, which are traditionally intertwined with national and democratic values. The survey identified five moral characteristics that Uzbek people possess. Considering the general behavior patterns of Uzbek people, most survey participants indicated characteristics such as diligence, dignity and humility, and respect for elders. On the other hand, young respondents identified the pursuit of education and knowledge, diligence and hard work, mobility, respect for elders and love for parents, and dignity and humility as universal values that the nation and its people should possess.

4.2 A Successful Life based on Moral Conduct and Attitudes as a Core Value

Most Uzbek youth identified their life goal as acquiring the “qualities necessary for a successful life.” To achieve this goal, they prioritized qualities such as direction (93%), responsibility (92.9%), entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen (90.2%), perseverance (89.3%), and intelligence and wisdom (88.8%). However, a small minority of young people believed that negative qualities like cruelty, greed, arrogance, deceit, conspiracy, shamelessness, and betrayal could occasionally be employed to achieve the life goal of success (Rostovskaya & Saralieva, 2018, p. 82).

Young people highlighted moral conduct and attitudes as essential qualities for a successful life. These included dignity, honesty and humility, diligence and perseverance, respect for parents and elders, education and knowledge, compassion and pursuit of humanity, and self-esteem that helps one rightfully claim their place in modern society and ensure family prosperity.

The majority of respondents had clear life goals, with the percentage increasing to 92.2% in 2008. Notably, the percentage of men with clear life goals (93.7%) was higher than that of women (90%). The proportion of women without clear life goals was relatively high at 6.9%. Across all age groups, the

highest percentage of respondents with clear life goals was observed in the 31-40 age bracket. This is attributed to this age group having already achieved their initial life goals and subsequently setting new ones. Interestingly, this indicator was higher among those with higher education (98.2%) and lower among those with secondary or vocational secondary education.

4.3 Family Formation and Raising Children as Primary Life Goals

The dominant value that determines the social status of Uzbek youth is family and children. Uzbek people consider forming a family and raising the next generation as one of their primary life goals (Saraliev & Sudin, 2023). This is followed by social and civic engagement, education, employment and material well-being, and a positive outlook and confidence in the future.

Forming a family and raising children emerged as an equally important life goal for young people living in both urban and rural areas, regardless of gender. However, women prioritized “receiving an education” as a life goal, while men prioritized “securing good employment and building a career” and “achieving material stability.” Middle-aged individuals (31-50 years old) identified “forming a family and raising children” as their primary life goal, whereas younger people considered “receiving an education” and “securing good employment” as more important life goals.

Whether life goals are achieved depends on whether individuals have the appropriate conditions and opportunities. When asked if they had the necessary conditions and opportunities to achieve their life goals, the majority of respondents (71.3%) answered affirmatively. Respondents identified “peace and stability in the country and family” as the most crucial factor for successfully achieving life goals. This was followed by “good deeds, one’s own business and education,” “health of relatives and close ones,” and “material wealth.”

For Uzbek youth, the meaning of life was found in “a prosperous and happy life” (23.2%), “maintaining spirituality and living for others” (22.8%), “childbearing and caring for children” (14.2%), and “social recognition and self-realization” (8.5%). When asked “What is a prosperous life?” more than half of the respondents (53.3%) answered “peace and tranquility in the family and country.” The perception of a prosperous life was consistent among Uzbek citizens regardless of their place of residence, gender, ethnicity, or education level. However, there were differences across age groups. While all

age groups considered a prosperous life to be rooted in “peace and tranquility in the family and country,” young and middle-aged people also associated a prosperous life with self-realization and opportunities for self-development, in addition to material well-being.

When asked about the “most important and valuable things in life,” the main responses were family and children (63.3%); stability of the country and the world, love for the homeland (46.5%); health (19.2%); well-being (17.2%); and work, employment, and education (10.7%). This result indicates that “family and children” are the most important and valuable things in life for Uzbek youth.

A survey conducted in all regions of Uzbekistan (including the Republic of Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic of Uzbekistan) with 1,000 respondents aged 14-29 revealed that 76.2% of Uzbek youth envisioned their future centered around “marriage and family,” while 12.1% envisioned it “with a loved one.” Only 2.2% of respondents considered “not having an ideal type and not getting married” as normal. The most important factor in married life was perceived to be “mutual responsibility of the couple towards each other and their children” (57.3%), followed by “parental responsibility towards children” (18.8%). Meanwhile, 37.5% of the respondents wanted to raise four children, 30.3% wanted two, and 25.7% wanted three.

4.4 Universal Human Values of the Younger Generation

The primary life goals of Uzbek youth were centered around the value of human life (82.9%) and the value of work and employment (80.1%). In the survey on values related to interpersonal relationships, “conscience” (94.6%) ranked high. Values related to socialization included fundamental concepts such as individuality, tradition, and hometown. 34.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement, “It is better to be a shining individual than to be the same as others.” This indicates that this group of participants valued the differentiation of individual characteristics. While 83.9% of the respondents mentioned the preservation of traditional values, 46.9% emphasized freedom from tradition, self-reflection, innovation, and social action. Regarding the concept of hometown, 81.9% of the respondents believed that a person has a single hometown and that leaving one’s hometown, especially during times of economic hardship and transition, is not desirable.

4.5 Perceptions of a Healthy Life

For Uzbek youth, “a healthy life” is both a physical and moral concept. 27.5% of young people regularly exercise to maintain a healthy life, and 25.4% prefer reading. Most young people (89.4%) recognized the importance of a healthy diet. Furthermore, they perceived the expression “looking beautiful” as a physical rather than materialistic concept. Young people generally had a negative view of harmful habits such as smoking, with 6.1% reporting occasional smoking and 1.3% reporting frequent smoking. On the other hand, the majority of young people (78.9%) did not consume alcohol at all, 14.6% drank occasionally, 3.3% only on weekends, and 2.7% once a week. These results indicate that most Uzbek youth have a negative perception of harmful habits like smoking and drinking.

Moreover, most Uzbek youth showed high satisfaction with their appearance. 46.4% were very satisfied with their appearance, 43.1% were satisfied, 9.3% were somewhat satisfied, and only 1.1% were dissatisfied (Umbetaliyeva et al., 2016, pp. 15-16). Uzbek women did not compare themselves to celebrities or aspire to have celebrity-like appearances; they accepted themselves as they were and expressed high satisfaction with their appearance.

4.6 Leisure Activities of the Younger Generation

A significant number of young women spent their leisure time doing household chores (76.9%), listening to music (71%), and watching movies (68.7%). They also spent time meeting friends (50%) and visiting relatives (36.7%). Only 3.8% of the respondents went to movie theaters in their leisure time.

Watching TV occupied a significant portion of leisure time for Uzbek youth, with an average of 2.73 hours per day spent on this activity. They also dedicated a considerable amount of their leisure time to internet usage. 62.8% of internet users reported using the internet daily. 6.9% of Uzbek youth spent more than 6 hours online. Men were twice as likely as women to use the internet. As the science and digital sectors are currently developing in Uzbekistan, it is expected that the number of internet users will further increase in the future.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the characteristics of the values held by the “Independence Generation” in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, based on the educational policies targeting young people during the early stages of nation-building and the results of a 2008 survey on the values of young people conducted in Uzbekistan. The study found that the priorities and values in the personal lives of the Uzbek “Independence Generation” become core values in their social lives. As seen in earlier sections, the primary values held by young people are health, love, family happiness, interesting and well-paying jobs, and friendships. They emphasize intelligence, responsibility, and self-confidence as essential qualities for realizing universal human values. The study also revealed that young people strive for success in life and believe they can succeed in their areas of interest. About half of the young people had long-term life goals, primarily focused on running their own businesses, pursuing education, and building happy families. On the other hand, it was also found that while some young people already enjoyed material abundance, others experienced economic hardship, difficulties in forming families, and anxieties about finding employment. The survey results also showed that the Uzbek “Independence Generation” considers a life based on moral conduct and attitudes as a successful life and views family formation and raising children as primary life goals.

This study holds academic value for the following reasons: the survey was conducted during the formative years of Uzbekistan’s nation-building after its independence in 1991, when the national identity and value education for citizens of the independent nation were being actively developed. It is also one of the few public opinion surveys conducted in a country with a strong presidential system. This study can serve as a foundation for future research on the values and identity of Uzbek youth and as a basis for comparative studies on the Independence Generations of other Central Asian countries that gained independence around the same time. However, the study acknowledges limitations in understanding the causal relationships behind value formation due to the lack of in-depth interviews with Uzbek youth, which was not feasible due to social constraints.

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