



Mechanisms Of Preparing Pre-Service Teachers For Spiritual And Educational Activity: An Integrative Approach

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ABSTRACT

Preparing future teachers for the moral and civic formation of learners remains one of the less systematised areas of pre-service teacher education. In Uzbekistan this area is framed as spiritual and educational activity, which covers the teacher's work on learners' values, civic responsibility, cultural identity and resistance to destructive information. This paper argues that the effectiveness of such preparation depends less on the number of dedicated courses and events than on the coherence of the mechanisms through which students acquire, test and reflect on this professional role. Using theoretical analysis, comparison of international approaches to value education and pedagogical modelling, the study proposes an integrative framework of five interrelated mechanisms: value-motivational, integrative-content, experiential-practical, partnership and reflective-evaluative. The framework is organised into three stages aligned with the bachelor's programme and is supplemented by criteria and indicators for diagnosing students' readiness. The findings can be used to redesign curricula, teaching practice and assessment in pedagogical universities.

KEYWORDS: Pre-service teachers, spiritual and educational activity, value education, teacher identity, experiential learning, reflective practice, school-community partnership.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education systems increasingly recognise that the professional role of the teacher extends beyond transmitting subject knowledge to the moral and civic formation of learners (Lickona, 1991; Arthur et al., 2017). In Uzbekistan this expectation is expressed through the notion of spiritual and educational (ma'naviy-ma'rifiy) activity. The Law "On Education" (2020) names the intellectual, moral and professional development of the individual as a core aim of education, and the Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education (2019) treats value formation as a cross-cutting task at every level of the education system.

In pedagogical universities, however, this area is still often addressed through isolated courses and one-off extracurricular events. Graduates usually know which types of events are expected of them, yet they find it harder to formulate an educational aim, anticipate how an activity will affect students, adapt it to a particular group and judge afterwards whether it achieved its purpose (Abdullayev, 2026). This gap between declarative knowledge and professional action is the problem addressed in the present paper.

The aim of the study is to substantiate a set of interconnected mechanisms that turn preparation for spiritual and educational activity from an episodic element of the curriculum into a coherent strand of pre-service teacher education.

2. Materials and Methods

The study is theoretical and design-oriented. It draws on (a) analysis of national regulatory documents on education and spiritual development; (b) a review of international research on character education, the moral dimension of teaching and teacher professional identity; (c) comparison of approaches to value education examined at earlier stages of the author's research (Abdullayev, 2024a, 2024b); and (d) pedagogical modelling to integrate the identified elements into a single framework. Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and the concept of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) served as the principal theoretical lenses, since both explain how professional competence emerges from a cycle of experience, reflection and conceptualisation.

3. Results

The analysis made it possible to distinguish five mechanisms. Each performs its own function, but their overall effect depends on the links between them.

Value-motivational mechanism. Its function is to help students accept spiritual and educational work as part of their own professional identity rather than as an external obligation. Korthagen (2004) shows that teacher behaviour is rooted in deeper layers of identity and mission; if these layers are left untouched, methodological training has limited effect. Typical instruments are biographical essays about teachers who influenced the student, value-clarification discussions and an individual professional mission statement that is revisited throughout the programme.

Integrative-content mechanism. Instead of concentrating the topic in a single course, this mechanism distributes it across the curriculum. Educational theory, adolescent psychology, history of pedagogy, subject methodology and media literacy each contribute a clearly defined component, and concept maps linking these components help students see spiritual and educational activity as a system rather than a list of events.

Experiential-practical mechanism. Students design and carry out real activities: a class mentoring hour, a community project with a mahalla (neighbourhood) council, a parent meeting or a short media-literacy session on recognising manipulative online content. Following Kolb's cycle, every task includes planning, implementation, observation and conceptual generalisation.

Partnership mechanism. In Uzbekistan, spiritual and educational work is traditionally carried out jointly by schools, families, mahalla institutions and public organisations. Joint projects, interviews with practitioners and shadowing of school deputy directors for educational work prepare students for this cooperation and develop organisational and communicative skills that classroom instruction alone cannot provide.

Reflective-evaluative mechanism. The student analyses the effect of their own activity, compares intended and achieved outcomes and plans improvements. Reflective journals, e-portfolios, peer review and structured post-event analysis serve as the main tools. This mechanism closes the cycle and feeds back into the value-motivational level, as students revise

their professional mission in the light of experience. The functions of all five mechanisms are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Mechanisms of preparing pre-service teachers for spiritual and educational activity

Mechanism	Function	Key instruments	Expected outcome
Value-motivational	Internalising the educational role as part of professional identity	Biographical essay, value-clarification discussion, mission statement	Stable inner motivation for educational work
Integrative-content	Distributing relevant knowledge across courses	Cross-course modules, concept maps, text analysis	Systemic understanding of the theoretical basis
Experiential-practical	Designing and conducting real educational activities	Mentoring hour, community project, case study, role play	Ability to organise activities independently
Partnership	Cooperation with family, mahalla and public organisations	Joint projects, practitioner interviews, job shadowing	Organisational and communicative skills
Reflective-evaluative	Analysing outcomes and self-correction	Reflective journal, e-portfolio, peer review, post-event analysis	Capacity for continuous self-improvement

The mechanisms are implemented in three stages aligned with the bachelor's programme. At the orientation stage (years 1–2) the value-motivational and integrative-content mechanisms prevail. The practice-based stage (year 3) centres on experiential and partnership tasks. At the autonomous stage (year 4, including teaching practice) students plan, carry out and evaluate spiritual and educational work independently, with the reflective-evaluative mechanism running through all three stages.

To make the framework verifiable, criteria and indicators of readiness were defined (Table 2). For each criterion three levels are distinguished: reproductive, productive and creative.

Table 2. Criteria and indicators of readiness for spiritual and educational activity

Criterion	Indicators	Diagnostic tools
Motivational-value	Attitude to the educational role; awareness of professional responsibility	Questionnaire, analysis of essays
Cognitive	Knowledge of educational theory, legal framework and age psychology	Test, concept map

Criterion	Indicators	Diagnostic tools
Activity-based	Ability to design, conduct and adapt an educational activity; cooperation with partners	Expert assessment of projects, observation during teaching practice
Reflective	Ability to analyse outcomes and plan improvements	Analysis of journals, portfolio rubric

4. Discussion

The proposed framework is consistent with international findings that value education is most effective when it is integrated across school life rather than delivered as a separate subject, and when teachers model the values they promote (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Arthur et al., 2017). Its distinctive feature for the national context is the partnership mechanism, which reflects the role of the family and the mahalla in the upbringing of young people in Uzbekistan and extends the teacher's educational work beyond the classroom.

The framework also has limitations. It is conceptual, and the contribution of each mechanism still needs to be verified through a pedagogical experiment with control and experimental groups. The criteria and indicators in Table 2 are intended to serve as the instrument for such verification at the next stage of the research.

5. Conclusion

Preparation of future teachers for spiritual and educational activity becomes effective when it is organised as a coherent system rather than a set of separate courses and events. The integrative framework proposed here links five mechanisms—value-motivational, integrative-content, experiential-practical, partnership and reflective-evaluative—into a cycle in which professional values are formed, tested in practice and revised through reflection. Implemented in stages and supported by clear diagnostic criteria, this framework can help pedagogical universities prepare graduates who act not only as subject teachers but also as mentors, organisers and partners of the community in the moral development of young people.

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