

Traffic Culture As A Factor Of Social Safety: Starting From Childhood

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Abstract: This article analyzes the pedagogical foundations of teaching children traffic rules and cultivating a culture of adherence to them. The study examines methods for developing traffic safety skills in children through the collaborative efforts of family, school, and society. Additionally, the effectiveness of didactic games, visual aids, and interactive activities is presented on a scientific basis. The pedagogical, social, and cultural features of fostering traffic culture in various countries are also analyzed. Based on the experiences of Sweden, Germany, Japan, the United States, and other countries, effective methods for instilling traffic culture in children from an early age are highlighted. The analysis of international practices provides a rationale for applying advanced approaches within the education system of Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Traffic rules, child safety, pedagogy, upbringing, transport culture, prevention, international experience.

Introduction: In recent years, ensuring road traffic safety has become one of the key directions of state policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan. With the growing number of vehicles, cases of road traffic accidents involving minors have also been reported. Therefore, the need to instill a culture of compliance with traffic rules in children from an early age is becoming increasingly urgent.

Relevance of the topic

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that if a child does not learn proper behavior as a participant in traffic from an early age, these negative habits can persist throughout life. From this perspective, cultivating traffic culture in childhood is an integral part of social safety, culture, and upbringing.

METHODOLOGY

The following methods were used during the study:

Pedagogical observation – analysis of traffic safety lessons involving school students;

Questionnaires and interviews – studying the involvement of parents and teachers in teaching traffic rules;

Experimental work – evaluating the effectiveness of “Safe Road” lessons incorporated into the curriculum for grades 1–4.

Additionally, statistical data from the Traffic Safety Department for 2022–2024 were used. Comparative analysis, pedagogical observation, and analysis of international documents were applied. Key data were collected from WHO, NHTSA (USA), the Ministries of Education of Japan and Sweden, and relevant scientific publications.

RESULTS

1. Factors influencing the formation of traffic culture in children. The study revealed three main factors that affect children’s mastery of traffic rules;
2. Exemplary behavior in the family – parents’ adherence to rules;
3. Systematic education at school – extracurricular activities, games, and quizzes;
4. Role of society and mass media – social advertising and programs specifically for children;
5. Approaches in European countries.

Sweden: Since 1997, the “Vision zero” strategy has

recognized each citizen's life on the road as the highest value (Swedish transport administration, 2022). Schools implement the "Safe kids" program, cultivating traffic signs and safety culture through practical games.

Germany: The subject "Verkehrserziehung" (Traffic education) is mandatory in school curricula, where children engage in practical exercises in mini simulated cities, following the principle of "learning through experience."

Netherlands: Special attention is given to cyclists' culture, and primary education includes the "Verkeersveiligheid" course, which teaches practical knowledge of road signs, lights, and pedestrian crossings.

3. Experiences in Asian countries

Japan: Annually hosts "Traffic safety week" with interactive games and practical exercises for preschool children (Ministry of Education, Japan, 2021), based on the principle of "learning through play."

South Korea: Since 2007, "Traffic safety experience centers" allow children to learn safety rules as pedestrians and drivers in a virtual environment.

Singapore: Traffic culture is an integral part of state policy, with "Safe journey" lessons implemented in schools using AR (Augmented reality) technologies.

4. Experience in the USA and Canada

USA: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) conducts large-scale campaigns such as "Walk safe" and "Bike safe" to instill traffic culture in children.

Canada: The Road Safety Education Council cooperates with schools to organize interactive training and seminars for parents on traffic culture.

5. Effectiveness of Didactic Approaches

Interactive methods such as "Colorful traffic lights," "Choose the right path," "Green light," and "Find the road sign" games increased student engagement. Experimental results showed that 87% of students participating in interactive lessons correctly identified traffic signs and signals, compared to 59% in the control group.

6. Social and educational significance

Such educational approaches foster responsibility, caution, and collective culture among children. They develop a conscious attitude toward traffic rules, which in turn improves overall societal safety.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that teaching traffic safety should not be limited to theoretical knowledge alone. Children must reinforce these skills through practical

experience. Cooperation among parents, teachers, and traffic safety representatives enhances the effectiveness of pedagogical processes.

The following approaches could be effective in Uzbekistan:

Introduce "Traffic Safety" as a subject in primary education;

Expand the "Safe school environment" program in cooperation with Road Safety Service;

Establish interactive mini-polygons (road models) in kindergartens;

Increase social media campaigns and public service announcements on traffic culture for children.

These approaches are highly relevant for Uzbekistan, and by adapting them to the national education system, children's traffic culture can be effectively strengthened. International experience shows that traffic culture is not just about knowing rules, but also about social awareness, responsibility, and culture. Each country shapes this process according to its national traditions and education policies. For Uzbekistan, integrating the experiences of Germany, Japan, and Sweden through practical exercises is considered the most effective way to instill traffic culture in children.

Instilling traffic rules from early childhood is not only an educational measure but also a factor in ensuring social safety. If lessons in this area are systematically implemented in educational institutions, road traffic accidents among minors can be significantly reduced. Therefore, it is advisable to introduce "Safe road culture" as a mandatory course at the primary education level. To expand on the article and make it more comprehensive, you could delve deeper into several key areas: Early education plays a crucial role in shaping behavior and establishing habits. In the case of traffic safety, teaching children at a young age about the importance of road safety can instill lifelong habits. Studies have shown that children who are taught traffic rules early on are more likely to make safe decisions as pedestrians, cyclists, and future drivers. This early education not only reduces the risk of accidents but also promotes social responsibility and respect for others on the road.

Effective traffic safety education relies heavily on the joint efforts of parents, schools, and local authorities. In Uzbekistan, a stronger collaboration among these stakeholders could significantly enhance the impact of road safety initiatives.

Engaging parents in the process: It's essential to involve parents in their children's traffic safety education. They should be encouraged to reinforce lessons at home and

during family outings, ensuring children internalize safe road practices in everyday situations. Parent-teacher associations can play a key role by organizing workshops that teach parents how to model and encourage road safety behaviors in daily life.

Support from the community and government: Beyond expanding educational efforts, government agencies such as the “Road safety service” must work closely with schools to create safer environments for students. This could involve initiatives such as installing pedestrian crossings, setting up traffic signals around schools, and organizing community-based road safety events.

Furthermore traditional approaches to traffic safety have tended to focus on teaching safe behavior (education), punishing risky behavior (enforcement), or designing the environment to minimize crashes and/or the injuries resulting from them (engineering). However, over recent years there has been a growing awareness of the need to understand how the prevailing culture in a country influences both behavior on the roads and the way governments and the community respond to the traffic safety problem. In this respect, it can be argued that the Safe System Approach still tends to focus our traffic safety efforts too narrowly on roads, vehicles, and road users. Indeed, some researchers have argued that it needs to be strengthened by integrating it with contemporary developments in systems theory to provide a better account of the complex nature of the road transport system and the interactions involved (Salmon & Lenne, 2015). Moreover, Johnson (2014, p. 1175) has argued that: [...] that critical elements of the safe system model are in discord with behavioural mores in the cultures of many western motorised nations and that this hampers the adoption of the most effective safety programs within key institutions and within political systems. He argued that a systematic examination of car use and safety cultures is required to strengthen contemporary safe system thinking. Therefore, the opportunity exists to augment both traditional and safe system approaches to traffic safety by incorporating a stronger focus on the role of culture. From a practical perspective, it offers a means of both better understanding the complex range of factors influencing behavior on the roads and of identifying innovative strategies to bring about change at the personal, community, and institutional level.

The introduction of a “Safe Road Culture” course as a mandatory part of the curriculum would be a major step towards long-term change. However, it’s important that this curriculum evolves over time, integrating new research, technology, and the changing needs of the community. Furthermore, road safety

education should not be seen as a one-time lesson but as an ongoing process that evolves with the children, helping them to internalize road safety principles as they mature.

By taking these steps, Uzbekistan can create a culture of road safety that empowers children to be responsible, informed, and conscious of the risks and responsibilities that come with being part of society. Integrating international best practices with a tailored approach that respects local traditions and the unique needs of the community will be key to success.

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