ISSN:2308-5703

Impact factor:13.5 *International Multidisciplinary Online Journal* September, 2026

PEDAGOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING CREATIVITY IN PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN BASED ON THE THIRD EDITION OF THE "ILK QADAM" STATE CURRICULUM

Tursunova Kamolaxon Ulug'bek qizi

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pedagogical Sciences,

Deputy Director for Higher Category Affairs, Mentor.

State Preschool Educational Institution

No. 5, Khonobod City, Andijan Region

Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22659510

Abstract: This article examines the pedagogical opportunities offered by the third edition of the "Ilk Qadam" (First Step) State Curriculum for developing creativity in preschool-age children in Uzbekistan. Drawing on a comparative analysis of the curriculum's normative content and on classical and contemporary theories of creative development, the study identifies the structural place of creativity within the curriculum's developmental domains and proposes a pedagogical model for its practical cultivation in kindergarten settings. The analysis shows that the revised curriculum extends beyond earlier editions by treating creativity not as an isolated activity confined to art lessons, but as a cross-cutting quality that can be nurtured through play, exploration, and guided independent activity across all developmental domains. Based on this analysis, the article outlines a four-stage pedagogical cycle - motivational, exploratory, creative-productive, and reflective-evaluative - together with three converging conditions (environment, teacher facilitation, and independent child activity) that, taken together, support the sustainable development of creative abilities. The findings are intended to support preschool teachers, methodologists, and curriculum developers in translating the standards of the "Ilk Qadam" program into concrete pedagogical practice.

Keywords: preschool education; "Ilk Qadam" curriculum; creativity development; pedagogical conditions; early childhood pedagogy; Uzbekistan.

INTRODUCTION

Creativity is increasingly recognized across early childhood education systems as a foundational capacity rather than a specialized talent reserved for a few children. The ability to generate original ideas, to combine familiar materials in unfamiliar ways, and to persist through open-ended tasks is now understood to underlie later achievement not only in the arts but also in problem-solving, language, and social cooperation. In Uzbekistan, the state framework governing preschool education, known as "Ilk Qadam" (First Step), has undergone successive revisions aimed at bringing national practice closer to internationally recognized standards of child-centered, developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

The third edition of the "Ilk Qadam" curriculum reorganizes the expected learning outcomes of children from birth to school entry into a small number of interconnected developmental domains, among which artistic and creative development occupies an explicit and expanded place. Unlike earlier normative documents, which tended to treat creative activity as equivalent to the reproduction of a model given by the teacher (drawing a predetermined picture, following a fixed craft pattern), the

revised curriculum places greater emphasis on the child's own initiative, choice of materials, and freedom of artistic expression within a supportive environment.

Despite this normative shift, practitioners in many kindergartens continue to rely on reproductive methods of art and craft instruction, in part because the curriculum's general statements about creativity are not always translated into concrete pedagogical guidance. This gap between what the standard document envisions and what is implemented in daily practice motivates the present study. The purpose of this article is twofold: first, to clarify the place and scope that the third edition of "Ilk Qadam" assigns to creativity within its overall structure; and second, to propose a pedagogically grounded model, consistent with the curriculum's requirements, that preschool teachers can use to design activities that genuinely cultivate children's creative abilities rather than merely occupying them with craft-like tasks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is theoretical-analytical in character and relies on a qualitative, document-based methodology rather than an experimental design. Three groups of sources were analyzed. The first group comprised the normative text of the third edition of the "Ilk Qadam" State Curriculum, with particular attention to the sections addressing artistic-aesthetic development, play activity, and the general principles governing the organization of the developmental environment. The second group consisted of classical and contemporary psychological and pedagogical works on creativity and its development in childhood, including the cultural-historical approach of L. S. Vygotsky, the stage theory of cognitive development of J. Piaget, the structural models of creative thinking proposed by J. P. Guilford and E. P. Torrance, and the pedagogical heritage of V. A. Sukhomlinsky concerning the moral and aesthetic education of young children. The third group comprised studies by Uzbek scholars in preschool pedagogy addressing the organization of creative and artistic activity in kindergarten conditions. The analysis proceeded through comparative-content analysis: the developmental domains and expected outcomes stated in the curriculum were mapped against the theoretical constructs identified in the literature, in order to determine (a) where creativity is explicitly named within the curriculum's structure, (b) which pedagogical conditions the theoretical literature considers necessary for creativity to develop, and (c) to what extent these conditions are already implied, or remain absent, in the curriculum's guidance for practitioners. On this basis, a structural diagram of the curriculum's developmental domains and a pedagogical model consisting of sequential stages and supporting conditions were constructed and are presented in the following section.

RESULTS

The comparative analysis of the third edition of "Ilk Qadam" indicates that the curriculum organizes expected child outcomes into a set of developmental domains that are treated as mutually reinforcing rather than isolated subject areas. Figure 1 presents this structure schematically, showing artistic and creative development positioned alongside physical, social-emotional, communicative, and cognitive domains, while also functioning as a domain that draws on and feeds back into the others.

ISSN:2308-5703

Impact factor:13.5 *International Multidisciplinary Online Journal* September, 2026

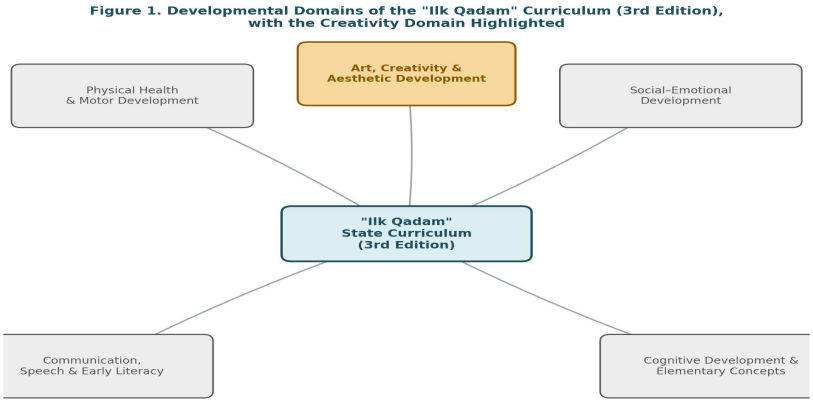


Figure 1. Developmental domains of the "Ilk Qadam" curriculum (3rd edition), with the creativity domain highlighted.

A close reading of the curriculum's descriptors for the creativity domain shows that expected outcomes are formulated in terms of the child's independent action - for example, the ability to select materials, to experiment with color, form, and texture, and to communicate an idea through an artistic product - rather than in terms of correctly reproducing a teacher-given sample. This formulation is consistent with the cultural-historical understanding of creative imagination as an activity that reorganizes elements of prior experience into new combinations, and with Guilford's and Torrance's emphasis on fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration as measurable facets of creative thinking that can be cultivated through appropriately structured tasks.

Based on this alignment between the curriculum's stated outcomes and the theoretical literature, the study proposes a four-stage pedagogical cycle for organizing creative activity in the preschool group, illustrated in Figure 2. The cycle begins with a motivational stage, in which the teacher arouses the child's curiosity through a problem, a story, or an unusual object rather than announcing a fixed task. This is followed by an exploratory stage, during which children are given time to handle and experiment with materials without an expected end product. The creative-productive stage allows the child to construct an original artistic or constructive outcome using the materials explored, and the cycle closes with a reflective-evaluative stage in which children describe their work and the teacher offers descriptive, non-judgmental feedback, which in turn generates new questions that feed back into the motivational stage of a subsequent cycle.

ISSN:2308-5703
Impact factor:13.5 *International Multidisciplinary Online Journal* September, 2026

Figure 2. Cyclical Pedagogical Model for Developing Creativity in Preschool-Age Children

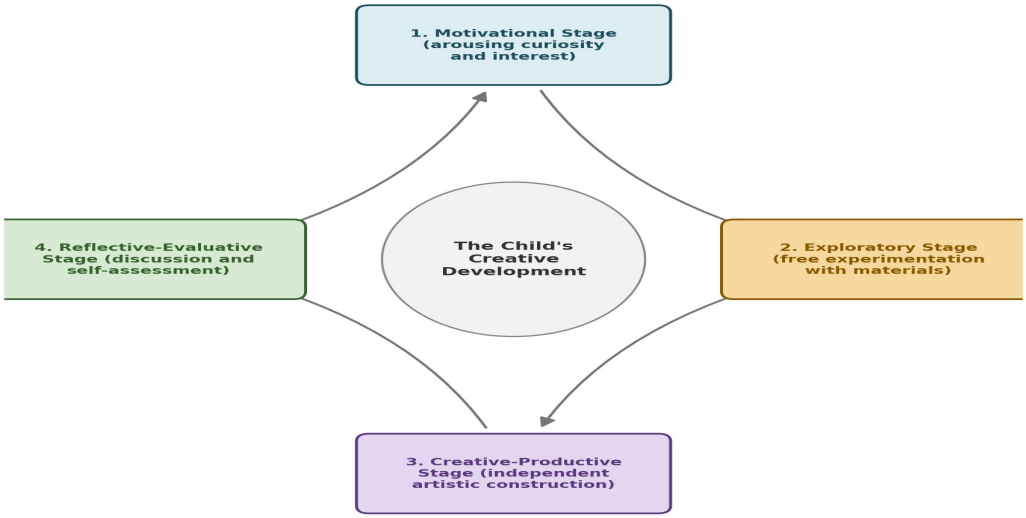


Figure 2. Cyclical pedagogical model for developing creativity in preschool-age children.

The analysis further identifies three pedagogical conditions that the literature consistently treats as necessary for the cycle above to function in practice, and that the curriculum's general principles imply without stating explicitly as a unified set. These conditions, shown in Figure 3, are: a developmentally enriched environment offering accessible, open-ended materials and dedicated free-choice time; a facilitative rather than directive teacher role, expressed through open-ended questioning and encouragement rather than correction of the child's product; and protected space for the child's independent activity and play, understood as the primary vehicle through which preschool-age children construct meaning and rehearse creative solutions.

Figure 3. Convergent Pedagogical Conditions Supporting Creativity Development in Preschool Education

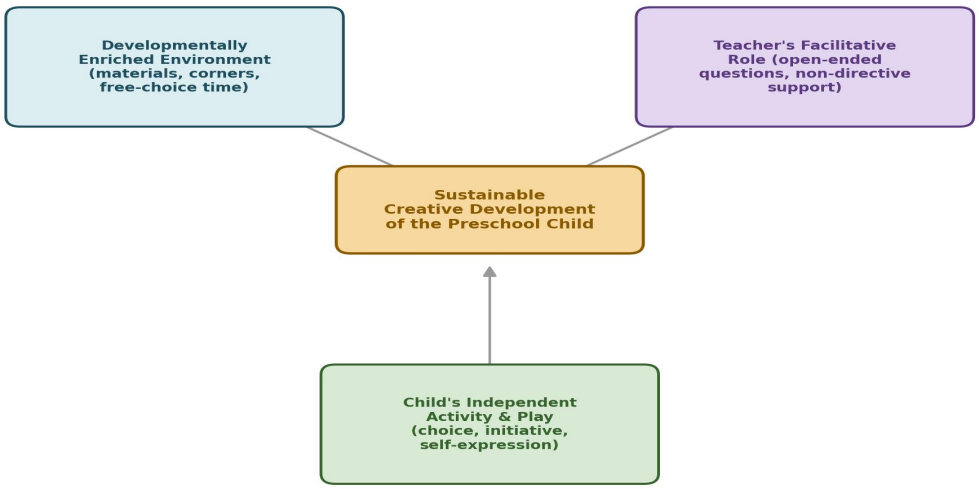


Figure 3. Convergent pedagogical conditions supporting creativity development in preschool education.

Taken together, the structural analysis, the four-stage cycle, and the three converging conditions provide a coherent answer to the question posed in the introduction: the third edition of "Ilk Qadam" does provide sufficient normative grounding for creativity-oriented pedagogy, but this grounding requires the kind of explicit procedural elaboration offered here in order to be reliably applied by practicing teachers.

DISCUSSION

The results support the view, long argued within the Vygotskian tradition, that creative imagination in early childhood is not a spontaneous, unteachable trait but a function of experience that develops through the child's activity in a socially organized environment. Read in this light, the third edition of "Ilk Qadam" represents a meaningful advance over earlier normative documents, in that it frames artistic-creative development as a matter of the child's independent engagement with materials and ideas rather than as skill in copying a model. At the same time, the analysis suggests that curriculum documents of this kind, by their nature, state desired outcomes without specifying the pedagogical sequence through which teachers might reliably bring them about, which is precisely the gap the four-stage cycle proposed in this article is intended to close.

The proposed model also resonates with Sukhomlinsky's insistence that aesthetic and moral education in early childhood cannot be separated from the child's everyday activity and relationships, and it is compatible with Piaget's account of the preoperational child as an active constructor of meaning through symbolic play. Reframing creativity development as a cycle beginning with motivation and ending with reflection, rather than as a single act of production, addresses a common shortcoming observed in kindergarten practice: activities that end as soon as a physical product is finished, without any structured opportunity for the child to articulate or reconsider the ideas behind it.

The study is limited by its document-based and theoretical nature. It does not include direct classroom observation or measurement of children's creative performance before and after the application of the proposed model, and the specific developmental domain labels used in Figure 1 summarize, rather than quote verbatim, the curriculum's own terminology. Future research should therefore test the four-stage cycle and the three supporting conditions empirically, for example through a pedagogical experiment comparing groups of preschool teachers trained in the proposed model with groups continuing to use predominantly reproductive methods, using standardized measures of fluency, flexibility, and originality in children's artistic output.

CONCLUSION

The third edition of the "Ilk Qadam" State Curriculum provides a stronger normative basis than earlier editions for treating creativity as a cross-cutting developmental quality rather than an isolated craft skill. Realizing this potential in kindergarten practice, however, requires that the curriculum's general statements be translated into a concrete pedagogical sequence and into identifiable classroom conditions. The four-stage cycle and the three converging conditions proposed in this article offer one such translation, grounded in both the curriculum's own language and in established theories of creative development. Preschool teachers, methodologists, and those responsible for teacher training may use this model as a practical reference point for planning activities, evaluating existing practice,

and designing further professional development aimed at strengthening the creative potential of preschool-age children in Uzbekistan.

References

1. Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2022). “Ilk Qadam” State Curriculum for Early Childhood Development and Education (3rd ed.). Tashkent.
2. Vygotsky, L. S. (2004). Imagination and Creativity in Childhood. Journal of Russian and East European Psychology, 42(1), 7–97.
3. Piaget, J. (1962). Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
4. Guilford, J. P. (1967). The Nature of Human Intelligence. New York: McGraw-Hill.
5. Torrance, E. P. (1974). Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking: Norms-Technical Manual. Bensenville, IL: Scholastic Testing Service.
6. Sukhomlinsky, V. A. (1979). Selected Educational Writings. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
7. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
8. Yusupova, D. (2019). Pedagogical Conditions for Developing Creative Abilities in Preschool Children. Tashkent: Fan va Texnologiya.
9. Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. J. (2007). Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
10. Runco, M. A. (2014). Creativity: Theories and Themes: Research, Development, and Practice (2nd ed.). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.