



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSONNEL IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Annotation: The article analyzes the development of inclusive education in Uzbekistan, the ongoing reforms, and the scientific challenges encountered in their implementation. The importance of continuous professional development of school psychologists as a key factor in enhancing inclusive education is examined, along with the advantages of using the blended learning model in this process. The study explores the integration of traditional and digital education to improve psychologists' qualifications, the utilization of distance and interactive teaching methods, and the combination of reflective and practical learning. Additionally, the article presents scientifically grounded recommendations for improving the effectiveness of psychological services in inclusive education settings.

Keywords: inclusive education, educational reforms in Uzbekistan, scientific challenges, school psychologist, continuous professional development, blended learning model, digital technologies, reflective learning.

Introduction. Reforms aimed at the development of inclusive education in Uzbekistan are being systematically implemented as one of the priority directions of state policy. Increasing attention is being paid to this area, with legal and organizational measures being undertaken in the education system based on the principle of ensuring equal opportunities for all children.

The legal foundations for the development of inclusive education in Uzbekistan are established in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Among the key legislative documents aimed at forming concrete mechanisms in this field are Presidential Decree No. PQ-4860 of October 13, 2020, and Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. VMQ-638 of October 21, 2021. These documents are designed to enhance the inclusive education system, expand specialized pedagogical and psychological services, and create conditions for ensuring quality education for children with disabilities.

"Uzbekistan is a sovereign, democratic, legal, social, and secular state with a republican form of governance." [1]. This constitutional norm guarantees the support of socially vulnerable groups by the state and society.

This principle serves as a legal foundation for ensuring the integration of children with special educational needs into society. It underscores the necessity of developing inclusive education principles and implementing specialized pedagogical approaches to create conditions for their equal access to opportunities.

The Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4860, "On Measures for the Further Improvement of the Education and Upbringing System for Children with Special Educational Needs," outlines several key tasks for the development of the inclusive education system. According to this document:

–qualified pedagogical personnel for the inclusive education system will be trained, retrained, and their qualifications will be improved;

–the material and technical base of institutions implementing inclusive education will be strengthened, and they will be equipped with special devices (lifting mechanisms, ramps, handrails, etc.), necessary literature, methodological guidelines, as well as equipment and tools for vocational training;

–modern information and communication technologies and innovative projects will be introduced into the field of inclusive education;

–a positive social environment will be fostered by raising public awareness about the right to education for children with special educational needs and explaining the essence of inclusive education. [2]

Today, the full implementation of these tasks remains a pressing issue and requires a systematic approach to further develop the inclusive education system.

Main Part. The Resolution of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. VM-638, "On the Approval of Normative-Legal Documents on the Education of Children with Special Educational Needs," defines the key responsibilities of school psychologists in an inclusive education environment.

According to this document, school psychologists are tasked with protecting each student's mental health, identifying and addressing psychological developmental issues, and facilitating the implementation of corrective approaches. To achieve these goals, they perform the following duties:

- developing individual development programs for students and supporting them in both family and inclusive education settings;

- organizing psychological sessions with students in group settings;

- regularly conducting psychological and pedagogical assessments of students and providing guidance to parents on their upbringing. [3]

According to the data from the Republican Diagnostic Center dated August 27, 2024, the coverage of inclusive education has been expanding year by year. Specifically, in the 2021-2022 academic year, 87 students were enrolled in inclusive education across 31 schools. By the 2022-2023 academic year, this figure had increased to 504 students in 195 schools. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the number of students reached 1,195 across 530 schools. For the 2024-2025 academic year, it is planned to increase the number of inclusive education institutions to 950, with student enrollment reaching 1,845.

This trend indicates the consistent implementation of inclusive education principles and the creation of favorable conditions for children with special educational needs.

Figure 1.

Academic Year	Number of Schools	Annual Growth (%)	Number of Students	Annual Growth (%)
2021-2022	31	-	87	-
2022-2023	195	529%	504	479%
2023-2024	530	172%	1195	137%
2024-2025 (planned)	950	79%	1845	54%

As seen from this table, the coverage of inclusive education has been expanding significantly each year. Notably, in the 2022-2023 academic year, the number of schools increased by 529%, while the number of students grew by 479%. Although the growth rate

has gradually declined in the following years, the overall trend indicates the steady development of inclusive education.

Figure 2.

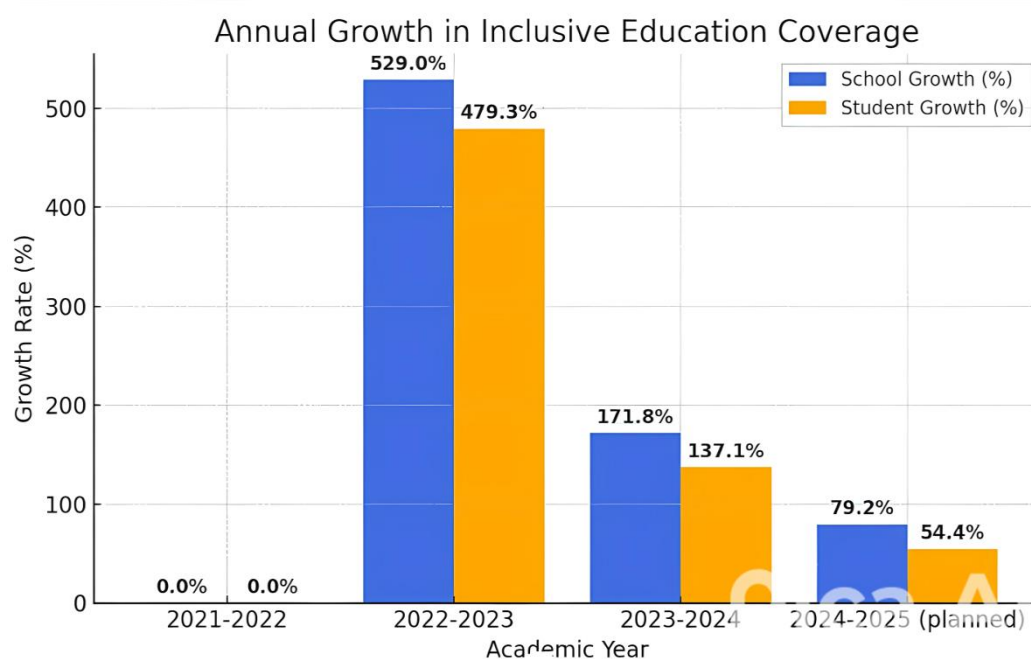
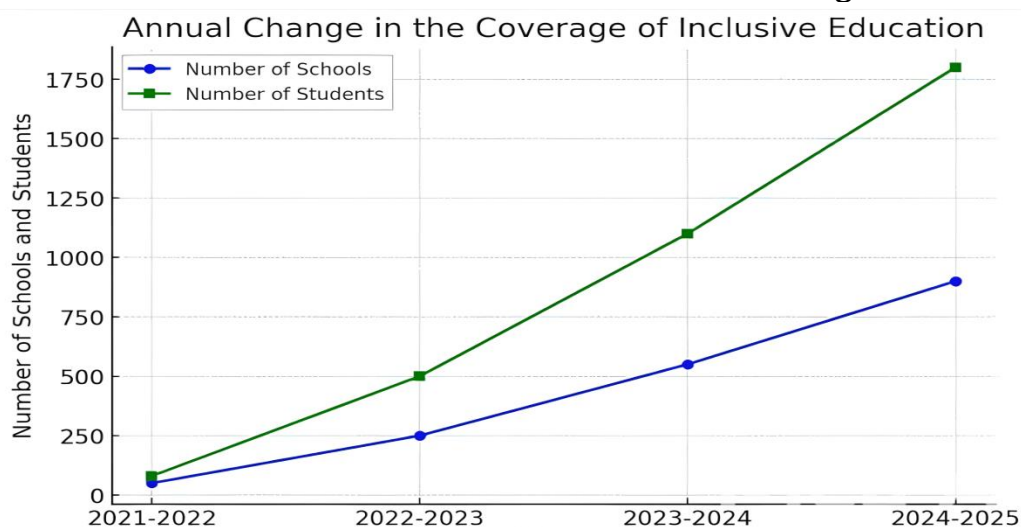
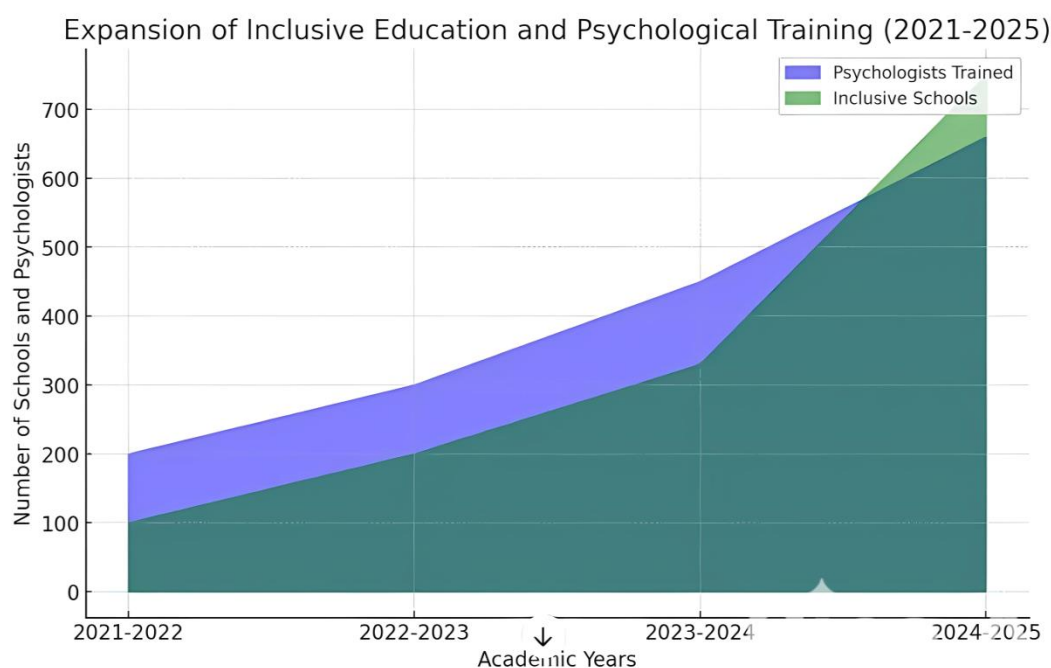


Figure 3.



According to the data from the Republican Diagnostic Center, during the period of 2021-2024, a total of 950 psychologists participated in retraining and professional development courses across the country. During this time, 530 schools were specialized for inclusive education. In the 2024-2025 academic year, an additional 420 schools are planned to be established to further expand the coverage of inclusive education. Consequently, to enhance the quality of inclusive education and the effectiveness of psychological services, at least 660 psychologists will need to undergo retraining and professional development programs. [4]

Figure 4.



As a result, there arises a necessity to improve the methodology of continuous professional development for psychological personnel, aligning it with the requirements of inclusive education. In the context of inclusive education, the professional training of psychologists should not only enhance their theoretical knowledge but also develop their practical skills. Therefore, increasing the effectiveness of psychological services through the implementation of modern pedagogical and psychological approaches is of great importance.

Firstly, preparing psychological personnel to work in an inclusive education environment requires the application of differential and individual approach methods, modern psychocorrection techniques, and advanced principles of pedagogical psychology. It is essential to improve the methodology for identifying and developing students' individual characteristics while considering their psychological needs, level of development, and learning opportunities.

Secondly, the use of innovative educational technologies is one of the key factors in effectively organizing the training process. For instance, digital learning platforms, interactive educational modules, and virtual training programs can significantly expand opportunities for enhancing psychologists' qualifications. The implementation of **blended learning** and **flipped learning** models allows for the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical exercises. This, in turn, contributes to the development of problem-solving skills that psychologists need in real professional settings.

Thirdly, there is a need to develop scientific-methodological guidelines and professional development programs for psychologists. These guidelines should focus on enhancing the effectiveness of psychological services, systematically organizing psychocorrectional work, and providing practical recommendations for working in an inclusive environment. Additionally, establishing cooperation with parents and offering them scientifically grounded consultations on ensuring students' psychological well-being is one of the key directions in the psychological service system.

Therefore, in order to improve the methodology for the continuous professional development of psychological personnel in alignment with the conditions of inclusive education, it is essential to develop new methodological approaches based on advanced pedagogical and psychological research. Furthermore, the widespread integration of innovative technologies and the application of modern educational methods should be considered a priority in ensuring the continuous professional development of psychologists.

In the article "The Readiness Level of Future Pedagogical Psychologists for Implementing Inclusive Education" [5], K. A. Sharina explores the issues of the dynamics of developing a positive attitude toward learning and the formation of tolerance.

In the article "Psychological and Pedagogical Readiness of Psychology Students for Working in Inclusive Educational Institutions" [6], S. A. Cherkasova presents a training program for preparing psychology students to work in the inclusive education system.

According to international standards, a school practical psychologist is expected to provide psychological services to 500-700 students[7]. Psychological services in schools are mainly directed towards the following categories:

I. Normotypical children and adolescents experiencing a normative developmental crisis.

II. Children experiencing learning difficulties.

III. Children in need of special attention due to a high risk of vulnerability.

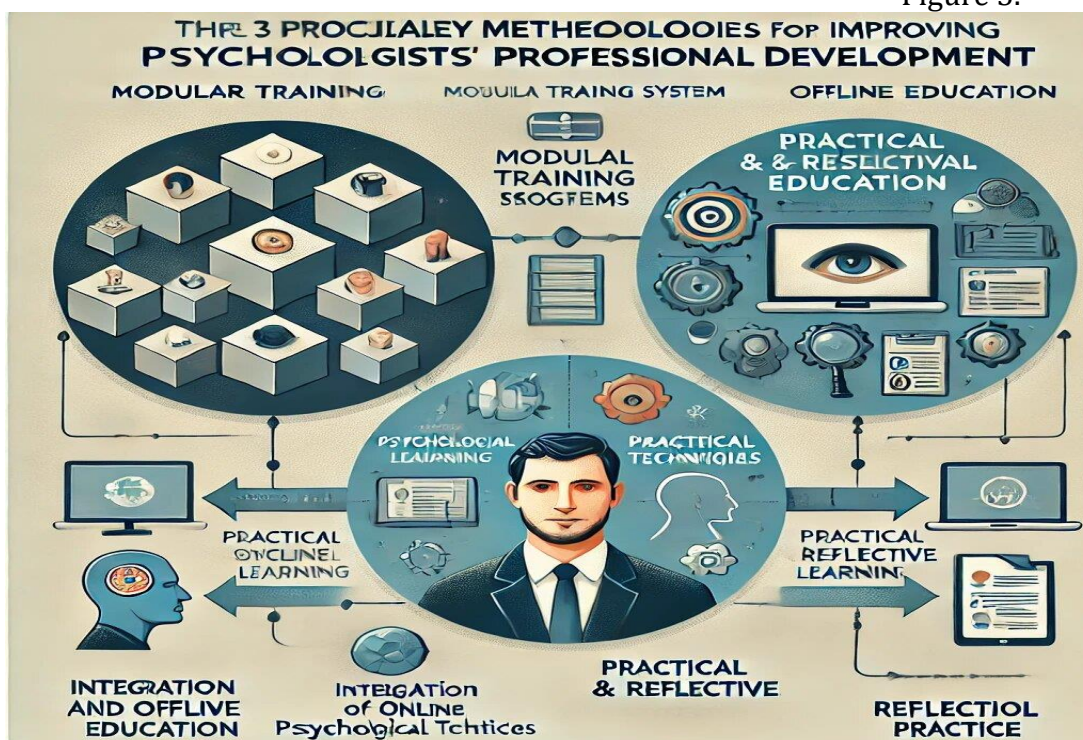
1. Children in difficult life circumstances:

- Orphaned and children without parental care;
- Children with disabilities and students with disabilities;
- Children with deviant behavior (including children and adolescents prone to suicide).

2. Gifted children. [8]

In Uzbekistan, however, the scope of service provided by a single psychologist differs significantly from international standards. Specifically, one psychologist serves up to 1,500 students [9], which is three times the workload recommended by international norms. Considering that the inclusive education system is also being implemented in schools located in densely populated areas, engaging school psychologists in continuous professional development has become one of the pressing organizational challenges.

Figure 5.

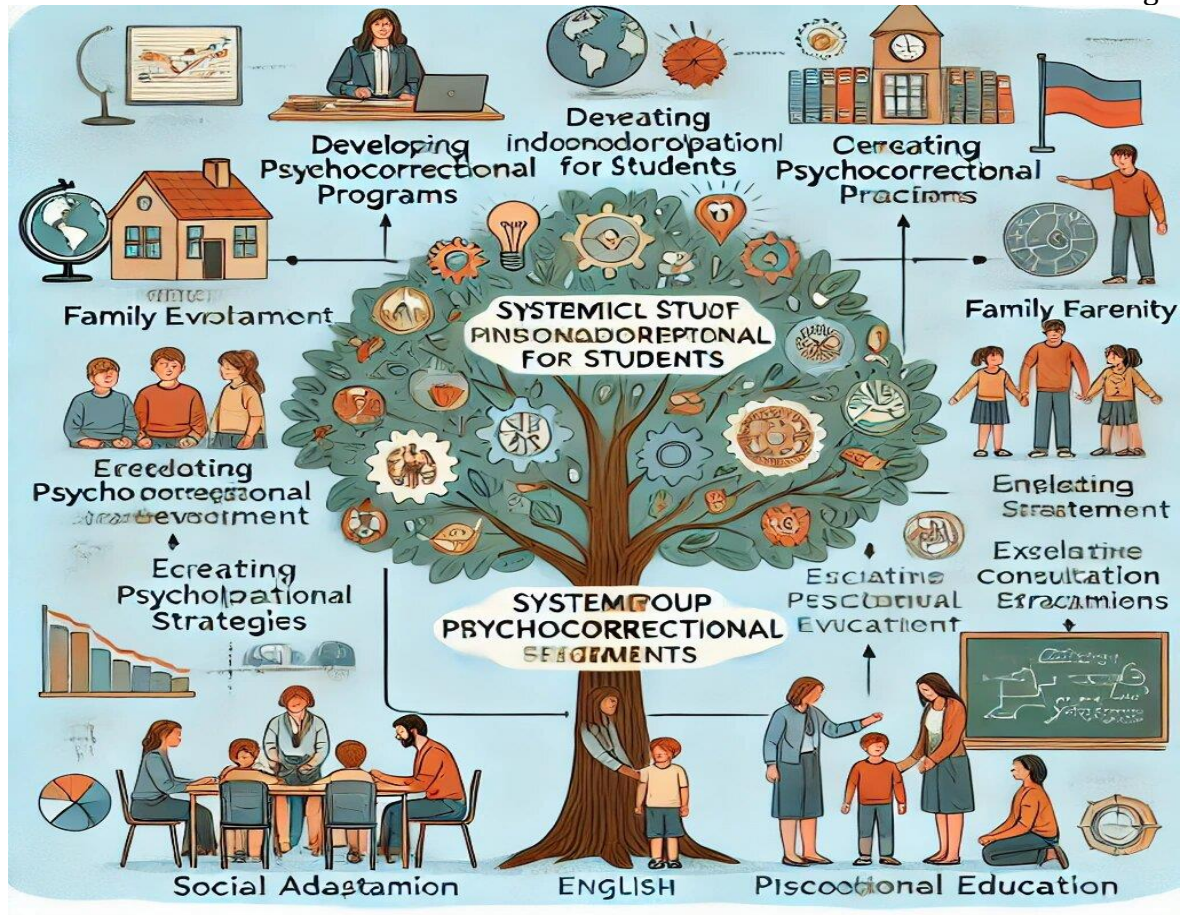


To effectively address this issue and improve the professional development of psychologists, we propose the following methodological approaches:

- Modular training system – Developing and implementing specialized training programs tailored to psychologists' professional experience and needs.

- Integration of online and offline education programs – Establishing a flexible learning process through distance learning platforms, considering the availability of psychologists.
- Conducting practical and reflective training based on a blended learning model
- Organizing training aimed at developing psychological-pedagogical competencies by combining traditional and digital technologies.

Figure 6.



In the process of continuous professional development of psychologists, the following priority areas aimed at enhancing their professional competencies should be identified:

- developing individualized development programs for students and formulating effective support strategies within the family environment and inclusive education settings;
- conducting group-based psychocorrectional sessions with students to develop their social adaptation, personal growth, and emotional stability skills;
- systematically studying the psychological and pedagogical development of students and optimizing teaching methodologies based on their individual psychological characteristics.
- organizing effective consultations with parents to enhance their understanding of the significance of the family environment and educational strategies in ensuring children's psychological well-being.
- creating an inclusive educational environment and providing psychological support to enhance social integration processes.

Conclusion

The outlined directions not only enhance the effectiveness of psychologists' professional activities but also contribute to the development of their competencies in working based on modern approaches. In this regard, the use of online education platforms, distance learning programs, interactive training, and digital educational resources holds significant relevance in

the process of continuous professional development. The integration of innovative approaches such as blended learning and flipped learning into the educational process can improve psychologists' theoretical and practical training levels.

Therefore, in the process of continuous professional development of psychological personnel, improving the scientific and methodological foundations, widely implementing innovative educational technologies, and establishing approaches based on pedagogical and psychological research are among the key methodological tasks.

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