

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL CULTURE AND INCLUSIVITY: HOW DOES
INCLUSIVE CULTURE SUPPORT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

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Annotation: This study scientifically analyzes the interrelation between school culture and inclusivity. It examines the formation of inclusive culture, the socio-psychological environment among students, teachers' inclusive competencies, and the mechanisms of collaboration that influence the effectiveness of inclusive education. The relevance of developing inclusive culture in the context of recent reforms in Uzbekistan's education system is also highlighted.

Keywords: school culture, inclusivity, inclusive education, tolerance, empathy, inclusive policy, socio-psychological environment.

Introduction. In recent years, inclusive education has become a pressing issue worldwide, including in Uzbekistan's education system. The new edition of the "Law on Education" adopted in 2020, as well as the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4860 dated October 13, 2020 "On measures to further improve the system of education for children with special educational needs", has made creating equal educational opportunities for children with special needs and engaging them actively in social life a priority direction of state policy. In primary education, the success of inclusive processes largely depends on the professional competence, psychological readiness, and personal values of the teacher. The tolerance, empathy, and communicative culture of future primary school teachers have a direct impact on the social adaptation of children with special needs. The effective implementation of inclusive education is linked not only to methodological approaches but also to how school culture is formed and developed. The inclusive culture of a school is a set of values aimed at accepting, respecting, and integrating all learners—including children with physical or intellectual disabilities, socially vulnerable groups, and those from diverse cultural backgrounds—as equal participants in the educational process.

The Concept of School Culture and Its Components

School culture is a system of values, norms, traditions, interpersonal relations, and social behaviors developed within the school community. It is the "heart" of a school; without it, inclusive education remains nothing more than a formal project. School culture directly influences:

- the quality of education,
- the socio-psychological development of students,
- teachers' professional growth,
- the level of collaboration with parents.

The inclusivity-related aspects of school culture include:

- **Respect and appreciation:** acknowledging each learner's abilities, needs, and differences.

- **Equal opportunities:** ensuring every child has equal access to education.
- **Cooperation and participation:** collaboration among teachers, parents, psychologists, and social pedagogues.
- **What Is Inclusive Culture and How Is It Formed?**

Inclusive culture refers to an internal school culture that fosters positive attitudes toward accepting learners with diverse needs and actively involving them in the educational process. Research shows that organizational decisions alone (such as mixed classrooms, accessible infrastructure, or additional teaching support) are not sufficient; if school culture does not change, inclusive initiatives remain “on paper.”

- Inclusive culture:
 - enhances teachers’ motivation and positive attitudes toward inclusive education,
 - encourages school leaders to make decisions based on inclusive values,
 - promotes inclusive collaboration with parents and the community.

Key principles of inclusive culture:

- Tolerance and empathy: understanding and accepting differences.
- Flexibility: adapting curriculum content and teaching methods to diverse needs.
- Collaboration: supporting the development of all learners through teamwork.
- Development-oriented leadership: school leadership prioritizes inclusivity as a strategic direction.

Booth and Ainscow’s Index for Inclusion identifies three main directions for creating an inclusive environment:

1. Creating an inclusive culture,
2. Developing inclusive policies,
3. Improving inclusive practices.

The Role of Inclusive Culture in Supporting Inclusive Education

Inclusive culture is the “soil” in which inclusive education grows. Without it, even the best teaching methods and resources cannot produce the desired outcomes.

Inclusive culture supports inclusive education by:

- **Creating a psychologically safe environment**—students feel valued and respected.
- **Enhancing teachers’ inclusive competencies**—ensuring readiness for individualized approaches.
- **Forming positive societal attitudes**—reducing social stigma toward children with differences.
- **Ensuring equal access to educational resources** for all learners.
- **Fostering cooperation with parents and the community**—decision-making becomes collective.

According to UNESCO (2020), schools with well-established inclusive cultures show a **30–40% higher participation rate** among children with disabilities in education. In Uzbekistan, inclusive culture is steadily developing. The Presidential Resolution No. PQ-4860 specifically focuses on:

- introducing inclusive education in schools,
- training teachers,
- developing special curricula,
- strengthening collaboration and shaping inclusive culture.

Currently, schools are implementing the following measures to build inclusive culture:

- training and professional development for teachers,
- extracurricular activities that foster empathy and social responsibility among students,
- support services involving special educators and psychologists.

Conclusion. The relationship between school culture and inclusivity is interconnected, systemic, and strategically important. The successful implementation of inclusive education primarily depends on the presence of an inclusive school culture. In such an environment, every child feels valued, supported, and a full participant in the educational process. Therefore, developing inclusive values and a socially supportive atmosphere in schools must be a top priority in advancing inclusive education.

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