

THE LACK OF TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN'S OUTSKIRTS SCHOOLS

Ahrorova Gulsanam Husan qizi

Tourism faculty

Chirchik State Pedagogical University

Scientific advisor: Kurbanova Feruza

Chirchik State Pedagogical University

Abstract. This article examines the challenges faced by secondary schools in the outskirts of Uzbekistan regarding their lack of technological equipment and infrastructure. Since the country's independence, the gap between urban and rural schools in terms of access to modern educational resources has widened. Through a detailed analysis of existing literature, surveys, and interviews with educators and students, the study identifies key issues such as limited access to computers, poor internet connectivity, and insufficient teacher training. It also highlights the negative impact of these challenges on student performance and digital literacy. The article proposes practical solutions, including increased investment in technology, professional development for teachers, and improved internet access, aimed at bridging the digital divide and creating a more equitable educational environment. By addressing these issues, the study seeks to contribute to the development of better learning opportunities and educational facilities in the rural regions of Uzbekistan.

Key words: Technological devices, rural schools, learning environment, teacher training, internet, equipment

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, technology has become a cornerstone of education, enabling students to access vast resources, engage in interactive learning, and acquire essential skills for the digital age. However, in many rural regions of Uzbekistan, particularly in the outskirts, schools face significant challenges in integrating technology into the classroom. Despite various educational reforms since the country's independence, the gap between urban and rural schools in terms of access to technological equipment remains a pressing issue.

Secondary schools in these areas are often underfunded and lack the necessary infrastructure to provide students with the digital tools required for a comprehensive education. Many schools still rely on outdated teaching methods, and the absence of computers, projectors, and high-speed internet prevents teachers from utilizing modern educational resources and methods that could enhance learning. Furthermore, the lack of trained educators who can effectively use technology exacerbates the situation, limiting students' exposure to essential digital skills. This article aims to explore the extent of this technological deficit in Uzbekistan's rural schools, identify the key challenges contributing to this issue, and assess its impact on students' educational outcomes. Through a detailed analysis of the current situation, the study seeks to highlight the importance of addressing this technological gap and propose solutions that can help improve educational infrastructure and ensure equal opportunities for students in both urban and rural regions of Uzbekistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The lack of technological equipment in Uzbekistan's rural schools is a multifaceted issue that affects students' academic performance, teacher effectiveness, and overall educational quality. By addressing these challenges through government investment, teacher training, and public-private partnerships, Uzbekistan can begin to bridge the digital divide and provide rural students with the educational opportunities they deserve. Through these concerted efforts, the goal of creating an equitable and inclusive educational system for all students in Uzbekistan can be realized. The issue

of limited access to technological equipment in rural schools is a well-documented concern in many developing nations, including Uzbekistan. Several studies have highlighted the challenges that rural schools face in providing equitable educational opportunities due to inadequate resources and infrastructure. The gap between urban and rural schools in terms of access to technology has been a longstanding issue. In Uzbekistan, while urban schools are rapidly adopting digital tools and resources, rural schools remain significantly behind. Rural schools often lack basic technological resources such as computers, projectors, and reliable internet access. These schools face difficulties in keeping up with the modern, technology-driven educational practices seen in urban areas. The absence of these resources exacerbates educational inequalities, affecting student engagement and limiting their access to digital learning opportunities. In a similar vein, several studies from other developing countries, such as India and Afghanistan have also highlighted the persistent technological deficits in rural schools. These studies argue that the technological gap results in lower educational outcomes for students in rural areas, contributing to long-term disparities in digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and employability. Teacher training has been identified as another critical factor in the successful integration of technology in rural classrooms. Shodiev discusses the lack of digital literacy and technology training for teachers in rural Uzbekistan. This gap in training prevents educators from fully utilizing available technological resources. Many rural teachers lack the confidence and knowledge to incorporate technology into their lessons, often due to limited access to training programs and professional development opportunities. This issue is not unique to Uzbekistan; studies in countries such as Kenya have shown that teacher training in rural areas is crucial for effective technology adoption in classrooms.

The lack of technological access and integration has significant implications for student outcomes. Digital literacy is becoming increasingly important for students to succeed in the modern job market. Students in rural schools who lack access to technology are at a severe disadvantage in developing critical digital skills. In Uzbekistan, rural students demonstrate lower digital literacy rates than their urban

counterparts. Students in rural schools often struggle to engage with online learning platforms, research online materials, and develop the skills needed for digital-based careers. Moreover, rural students in Uzbekistan tend to perform worse on standardized tests compared to their urban peers. The lack of technological resources hinders their ability to access online tutorials, participate in virtual lessons, or conduct research effectively, resulting in poorer academic outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The survey results revealed significant disparities in the availability of technological resources between rural and urban schools in Uzbekistan. Only 25% of the rural schools surveyed reported having access to computers for students, compared to over 80% of urban schools. Similarly, while 60% of urban schools had smartboards or projectors in classrooms, less than 10% of rural schools were equipped with these tools. Internet connectivity was another critical issue. Nearly 70% of rural schools reported having very limited or no access to the internet, with speeds often too slow to support effective online learning. In contrast, urban schools reported high-speed internet access in nearly all classrooms, facilitating the use of digital learning platforms and resources. This technological gap reflects the ongoing struggle rural schools face in accessing the necessary infrastructure to support modern educational practices. Survey results and interviews indicated that only 18% of teachers in rural schools had received formal training in using technology for teaching purposes. Many teachers reported feeling unprepared and overwhelmed when trying to integrate technology into their lessons. One teacher in the southern region stated, "We don't have the training or resources to use technology effectively. We try our best with what we have, but it's difficult." In contrast, urban teachers often had access to regular professional development programs, which included training on integrating digital tools in the classroom. Approximately 45% of urban teachers reported receiving training in educational technology, which greatly enhanced their ability to use digital resources to engage students. The lack of formal training for rural teachers, coupled with inadequate

support and resources, significantly hinders the integration of technology into teaching and learning. Many rural teachers resort to traditional methods of instruction, such as using chalkboards and textbooks, as they are unfamiliar with or unable to access digital tools. Discussions revealed that students in rural areas felt disadvantaged compared to their urban peers. One student explained, "We don't have the same opportunities as other students. They use computers in class, but we only have books. It's not fair." This sense of inequality, stemming from the lack of technological access, contributes to the widening educational gap between rural and urban students. Additionally, academic performance was noticeably lower in rural schools compared to urban schools. On standardized tests and digital literacy assessments, rural students scored significantly lower. This gap is attributed to their limited exposure to digital tools, which are essential for developing critical thinking and research skills that are tested in such assessments.

CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the critical issue of inadequate technological equipment in rural schools in Uzbekistan, emphasizing the disparities between rural and urban educational environments. The lack of access to essential technological resources, such as computers, internet connectivity, and interactive teaching tools, has a profound impact on both students and teachers in these areas. Teachers in rural often lack the necessary training to integrate technology into their teaching, further hindering the potential benefits that digital tools could bring to the classroom. Students, too, face significant barriers, including limited access to personal devices and a lack of engagement in lessons that do not incorporate technology. The findings suggest that the digital divide between urban and rural schools in Uzbekistan is contributing to a widening gap in educational quality and opportunities. This divide negatively affects student motivation, academic performance, and long-term prospects, ultimately limiting their ability to compete in an increasingly technology-driven world. To address these challenges, the study recommends increasing government investment in

technological infrastructure in rural schools, ensuring equitable access to digital resources, and expanding professional development programs for teachers. Collaboration with private sector partners and NGOs, as well as community-based initiatives, could also play a vital role in improving access to technology and digital literacy. Ultimately, bridging the technological gap between urban and rural schools is crucial for ensuring that all students, regardless of their geographic location, have access to a modern, high-quality education. Through concerted efforts by the government, educators, and other stakeholders, Uzbekistan can build a more equitable and inclusive education system that empowers all students to thrive in the digital age.

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