

EDUCAÇÃO

V.12 • N.3 • Edição Especial - 2024

ISSN Digital: 2316-3828

ISSN Impresso: 2316-333X

DOI: 10.17564/2316-3828.2024v12n3p24-36



HOW GENDER NORMS AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS MAINTAIN GENDER INEQUALITY IN UZBEK EDUCATION

COMO AS NORMAS DE GÊNERO E AS EXPECTATIVAS SOCIAIS MANTÊM A DESIGUALDADE DE GÊNERO NA EDUCAÇÃO UZBEQUE

CÓMO LAS NORMAS DE GÉNERO Y LAS EXPECTATIVAS SOCIALES MANTIENEN LA DESIGUALDAD DE GÉNERO EN LA EDUCACIÓN UZBEKA

Gafurova Nodira Ravshanovna¹
Shikina Anastasiya Aleksandrovna²

ABSTRACT

The topic of gender inequality has captivated many researchers in recent decade. While vari us studies have explored the influence of gender norms on societal roles, there is a dearth o of empirical research on gender inequality in Uzbekistan’s education system. This highlights the urgent need for research that utilizes real-world data to analyze the factors sustaining gender disparities in Uzbek education. This paper aims to examine the hypothesis that stereotypes about the roles and abilities of men and women influence the distribution of functions in society, perpetuating gender inequality in Uzbekistan educational system. Results of this survey conducted among 1st-4th year students at Fergana State University revealed that a huge proportion of women and men in Uzbekistan is strongly influenced by widespread gender stereotypes that define family roles and access to education. The widespread acceptance of these stereotypes, as evidenced by the survey results, underlines the urgent need to transform the views of the locals.

KEYWORDS

Family dynamics; Gender roles; Traditional norms; Uzbek education

RESUMO

O tema da desigualdade de género tem cativado muitos investigadores na última década. Embora vários estudos tenham explorado a influência das normas de género nos papéis sociais, há uma escassez de investigação empírica sobre a desigualdade de género no sistema educativo do Uzbequistão. Este facto realça a necessidade urgente de investigação que utilize dados do mundo real para analisar os factores que sustentam as disparidades de género no ensino uzbeque. O presente documento tem por objetivo analisar a hipótese de que os estereótipos sobre os papéis e as capacidades dos homens e das mulheres influenciam a distribuição de funções na sociedade, perpetuando a desigualdade entre os sexos no sistema educativo do Usbequistão. Os resultados deste inquérito realizado entre os estudantes do 1º ao 4º ano da Universidade Estatal de Fergana revelaram que uma grande parte das mulheres e dos homens no Usbequistão é fortemente influenciada por estereótipos de género generalizados que definem os papéis familiares e o acesso à educação. A aceitação generalizada destes estereótipos, tal como evidenciado pelos resultados do inquérito, sublinha a necessidade urgente de transformar as opiniões dos habitantes locais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Dinâmica familiar; Papéis de género; Normas tradicionais; Educação uzbeque

RESUMEN

El tema de la desigualdad de género ha cautivado a muchos investigadores en la última década. Aunque varios estudios han explorado la influencia de las normas de género en los roles sociales, escasean las investigaciones empíricas sobre la desigualdad de género en el sistema educativo de Uzbekistán. Esto pone de relieve la urgente necesidad de investigaciones que utilicen datos reales para analizar los factores que sustentan las disparidades de género en la educación uzbeke. Este trabajo pretende examinar la hipótesis de que los estereotipos sobre las funciones y capacidades de hombres y mujeres influyen en la distribución de funciones en la sociedad, perpetuando la desigualdad de género en el sistema educativo uzbeke. Los resultados de esta encuesta realizada entre estudiantes de 1º a 4º curso de la Universidad Estatal de Fergana revelaron que una enorme proporción de mujeres y hombres en Uzbekistán está fuertemente influenciada por los estereotipos de género generalizados que definen los roles familiares y el acceso a la educación. La aceptación generalizada de estos estereotipos, como demuestran los resultados de la encuesta, subraya la urgente necesidad de transformar las opiniones de la población local.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Dinâmica familiar; Roles de género; Normas tradicionales; Educación uzbeka

1 INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, the problem of gender inequality in the family, society, and economy is relevant to Uzbekistan. However, in order to solve any problem it is necessary firstly to understand its causes. In our opinion, there are very few significant legislative reasons. On the contrary, our laws create a gender imbalance in favor of women, for example, by allowing them to retire earlier. Alimov (Alimov, 2024) explains in his paper that a number of amendments and additions have been made in our country to strengthen efforts to prevent violence against women and domestic violence and to combat outdated customs. A compulsory gender-legal examination of legislative acts has been introduced, aimed at eliminating inconsistencies between the provisions of normative legal acts and the principles of gender equality and identifying possible risks of a discriminatory nature in the process of their application. Hence, the roots of this issue lie in another thing, triggering the problem even in our modern era.

Over the past few years, researchers have explored gender stereotypes and their influence on societies and the entire world, having diverse roots and paradigms of gender stereotyping depending on the countries' contexts and foundations. However, across almost of cultures, women are presented as more kind and caring human beings, but less capable rather than men in terms of both their mental (for instance, intelligence) and physical (strength) abilities. Additionally, several studies (Eagly *et al.*, 2000; Ellemers, 2018) suggest that they are less independent and ambitious in the eyes of societies worldwide. Xilin Jin (Xilin Jin, 2023) in his paper analyzed existing studies to determine the impact of gender stereotypes on females in educational sphere. They found that negative stereotypes from family, school, and society lead to low self-confidence, mental health issues, and a focus on social identity instead of interests and abilities. Diyora (Diyora, 2024), in an in-depth analysis of extensive data extracted from official research reports in Uzbekistan and other countries, points out that according to a study by the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singaporean women are far less confident in their ability in mathematics than men. This is all the more striking given that girls are just as good as boys at maths.

Hye Rin Choi *et al.* (Hye Rin Choi *et al.*, 2021) in their research had studied the connections between gender role stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes with the cognitive function in an elderly community. The target population of their study consisted of people aged 60 years or older and their spouses living in a rural community in Korea, such as Township K, Ganghwa Island, Incheon. The study identified a total of 860 people as the target population, with a response rate of 94.7% for the initial survey. The study's findings indicate that beliefs regarding GRS and patriarchal attitudes are marginally significantly associated with cognitive impairment among women in later life. Additionally, the study suggests that age acts as an effect modifier for the association between patriarchal attitudes and cognitive function,

particularly among individuals with conservative mindsets toward patriarchal norms who are relatively younger. Therefore, through their research, they concluded their hypothesis that gender role stereotypes are highly associated with cognitive impairment among women later in life in Korea.

Bye H. *et al.* (Bye H. *et al.*, 2022) have investigated the stereotypes of subgroups of women and men in Norwegian society. They have introduced pilot and main studies, in which they have composed a list of gender subgroups in Norway, and then, in the main study, they have investigated these subgroups. Based on the results of their study, they have concluded that even though Norway is ranked as one of the world's most gender-equal nations, gender stereotypes, ambivalent sexism, and social role theory still exist in their society. Traditional caregiving roles for women were depicted as stereotypically warm and low in competence, while traditional male roles (such as leaders, politicians, and businesspeople) were stereotypically competent and low in warmth.

Despite numerous studies examining the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on the distribution of societal functions, there is still a lack of research that uses real data rather than theories to examine the persistence of gender inequality in the education system in Uzbekistan. This underscores the critical importance of conducting this research work to comprehensively examine the factors contributing to gender inequality in education in the Uzbek context.

2 METHODS

For this study, the online survey was conducted to investigate the proposed authors' hypothesis that the stereotypes about the roles and abilities of men and women influence the distribution of functions in society, perpetuating gender inequality in the Uzbek educational system. This survey was designed as an online Google Form questionnaire and then distributed among the students at Fergana State University which is located in Fergana city, Uzbekistan. The survey consisted of 7 personal multiple-choice questions to get the responses of the participants on the current issue.

Therefore, these are the main issues explored in this study aiming to answer the following research questions:

The main research question is: 'To what extent do stereotypes about the roles and abilities of men and women influence the distribution of functions in the Uzbek educational system, and how does this contribute to gender inequality?'

Additionally, other sub-research questions that are:

-How do these stereotypes impact the choice of subjects, career paths, and educational opportunities available to boys and girls in Uzbekistan?

-What are the social and economic consequences of gender inequality in the Uzbek educational system?

-What strategies could be employed to effectively challenge gender stereotypes and promote more equitable educational opportunities for all genders in Uzbekistan?

2.1. PARTICIPANT SELECTION

This research aimed to examine the opinion of the students at Fergana State University regardless of the proposed research questions. All of the participants were students at the Fergana State University, starting from the 1st year and ending with the senior students. Additionally, they were randomly chosen, including both national (those, who study in the Uzbek language) and the euro (who study in English on the main and compulsory courses or Russian on the additional optional subjects) groups to obtain more wider range of answers, and so, investigate the issue in depth. The age range of the participants was 23 years old on average.

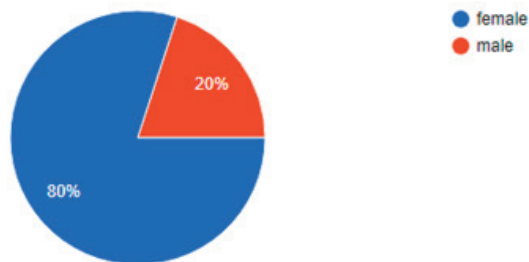
As figure 1 shows, a total of 105 participants took part in the survey, with a gender distribution of 20% male and 80% female (see Fig.2).

Figure 1 - An overview of the groups distribution

	Group ID	Size	Studying language
1	20.124 R	22	Eng/Ru
2	22.158	18	Eng/Ru
3	22.115	18	Eng/Ru
4	20.122	19	Eng/Uz
5	21.100 D	28	Eng/Uz
Total:			105

Source used: were designed by the authors

Figure 2 - The gender proportion of the participants



Source used: were designed by the authors

2.2. DATA ANALYSIS

The survey was conducted anonymously to encourage honest responses from the participants. The questionnaire included questions about the participants' attitudes towards the existing stereo-

types in the local communities, their opinion on this issue, the possible influence of this trend on the national educational system and how they affect the distribution of roles in Uzbek families, and what are the suggestions can be implemented to dispose of this problem in their opinion.

After the collection of the responses from the participants, they were carefully examined by the authors. To complete the comprehensive analysis, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to highlight the opinions of the participants.

3 RESULTS

The survey results highlight a significant perception of gender stereotypes among residents due to the different internal and external factors. The overwhelming majority (100%) either agree or strongly agree with the statement, indicating widespread acknowledgment of the presence of these stereotypes. This suggests that gender roles and abilities are often perceived through a pre-defined lens, potentially influencing opportunities and expectations for both men and women.

The fact that a larger percentage (60%) simply “agree” rather than “strongly agree” suggests a nuanced understanding of the issue (fig.2). While respondents acknowledge the existence of stereotypes, they might not necessarily believe them to be deeply ingrained or universally accepted. This could reflect a growing awareness of gender equality and a desire to challenge traditional norms.

Figure 3 - To what extent do you agree with the statement that some people In Uzbekistan have stereotypes about the roles and abilities of men and women?



Source used: were designed by the authors

The absence of data for the “Not sure,” “Disagree,” and “Completely disagree” options is particularly revealing. It indicates a lack of substantial opposition to the statement, further strengthening the perception of widespread acceptance of gender stereotypes. This lack of dissent could be attributed to several factors as societal pressure, fear of challenging traditional norms, or a lack of exposure to alternative perspectives on gender roles.

The survey question “How do you think these stereotypes influence the distribution of roles in Uzbek families?” reveals a nuanced understanding of the relationship between societal expectations

and familial dynamics. The responses highlight a prevailing perception of traditional gender roles within Uzbek families, with a significant majority (60%) attributing a traditional division of labor to these stereotypes, where men are seen as breadwinners and women as housewives (fig.3). This aligns with the cultural norms and historical context of Uzbekistan, emphasizing the male role in providing for the family and the female role in domestic responsibilities.

Figure 4 - To what extent do you agree with the statement that some people in Uzbekistan have stereotypes about the roles and abilities of men and women?



Source used: were designed by the authors

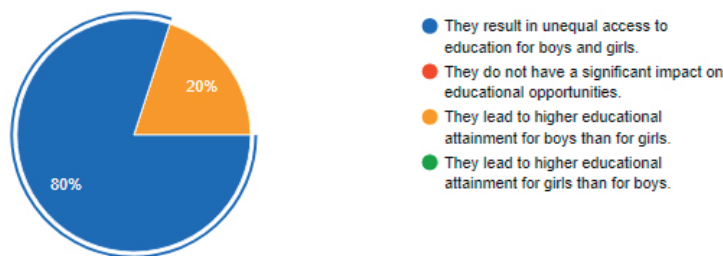
The fact that 40% of respondents believe stereotypes lead to women assuming more family responsibilities than men is noteworthy. This suggests a recognition that even within the framework of traditional roles, women often bear a disproportionate burden in family life. This could reflect the realities of childcare, household management, and extended family obligations that often fall on women's shoulders, even when they also contribute to the family income.

The option "They do not have a significant impact on the division of roles" received no votes, indicating a strong perception that societal stereotypes do indeed influence family dynamics. This suggests that respondents are aware of the power of cultural expectations and their influence on individual choices and perceptions within the family unit.

Finally, the option "They lead to men taking on more family responsibilities than women" received zero votes. This absence is revealing. It indicates a lack of recognition, or perhaps a reluctance to acknowledge, the possibility of a shift towards more equitable roles in Uzbek families. This absence underscores the deeply ingrained nature of traditional gender roles and the challenge of challenging those expectations, even in the face of changing societal realities.

The survey results reveal a strong consensus that stereotypes have a detrimental impact on educational opportunities in Uzbekistan, with 80% of respondents believing they result in unequal access for boys and girls (fig.4). This finding highlights a widespread awareness of the societal biases that hinder equal access to education. The remaining 20% of respondents offer a more nuanced perspective, with 10% believing stereotypes lead to higher educational attainment for boys and another 10% believing they favor girls. These contrasting viewpoints suggest a complex interplay of factors contributing to gender disparities in education.

Figure 5 - How do you think these stereotypes affect the educational opportunities of boys and girls in Uzbekistan?



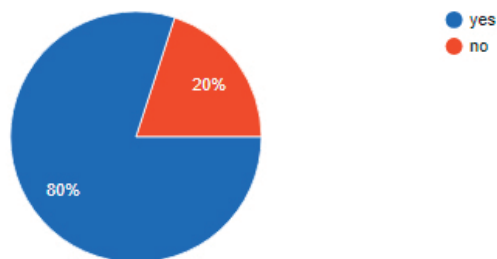
Source used: were designed by the authors

The dominant perspective that stereotypes contribute to unequal access underscores the pervasiveness of gender-based discrimination within the Uzbek education system. This could manifest in various ways, including societal expectations that influence career choices, and implicit biases held by teachers and administrators. The lack of equal access may translate into unequal opportunities for girls and boys to pursue their education, potentially impacting their academic achievements and future career prospects.

The view that stereotypes lead to higher educational attainment for either boys or girls raises interesting questions about the specific nature of these stereotypes and their influence on educational outcomes. For instance, if stereotypes promote the notion that boys are inherently better at STEM subjects, this could lead to more boys pursuing these fields, potentially contributing to a gender gap in STEM education. Conversely, if stereotypes portray girls as naturally adept at language and the arts, this could encourage more girls to excel in these areas, potentially leading to a higher rate of female representation in these disciplines.

The survey results reveal a stark reality: a significant majority (80%) of respondents have encountered situations where their educational or professional opportunities were limited due to gender stereotypes (fig. 5). This finding underscores the persistent and pervasive nature of gender bias, even in the modern era. It suggests that despite progress in promoting gender equality, deeply ingrained societal norms and prejudices continue to create barriers for individuals, particularly women, in accessing opportunities based on their merit.

Figure 6 - Have you ever experienced situations where your educational or professional opportunities were limited because of gender stereotypes?



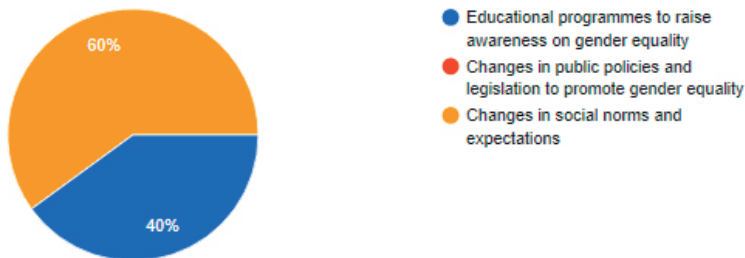
Source used: were designed by the authors

The high percentage of respondents who answered “yes” highlights the systemic nature of gender discrimination. It indicates that gender stereotypes are not merely isolated incidents but rather entrenched in the views of the local population, influencing decision-making processes in various domains, from education to employment. This pervasive influence can manifest in subtle ways, such as unconscious bias in hiring practices or the lack of role models in certain fields, as well as in more overt forms of discrimination.

The data also suggests that gender stereotypes can have a profound impact on individuals’ lives, limiting their choices and hindering their potential. This can lead to a range of negative consequences, including lower wages, reduced career advancement opportunities, and a diminished sense of self-efficacy. It also reinforces the need for continued efforts to dismantle gender stereotypes and create a more equitable society where individuals are judged based on their abilities, not their gender.

This survey data reveals a strong focus on the need for cultural and societal shifts in Uzbekistan to overcome gender stereotypes and promote gender equality. As shown on the figure 6, while respondents recognize the value of educational programs (40%), the majority (60%) prioritize changes in social norms and expectations. This indicates a deep understanding that ingrained cultural beliefs and societal expectations are the primary barriers to achieving true gender equality.

Figure 7 - What, in your opinion, can be done to overcome gender stereotypes and promote a more equal distribution of roles in Uzbekistan?



Source used: were designed by the authors

The emphasis on social norms and expectations underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of gender inequality. It signifies that simply providing information about gender equality through educational programs might not be enough to create lasting change. Addressing deeply rooted cultural beliefs and challenging traditional gender roles requires a more comprehensive approach that involves engaging with individuals, families, and communities.

The survey results highlight the need for interventions that directly tackle the pervasive influence of gender stereotypes in Uzbekistan. This could include initiatives aimed at promoting positive role models, challenging harmful gendered narratives, and fostering open dialogue on gender roles within families and communities. Additionally, engaging with religious leaders and traditional institutions to promote gender-inclusive interpretations of religious texts and practices is crucial.

The call for changes in public policies and legislation suggests that legal frameworks play a vital role in supporting the shift towards a more equitable community. Policies promoting equal opportunities in education, employment, and healthcare, along with legal protections against discrimination based on gender, are essential to create an enabling environment for achieving true gender equality.

4 DISCUSSION

The survey findings provide compelling evidence for the presence and influence of gender stereotypes in Uzbekistan, revealing a strong correlation between these stereotypes and the distribution of roles within families and, by extension, the educational system.

The nuanced understanding of the issue is reflected in the majority of respondents agreeing (60%) rather than strongly agreeing (40%) with the initial statement of the survey. This distinction could indicate a growing sensitivity towards gender equity and a willingness to contest established norms.

The absence of opposition to the statement, with no respondents selecting “Not sure,” “Disagree,” or “Completely disagree,” further solidifies the perception of widespread acceptance of gender stereotypes. It can be attributed to societal pressures, fear of challenging norms, or lack of exposure to alternative perspectives.

The survey reveals the respondents’ understanding of gender stereotypes’ impact on family roles. A majority perceive a traditional division of labor, and 40% believe women bear a disproportionate burden within family life. The absence of votes for the option “They lead to men taking on more family responsibilities than women” indicates a reluctance to acknowledge a potential shift towards equitable roles.

The survey also exposes a consensus that stereotypes negatively impact education in Uzbekistan. With 80% of respondents linking stereotypes to unequal educational access, there is an awareness of the biases that impede equal opportunities. The remaining 20% who believe stereotypes favor one gender over the other in education showcase a complex interplay of factors leading to gender disparities.

Finally, a significant majority of respondents (80%) have encountered situations where their opportunities were limited due to gender stereotypes. This statistic underscores the systemic nature of gender discrimination, confirming its influence in decision-making processes across various domains, from education to employment.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research underscores the pervasive issue of gender stereotypes in Uzbekistan, significantly impacting the distribution of roles within families and the educational system. The unanimous consensus among the survey respondents regarding the existence of these stereotypes highlights the need for substantive societal change.

The survey findings also indicate that these stereotypes are not limited to just familial roles but extend to educational opportunities and professional avenues. The fact that 80% of respondents have faced situations where their opportunities were limited due to gender stereotypes underscores the systemic nature of this problem.

While the legislative landscape may seem to favor women, the reality, as reflected by this survey, suggests otherwise. The apparent gender imbalance is not rooted in legislation but rather in deeply ingrained societal norms and stereotypes. These stereotypes, as the survey suggests, are perpetuating gender inequality, particularly in the educational system.

However, the slight nuance in response, with more respondents agreeing rather than strongly agreeing with the statement, may indicate a growing sensitivity towards gender equity. This could potentially signal an evolving perspective and a willingness to challenge established norms.

This shift in attitude could be attributed to a number of factors, including increased media representation of successful women in various fields, the rise of feminist movements promoting equality, and growing awareness of the economic benefits of gender diversity. Furthermore, educational institutions are increasingly implementing initiatives to promote gender inclusivity, from offering gender-neutral restrooms to fostering awareness of unconscious bias in the classroom.

It is essential to note that while the survey suggests a potential shift towards gender equality, the fight is far from over. The widespread existence of gender stereotypes and the persistent inequalities they produce necessitate continued efforts to challenge these deeply ingrained social norms. This requires a multi-pronged approach involving policy changes, educational initiatives, and conscious efforts to promote gender-neutral language and behaviour.

Achieving true gender equality requires a collective effort. Individuals, institutions, and governments must work together to dismantle the barriers that prevent women from fully participating in society and realizing their full potential. The survey findings, while promising, serve as a reminder that the journey towards gender equity is ongoing and requires sustained commitment from all stakeholders.

Addressing these stereotypes will require sustained efforts at various levels - from fostering gender-sensitive education, creating awareness, and challenging existing norms, to making structural changes in policies and practices. This study underscores the urgency to confront these stereotypes, highlighting the dire need for societal transformation towards gender equality in Uzbekistan.

REFERENCES

BYE H.H, SOLIANIK V.V, FIVE M., AGAI M.S. Stereotypes of Women and Men Across Gender Subgroups. **Front Psychol.** 2022 Apr 28. 13:881418. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.881418. PMID: 35572276; PMCID: PMC9096833.

CHOI H.R, HA B., JEON Y.J, YOUM Y., KIM H.C., JUNG S.J. Gender role stereotypes, patriarchal attitudes, and cognitive function in the elderly rural Korean population: a cross-sectional study. **Epidemiol Health.** 2021. 43:e2021023. doi: 10.4178/epih.e2021023. Epub 2021 Apr 7. PMID: 33831292; PMCID: PMC8289476.

DIYORA R.N. ПРОДВИЖЕНИЕ НАУЧНО-ТЕХНИЧЕСКОГО РАЗВИТИЯ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ: МЕРЫ ПО УКРЕПЛЕНИЮ ГЕНДЕРНОГО РАВЕНСТВА В ОБЛАСТИ НАУКИ И ИННОВАЦИЙ. **Oriental Conferences.** 2024. Pages: 138-144. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24412/cl-36892-2024-19-138-144>.

EAGLY A.H., WOOD W., DIEKMAN A.B. Social role theory of sex differences and similarities: a current appraisal. in **The Developmental Social Psychology of Gender.** eds. Eckes T., Trautner H. M. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum). 123–174 pp. 2000.

JIN X. How Gender Stereotype in Education Impact Female Students' Development in Secondary School. **Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences.** 2023. 12. 229-234. 10.54097/ehss.v12i.7644.

WOOD W., EAGLY A.H. Biosocial construction of sex differences and similarities in behavior. In **Advances in Experimental Social Psychology.** eds. Olson J. M., Zanna M. P. New York: Academic Press. 2012. 46, 55–123.

АЛИМОВ Н.Х. ГЕНДЕРНАЯ СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТЬ И ГЕНДЕРНАЯ СТРАТЕГИЯ НОВОГО УЗБЕКИСТАНА.2024. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10657967>

Recebido em: 14 de Janeiro de 2024

Avaliado em: 22 de Abril de 2024

Aceito em: 10 de Dezembro de 2024



A autenticidade desse artigo pode ser conferida no site <https://periodicos.set.edu.br>

Copyright (c) 2024 Revista Interfaces Científicas - Educação



Este artigo é licenciado na modalidade acesso abertosob a Atribuição-Compartilhaqual CC BY-SA

1 Associate professor of Fergana State University, PhD, Fergana city, Department of English Practical Course, Uzbekistan. E-mail: nr.gafurova@pf.fdu.uz | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6978-472X>

2 Fergana State University Bachelor degree student, Fergana city, Department of Foreign languages, Uzbekistan. E-mail: stasyashikina29@gmail.com

