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DEVELOPING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' COMPETENCE IN UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW AND PROVISIONAL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Abdug'aniyev Ozod
Scientific Secretary, Qori Niyoziy National Institute of Educational Pedagogy;
PhD in Pedagogical Sciences, Professor
Correspondence: ozodabduganiyev222@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Universities are expected to prepare graduates who can interpret and enact principles such as human dignity, justice, freedom, peace, tolerance, solidarity, and responsibility. Existing scholarship, however, often separates value knowledge, motivation, moral emotion, reflection, and conduct. This integrative review develops a provisional framework for university students' competence in universal human values and specifies the limits of the supporting evidence. Six criterion-selected works representing Uzbek pedagogical thought and established international theories were examined through directed qualitative content analysis. Meaning units were coded across cognitive, axiological-motivational, emotional-reflective, and activity-behavioral domains. The synthesis indicates consistent theoretical support for cognition, personal value commitment, and action, while emotional-reflective processes are less directly specified. The resulting framework defines four interdependent components, proposes observable indicators, and formulates propositions for empirical testing. The framework is a theory-building product rather than evidence of pedagogical effectiveness. Its construct validity, reliability, measurement invariance, and sensitivity to educational interventions require testing with student data before use in consequential assessment.

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Keywords: *universal human values; competence; pedagogical axiology; moral development; higher education; integrative review.*

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Introduction

Higher education has responsibilities that extend beyond disciplinary knowledge. Graduates must also judge how knowledge should be used when social interests, professional obligations, and moral claims conflict. This demand becomes especially visible in culturally plural settings and in digital environments where students encounter competing narratives, rapid communication, and ethical uncertainty. Knowing the definition of a value is therefore insufficient. Students need to explain why a principle matters, compare competing claims, recognize the dignity and interests of others, and translate reasoned judgments into conduct. Policy frameworks support this broader view of learning. Uzbekistan's Law on Education links education with intellectual, spiritual-moral, ethical, and cultural development (Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020). UNESCO's guidance on global citizenship education distinguishes cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral domains (UNESCO, 2015), while the Council of Europe (2018) organizes democratic competence around values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. These frameworks

justify a multidimensional approach, although they do not establish a specific construct for university students in Uzbekistan.

In this study, universal human values are principles whose normative reference is the equal dignity and legitimate welfare of human beings, including humanism, justice, freedom, peace, tolerance, solidarity, responsibility, compassion, and mutual respect. Universality is not treated as cultural uniformity. National history, language, traditions, and moral experience shape how values are understood and practiced. The educational problem is thus to connect culturally situated meaning with standards of dignity and reciprocal respect rather than to oppose national and universal values.

The term competence also requires precision. A knowledge-only definition permits a student to describe justice or tolerance while behaving inconsistently. A behavior-only definition, by contrast, conceals the motives and reasoning behind an action. A defensible construct must connect understanding, personal endorsement, emotional and reflective mediation, and action. Relevant elements appear across pedagogical axiology, national education, psychological value theory, and character education, but they are rarely assembled into one transparent framework. The study therefore asks three questions: Which competence dimensions are explicit or implicit in the selected Uzbek and international theories? How do national-pedagogical and international psychological-moral perspectives complement one another? What provisional component structure, observable indicators, and empirical propositions can be derived without presenting conceptual synthesis as validated evidence?

Method

The study used a structured integrative review informed by Whittemore and Knafl's (2005) sequence of problem identification, focused literature search, data evaluation, analysis, and presentation. Directed qualitative content analysis was selected because the inquiry began with theoretically anticipated domains while allowing weakly represented or missing elements to remain visible (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The design is document-based conceptual research, not a systematic review of intervention effects, and no claim of PRISMA completeness is made.

Bibliographic discovery used Google Scholar and verification through publisher or catalogue records, including Uzbek catalogues where available. Searches were rechecked on September 8, 2026. English search terms included universal human values, value education, moral education, basic human values, value competence, moral knowing feeling action, and higher education. Uzbek terms included umuminsoniy qadriyatlar, qadriyatli kompetentlik, pedagogik aksiologiya, and milliy tarbiya va yoshlar. Backward citation checking was used to locate foundational works. A work entered the analytical corpus when it met five criteria: it conceptualized values or values education; explained at least one relation among knowledge, commitment, moral emotion, reflection, or behavior; offered concepts transferable to higher education; represented either Uzbek pedagogical thought or an established international theoretical tradition; and had traceable authorship, year, and publication source. Promotional texts, duplicate records, items without identifiable bibliographic data, and studies limited to one value without a transferable conceptual mechanism were excluded.

The final corpus was purposively selected for conceptual variation. Three Uzbek works addressed spiritual culture, pedagogical axiology, and national education (Mardonov et al., 2013; Musurmonova, 1996; Quronov et al., 2016). Three international works represented value hierarchy, cross-cultural value structure, and the relation among moral knowing, feeling, and action (Lickona, 1991; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). The six texts form an analytical sample of contrasting theoretical positions rather than a representative sample of the full literature. The unit of analysis was a proposition, definition, or explanatory passage connecting values with learning, motivation, emotion, reflection, or action. No students, teachers, institutions, intervention groups, personal records, or survey responses were included. Human-participant consent and ethics approval were therefore not applicable to this document study.

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Table 1

Selection logic and analytical contribution of the six-source corpus

Source	Reason for selection	Central proposition	Contribution and boundary
Musurmonova (1996)	Spiritual values and youth education	Values organize spiritual needs, cultural experience, and conduct.	Culturally situated internalization; no competence measurement model.
Mardonov et al. (2013)	Pedagogical axiology	Value knowledge, attitude, and value-oriented behavior function in unity.	Closest pedagogical architecture; emotion/reflection less differentiated.
Quronov et al. (2016)	National education and youth	Historical memory and national worldview guide socially responsible action.	Clarifies contextual meaning; limited operational criteria.
Rokeach (1973)	Value hierarchy	Enduring beliefs order preferred goals and modes of conduct.	Supports prioritization; ranking may simplify value conflict.
Schwartz (1992)	Cross-cultural value structure	Values form a motivational system with compatible and conflicting priorities.	Supports cross-cultural comparison; requires educational operationalization.
Lickona (1991)	Moral education	Moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action are mutually necessary.	Strong pedagogical bridge; adult contexts need further specification.

A four-domain codebook was applied. Cognitive referred to understanding and reasoned use of value concepts. Axiological-motivational referred to personal acceptance, prioritization, and motives. Emotional-reflective covered empathy, perspective-taking, and self-evaluation. Activity-behavioral referred to observable enactment in interaction and social practice. Each source-domain relation was coded E when explicit, I when indirect, and 0 when not central.

Analysis proceeded through extraction of relevant meaning units, assignment of E/I/0 codes, comparison of Uzbek and international sources, identification of convergence and omission, and synthesis of component definitions and candidate indicators. A component was retained when at least three of the six sources supported it explicitly or indirectly and when it remained conceptually distinguishable from the other components. Coding was completed by one researcher; consequently, no intercoder reliability coefficient was calculated. The matrix and retention rule are reported to make the interpretive process open to scrutiny.

Results

The comparison showed complementarity rather than equivalence. Uzbek authors emphasize the cultural and pedagogical conditions through which values acquire personal meaning: spiritual needs, historical memory, national identity, educational relations, and social responsibility (Mardonov et al., 2013; Musurmonova, 1996; Quronov et al., 2016). International theories specify other mechanisms, notably value organization and prioritization (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992) and the movement from moral knowledge and feeling to action (Lickona, 1991). The national works strengthen contextual interpretation, whereas the international works provide sharper structural distinctions for diagnosis and future measurement. No source contains the complete four-component model. The proposed framework is therefore an analytical synthesis produced through the stated coding and retention rules, not a quotation from any author and not a validated measurement model.

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Table 2

Cross-source coding of the four candidate components

Source	C	AM	ER	AB	Coding rationale
Musurmonova (1996)	I	E	0	E	Spiritual needs and conduct are central; empathy/reflection is not separated.
Mardonov et al. (2013)	E	E	I	E	Knowledge-attitude-behavior unity is explicit; reflection is indirect.
Quronov et al. (2016)	E	E	I	E	Historical awareness and responsibility are explicit; reflection is embedded in worldview.
Rokeach (1973)	E	E	I	E	Belief, preference, and conduct are linked; emotion is not a distinct domain.
Schwartz (1992)	E	E	I	I	Motivational goals are explicit; emotion and action are represented indirectly.
Lickona (1991)	E	E	E	E	Moral knowing, feeling, and action support all four domains.

Note. C = cognitive; AM = axiological-motivational; ER = emotional-reflective; AB = activity-behavioral; E = explicit; I = indirect; 0 = not central. Counts and codes describe this six-work corpus only.

Two patterns stand out. All six sources treat values as personally meaningful priorities or commitments, supporting the axiological-motivational component. Five explicitly connect values with both understanding and conduct. Emotional-reflective processes have the weakest direct representation: they are explicit in Lickona's (1991) moral-feeling domain and indirect in four other works. This component nevertheless satisfies the retention rule and addresses a theoretical mechanism by which learners register the human consequences of a choice and reconsider their conduct.

Competence in universal human values is therefore defined here as a student's integrated capacity to understand dignity-based principles, accept and prioritize them through autonomous reasons, experience and reflect on their implications for self and others, and enact them consistently in academic, interpersonal, civic, and emerging professional situations.

The four components are analytically distinct but reciprocal. Action creates consequences that become material for reflection; reflection may then revise motives and conceptual understanding. The model is cyclical rather than a fixed sequence.

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Figure 1

Evidence-to-framework synthesis and the empirical-validation boundary

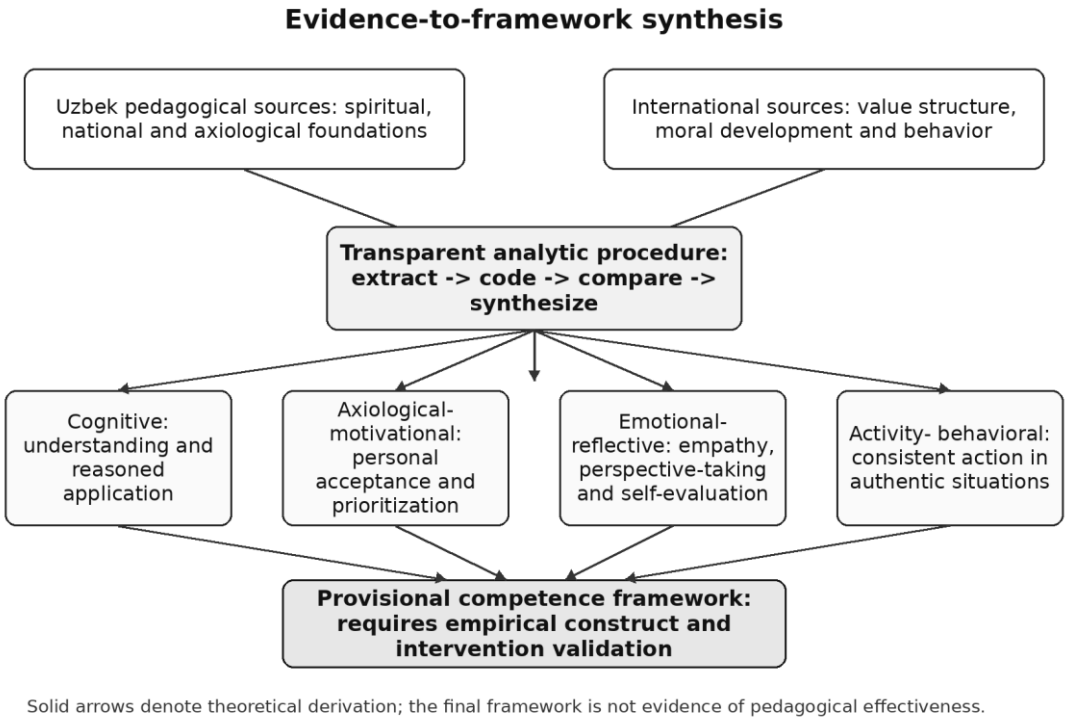


Table 3

Operational definitions, candidate indicators, and testable propositions

Component	Operational definition	Candidate indicators	Proposition for validation
Cognitive	Understands, differentiates, and applies value concepts when reasons or principles conflict.	Concept discrimination; dilemma analysis; recognition of rights, duties, and consequences.	P1: Cognitive scores will relate positively, but not perfectly, to behavior.
Axiological-motivational	Accepts universal human values as personally significant priorities and can justify them beyond external compliance.	Value priorities; autonomous reasons; persistence when value-consistent choices have a cost.	P2: Autonomous value endorsement will mediate knowledge-action relations.
Emotional-reflective	Recognizes others' perspectives and emotions and evaluates personal choices against value-based criteria.	Empathic accuracy; perspective-taking; identification of bias; reflective revision.	P3: Reflection quality will predict correction of inconsistent conduct.
Activity-behavioral	Demonstrates values in communication, collaboration, decision-making, and social participation.	Respectful disagreement; fair role distribution; responsible follow-through; response to exclusion or injustice.	P4: Multi-source behavior ratings will relate more strongly to the full framework than to knowledge alone.

The propositions are falsifiable statements for future research, not findings of the present review. Their purpose is to convert a broad normative concept into a construct that can be tested, revised, or rejected with empirical evidence.

Discussion

The central theoretical contribution is the separation of personal value commitment from both value knowledge and observable conduct. A student may reproduce an accepted formulation because an

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instructor expects it while lacking autonomous endorsement. Conversely, a student may endorse a principle yet fail to enact it under peer pressure or personal cost. Treating these states as equivalent would obscure meaningful differences in competence. The emotional-reflective component warrants particular caution. Its weaker explicit representation in the six-source corpus does not establish it as an independent empirical dimension. Instead, the synthesis identifies a mechanism that value-hierarchy and national-education sources do not isolate consistently. Lickona's (1991) account of moral feeling, UNESCO's (2015) socio-emotional domain, and the Council of Europe's (2018) competence model provide reasons to test empathy, perspective-taking, and self-evaluation. Factor analysis may show one factor, multiple factors, or no stable independent factor; the conceptual model leaves this issue open.

The framework also clarifies the relation between national and universal values. National values provide narratives, symbols, practices, and obligations through which students encounter moral meaning. Universal values offer criteria for examining whether a culturally situated practice respects dignity, justice, and reciprocity. Pedagogical integration therefore depends on reasoned dialogue: students can investigate how traditions express broader principles and how competing interpretations should be assessed.

Instruction aligned with the framework would require varied learning conditions. Concept clarification and comparative reading address the cognitive component.

Moral dilemmas and justification tasks can reveal whether values function as personally endorsed reasons. Dialogue, perspective-taking, and structured reflection make emotional and reflective processes observable. Service learning, collaborative projects, and professionally authentic cases can provide opportunities for value-consistent action. Alignment with the model, however, does not demonstrate effectiveness; each method requires evaluation against appropriate outcomes and comparison conditions.

Assessment should likewise be multi-method. Self-report measures are vulnerable to socially desirable responding, whereas observation alone may confuse compliance with commitment. A diagnostic design could combine concept tests, value and motivation measures, scenario-based judgments, reflection rubrics, structured observation, and portfolio evidence. Schwartz et al. (2012) further show that value priorities can be differentiated with greater motivational precision than broad value labels alone, which is relevant when future instruments operationalize the axiological-motivational component. Until reliability, factorial validity, fairness, and measurement invariance are established, scores should be used for formative research rather than selection or certification. Earlier publications by the author discussed the social relevance, content, and pedagogical-cooperation factors associated with competence in universal human values (Abdug'aniyev, 2023, 2024a, 2024b). The present article has a different object and method. It uses a declared six-work document corpus, a predefined codebook, and explicit E/I/0 decision rules. Its output is a cross-source matrix, operational component definitions, and propositions for empirical testing; it does not re-report participant data or intervention outcomes from the earlier publications.

Limitations and Research Agenda

Four limitations constrain the claims. First, the purposive six-work corpus is small and non-exhaustive; it was chosen for theoretical contrast, not for estimating frequencies across the literature. Second, English summaries of Uzbek concepts may not preserve every semantic nuance of the original texts. Third, one researcher performed the coding, so intercoder agreement was not estimated. Fourth, the study includes no student sample, diagnostic administration, or pedagogical intervention. It therefore provides neither prevalence estimates nor causal evidence of effectiveness.

Empirical validation should begin with expert review of content validity, followed by cognitive interviews with students to identify ambiguous or socially desirable items. Pilot testing should examine item distributions and internal consistency.

A multi-institution sample determined through a priori power analysis could then support exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses comparing one-factor, four-factor, and higher-order models. Measurement invariance across relevant student groups should be established before mean comparisons.

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Finally, a preregistered quasi-experimental or randomized study could compare a specified values-education intervention with an appropriate control condition using pretest, post-test, and follow-up measures.

Conclusion

This integrative review offers a bounded conceptual synthesis of Uzbek pedagogical thought and established international theories of values and moral education. The proposed construct comprises cognitive, axiological-motivational, emotional-reflective, and activity-behavioral components. The evidence is strongest at the conceptual level for understanding, value commitment, and action, while emotional-reflective processes are less directly represented and therefore require especially careful testing. The framework should be treated as a research hypothesis and a guide for formative design. Its value lies in making assumptions, component definitions, candidate indicators, and validation propositions explicit. Claims about diagnostic accuracy or pedagogical effectiveness must await evidence from student samples, psychometric analysis, and intervention studies.

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