STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ITS ROLE IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Yuldashov Aziz Avazovich
General Director of "Al-Aziz Academy" Non-Governmental Educational Institution
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6227-9787

Annotation. *This article examines strategic human resource management as a key internal factor in improving the performance of private educational institutions, combining a review of strategic human resource management, high-performance work system and school-management theory with an analysis of the rapidly expanding non-state education sector of Uzbekistan. The resource-based, best-practice, contingency and ability–motivation–opportunity literatures are systematized to build a conceptual view of how HR strategy translates into institutional performance, and a seven-stage model for building a strategic HR management mechanism in private educational institutions is proposed. Using data from the Statistics Agency of Uzbekistan, UNESCO, the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2024) and official statements on teacher qualification, the article analyses the growth of the non-state school sector and the workforce conditions under which it operates. The results show that the number of non-state general secondary schools in Uzbekistan rose from 58 in the 2018/19 academic year to 551 in 2025/26, a 9.5-fold increase, yet they still make up only about 5 percent of all schools and are concentrated in Tashkent city and Fergana region, which together host 48 percent of them. At the same time, the supply of qualified teachers is constrained both nationally, where about 86,000 teachers were assessed as having unsatisfactory knowledge and skills, and globally, where UNESCO projects a shortfall of 44 million teachers by 2030, while TALIS 2024 shows that teachers satisfied with their jobs are about five times less likely to plan to leave. Based on these findings, practical recommendations are formulated for private educational institutions in Uzbekistan.*

Key words: *private educational institutions, strategic human resource management, teacher quality, high-performance work systems, teacher retention, school management, professional development, Uzbekistan.*

INTRODUCTION

In education, the quality of what an institution delivers cannot be separated from the people who deliver it: the core "technology" of a school or academy is the daily interaction between teachers and learners, which is why the management of teachers and staff is widely regarded as a primary determinant of institutional performance [1]. Research on teacher effectiveness shows that teachers have powerful effects on student achievement, yet that these effects are only weakly explained by observable credentials such as degrees or years of experience [2]. Attracting, developing, motivating and retaining the right teachers is therefore a strategic task rather than an administrative routine.

In Uzbekistan this task has acquired particular urgency because the non-state education sector is expanding quickly. The number of non-state general secondary schools grew from 58 in the 2018/19 academic year to 293 in 2023/24 [3] and reached 551 at the beginning of 2025/26, which is 96 schools, or 21.1 percent, more than a year earlier [4]. In preschool education the private share of

enrolment rose from 2 percent in 2016 to 41 percent in 2024 [5]. At the same time, these institutions recruit from a teacher labour market that is under strain: in 2023 the President of Uzbekistan reported that about 86,000 teachers had been assessed as having unsatisfactory knowledge and skills, with the situation most alarming in computer science, English, physics, mathematics and chemistry [6], and globally UNESCO estimates that 44 million additional teachers will be needed by 2030 [7]. Under these conditions, a private educational institution's performance depends less on its buildings or curriculum branding than on its ability to design an HR strategy that is aligned with its mission, market position and financial capacity.

The purpose of this article is to analyse, on theoretical and empirical grounds, how strategic human resource management affects the performance of private educational institutions, and to substantiate a step-by-step model for building a strategic HR mechanism in such institutions in Uzbekistan. To achieve this purpose, the following tasks are addressed: to systematize the principal theoretical approaches to SHRM and their application to education; to assess, on the basis of official statistics, how the non-state school sector and its workforce are developing in Uzbekistan; to identify international benchmarks on teacher retention, satisfaction and shortages; and to develop practical recommendations for the managers of private educational institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic human resource management is commonly defined as the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals [8]. Boxall and Purcell add that HR strategy has both economic and social goals and must be analysed at the level of the whole organization rather than as a collection of separate personnel techniques [9]. The theoretical basis for treating people as a source of advantage is the resource-based view, according to which resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and non-substitutable can sustain competitive advantage [10]. Because teachers' knowledge, relationships with learners and commitment to the institution's culture are embedded in individuals and teams, they are precisely the type of resource that rival institutions cannot copy quickly.

A large empirical literature tests whether systematic HR practices improve organizational results. Huselid, studying 968 US firms, found that high-performance work practices were associated with lower turnover and higher productivity and corporate financial performance [11]. Delery and Doty distinguished universalistic, contingency and configurational approaches and found the strongest support for the universalistic and configurational predictions [12], which means that practices work best when they fit together and fit the organization's strategy. A meta-analysis of 92 studies by Combs and colleagues confirmed that the use of high-performance work practices is positively and practically significantly related to organizational performance [13]. The mechanism was clarified by Jiang and co-authors, who showed that skill-, motivation- and opportunity-enhancing HR practices influence results mainly through employees' human capital and motivation [14], an approach known as the ability–motivation–opportunity (AMO) model [15]. Bowen and Ostroff added that HR practices only produce a shared climate and consistent behaviour when the HR system is distinctive, consistent and sends a consensual message to employees [16].

Applying these ideas to education, Runhaar argued that schools can benefit from human resource management when they combine well-designed content (ability-, motivation- and opportunity-enhancing practices) with a process that teachers perceive as distinctive and consistent. The evidence on why this matters is consistent: Darling-Hammond found that teacher preparation and certification were among the strongest correlates of student achievement across US states [17], and

Hanushek and Rivkin concluded that teacher quality varies widely within schools and that selection, retention and compensation policies matter more than formal credential requirements [18]. In other words, an institution's results depend on which teachers it chooses, how it develops them and whether it keeps the effective ones.

A parallel strand concerns management and leadership. Bloom, Lemos, Sadun and Van Reenen measured management practices in more than 1,800 schools in eight countries and found that higher management quality is strongly associated with better student outcomes; notably, autonomous government schools scored higher than both regular public and private schools, and nearly half of that gap was attributable to principal leadership and governance [19]. This finding is a useful caution for private institutions: private status and autonomy do not by themselves guarantee good people management. Leithwood and colleagues likewise concluded that leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related influences on student learning [20].

Teacher retention is the HR outcome on which the education literature is most developed. Ingersoll showed that teacher turnover in US schools was driven mainly by organizational conditions, such as inadequate administrative support, low salaries and limited teacher input into decisions, rather than by retirement, and that turnover was notably higher in private schools [21]. The latest evidence supports this picture. The OECD's TALIS 2024, which covered 55 education systems and about 280,000 lower-secondary teachers, found that on average 17 percent of non-retiring teachers intend to leave teaching within five years (around one in five among teachers under 30), that teachers satisfied with their jobs are about five times less likely to plan to leave, and that only about 40 percent are satisfied with their salaries [22]. UNESCO's Global Report on Teachers links these retention problems to a projected global shortfall of 44 million teachers by 2030.

Despite this body of work, studies that examine strategic HR management in the private education sector of Uzbekistan remain scarce; most of the evidence reviewed above comes from OECD countries and from large public systems. This creates a need for research that links the international strategic human resource management and school-management literature to the specific conditions of Uzbekistan, where private schools are multiplying rapidly, are concentrated in a few regions and compete for a limited pool of qualified teachers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research used the methods of logical abstraction, systemic and comparative analysis, statistical grouping and graphical analysis. The empirical part relies on secondary data: official statistics of the Statistics Agency of Uzbekistan on the number of non-state schools, students and teachers; UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report country case study on Uzbekistan; the OECD's TALIS 2024 results; the UNESCO Global Report on Teachers; and publicly reported statements and media reviews on teacher qualification and private school costs. Because these sources differ in reporting date and methodology, the data are not treated as strictly comparable; they are interpreted as indicative evidence of the direction and scale of change in the factors that shape HR strategy in private educational institutions. Growth multiples, regional shares and the ratio of students to teachers were calculated by the author from the reported figures.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In a private educational institution, a strategic HR management mechanism is understood as the set of organizational, analytical and incentive tools through which the institution defines the workforce it needs to deliver its mission, recruits and selects teachers and staff, supports their development, rewards and manages performance, builds engagement and leadership capacity, and

measures how these efforts affect learning outcomes and enrolment. According to the resource-based view, such a mechanism raises performance to the extent that it builds teacher capability that competitors cannot easily replicate, while the HR-system-strength view suggests that its effect depends on the consistency of the message that HR practices send to teachers.

The environment in which Uzbekistan's private educational institutions design their HR strategy has changed markedly. As Figure 1 shows, the number of non-state general secondary schools increased from 58 in 2018/19 to 102 in 2020/21, 293 in 2023/24, 455 in 2024/25 [23] and 551 in 2025/26; this is a 9.5-fold increase over seven academic years and a 4.5-fold increase over the 2020/21 level. Nevertheless, the sector remains small: against 11,118 general education schools, 6.87 million students and 577,700 teachers in 2025/26 [24], private schools make up about 5.0 percent of all schools. The sector is also geographically concentrated. Tashkent city (145 schools) and Fergana region (121) together account for 266 of the 551 non-state schools, or 48.3 percent, followed by Samarkand (43), Andijan (37) and Namangan (37) regions [4].

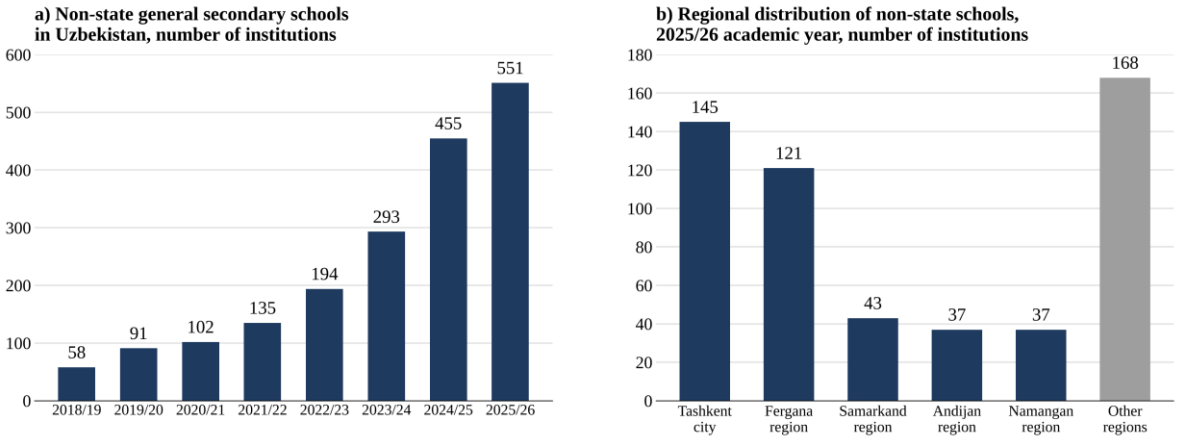

Figure 1. Growth and regional distribution of non-state general secondary schools in Uzbekistan

These figures have direct HR implications. First, rapid growth means that new institutions must recruit teachers at the same time, and the demand is concentrated in two labour markets where competition for qualified staff is strongest. Second, private schools are largely funded by tuition, which varies from about 1 million soums (US$82) per month outside the capital to about 4 million soums (US$320) in Tashkent, and reaches US$10,000–15,000 per year at elite international schools [25]. Such revenue constraints limit an institution's ability to compete on pay alone and make non-monetary elements of the HR strategy, such as mentoring, professional growth, workload design and a clear career path, more important. Third, where teachers sign annual contracts, as one review of the sector reports, dissatisfied teachers can simply leave at the end of the year, so retention depends on the quality of daily management rather than on legal attachment.

The quality of the teacher pool is a further constraint. Nationally, there are about 11.9 students per teacher (6.87 million students and 577,700 teachers), a favourable ratio in itself, but about 86,000 of the 220,000 teachers assessed in 2023 were rated as having unsatisfactory knowledge and skills, and only 17,000 of 51,000 foreign-language teachers (33 percent) reached the C1 level of proficiency. These are the very subjects, such as English, mathematics, physics, chemistry and computer science, in which private institutions typically compete for parents' trust. At the same time, 73.1 percent of schools operated on more than one shift in 2022/23, which shows how stretched the system's physical

and human capacity is (Figure 2, panel b). For a private institution, selection and development of teachers is therefore not a supplementary activity but the main way to create a visible quality difference.

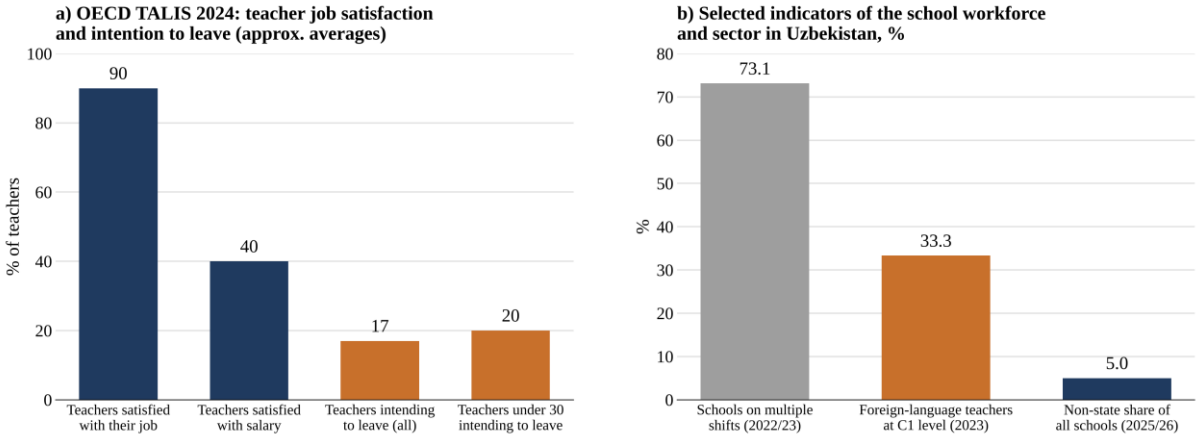

Figure 2. International benchmarks of teacher satisfaction and retention and selected indicators of the school workforce in Uzbekistan

International benchmarks point in the same direction (Figure 2, panel a). In TALIS 2024 almost 90 percent of teachers on average report being satisfied with their job, yet only about 40 percent are satisfied with their salaries, 17 percent plan to leave within five years and a larger share of young teachers plans to do so. Because satisfied teachers are far less likely to leave, investment in the working conditions that drive satisfaction, such as supportive leadership, manageable workload, recognition and development opportunities, is a cost-effective way of protecting the institution's most important asset. Combined with the evidence that the effect of HR practices depends on how well they are integrated, this suggests that private educational institutions in Uzbekistan should build a coherent HR system instead of relying on isolated measures such as salary increases or short training events.

Summarizing the theoretical and empirical analysis above, the following seven-stage model for building a strategic HR management mechanism in private educational institutions is proposed for Uzbekistan (Table 1).

Table 1.

A Seven-Stage Model for Building a Strategic HR Management Mechanism in Private Educational Institutions

Stage	Content	HR-strategy instruments	Monitoring indicator
1. Strategic workforce analysis and planning	Forecast of staffing needs by subject and campus from enrolment plans, analysis of skill gaps and labour-market competition	Resource-based analysis of critical teaching skills [10]	Vacancy rate; staffing gap by subject

Stage	Content	HR-strategy instruments	Monitoring indicator
2. Competency-based recruitment and selection	Clear teacher competency profile, demonstration lessons, subject tests and a distinctive employer value proposition	AMO model: ability-enhancing practices	Time to fill; offer-acceptance rate
3. Induction and mentoring	Structured first-year programme with an assigned mentor, reduced workload and regular feedback	Organizational support and retention practices	First-year teacher retention
4. Professional development and career paths	Individual development plans, subject and pedagogy training, and a career ladder from teacher to mentor and leader	Teacher-quality development policies	Development hours per teacher; career-ladder progression
5. Performance management and rewards	Transparent appraisal based on lesson observation and learning outcomes, linked to pay and recognition	Selection, retention and compensation policies	Appraisal coverage; pay competitiveness
6. Engagement, climate and leadership	Distributed leadership, participation of teachers in decisions, workload and well-being management	HR system strength and leadership quality	Engagement score; turnover intention
7. HR analytics and feedback to strategy	HR scorecard that links retention, engagement and teaching quality with learning outcomes, parent satisfaction and enrolment	Strategic HR measurement	Teacher turnover; learning outcomes; student retention

Source: developed by the author.

The principal strength of this model is that it treats HR management not as a set of separate administrative functions but as an integrated mechanism in which workforce planning, selection,

induction, development, rewards, engagement and analytics are coordinated and monitored together, in line with the finding that coherent HR systems outperform isolated practices. In practice, the relative priority of the stages is likely to differ between institutions. Newly established schools in Tashkent and Fergana, which face intense competition for staff, are likely to gain most from stages 1–3 (workforce planning, selection and induction), while more mature institutions are likely to gain most from stages 4–7 (development, performance management, engagement and analytics), which determine whether early enrolment growth turns into durable performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings show that strategic human resource management has become one of the principal internal factors determining the performance of private educational institutions, both in the international literature and in the conditions of Uzbekistan. The systematized SHRM, high-performance work system and school-management literature indicates that performance depends not only on what an institution teaches, but on how it plans its workforce, selects and develops teachers, rewards and manages performance, and builds the leadership and working climate that keep effective teachers in the institution.

Empirically, the number of non-state general secondary schools in Uzbekistan rose 9.5 times in seven academic years, from 58 to 551, although they still represent only about 5 percent of all schools and are concentrated, to the extent of 48 percent, in Tashkent city and Fergana region. The supply of qualified teachers is constrained nationally, as about 86,000 teachers were assessed as having unsatisfactory knowledge and skills, and globally, where a shortfall of 44 million teachers is projected by 2030. International evidence from TALIS 2024 shows that teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are about five times less likely to plan to leave, which makes the quality of HR management a direct retention instrument.

The limitation of the study is that the empirical part relies on secondary data of differing dates and methodologies, drawn from official statistics and international reports rather than from a unified institution-level dataset or an original survey of teachers and school leaders; the findings should therefore be read as indicative of direction and scale rather than as causal estimates. Based on the research findings, the following are proposed:

- adopt a written HR strategy approved by the institution’s governing body and linked to its mission, enrolment plan and budget, with measurable indicators such as vacancy rate, first-year teacher retention, teacher engagement and professional-development hours per teacher;
- introduce competency-based selection that includes demonstration lessons and subject-knowledge assessment, with particular attention to scarce subjects such as English, mathematics, the sciences and computer science, rather than relying on diplomas and interviews alone;
- establish a structured induction and mentoring programme for new teachers, since TALIS 2024 shows that young teachers are the most likely to plan to leave the profession;
- build a transparent career ladder and performance-management system that combines competitive pay with non-monetary rewards, such as development opportunities, lighter administrative load and recognition, to compensate for limited tuition revenue;
- measure teacher satisfaction and turnover intentions at least annually and use these data, together with learning outcomes and parent satisfaction, in an HR analytics dashboard that is reviewed by the institution’s leadership as rigorously as financial results.

In future research it would be useful to build an institution-level dataset on private schools in Uzbekistan covering teacher turnover, qualifications, pay and development expenditure, and student

outcomes, and to use regression-based methods to assess, causally rather than descriptively, how specific HR practices affect the performance of private educational institutions.

REFERENCES

1. Runhaar, P. How Can Schools and Teachers Benefit from Human Resources Management? Conceptualising HRM from Content and Process Perspectives // Educational Management Administration & Leadership. 2017. Vol. 45, No. 4. P. 639–656.
2. Rivkin, S.G., Hanushek, E.A., Kain, J.F. Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement // Econometrica. 2005. Vol. 73, No. 2. P. 417–458.
3. Kun.uz. Number of Non-State Educational Organizations Growing in Uzbekistan (Statistics Agency data), April 13, 2024. URL: https://kun.uz/en/news/2024/04/13/number-of-non-state-educational-organizations-growing-in-uzbekistan
4. Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Number of Private Schools in Uzbekistan Reached 551, May 2026. URL: https://stat.uz/en/press-center/news-of-committee/68152-zbekistonda-khususij-maktablar-soni-551-taga-etdi-4
5. UNESCO. Global Education Monitoring Report 2026: Country Case Study — Uzbekistan. Paris: UNESCO, 2026. URL: https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/2026-gem-report-country-case-studies/uzbekistan
6. AKIpress News Agency. More than a Third of Teachers in Uzbekistan Have “Unsatisfactory” Knowledge and Skills, August 29, 2023 (statement of the President of Uzbekistan). URL: https://akipress.com/news:727920:More_than_third_of_teachers_in_Uzbekistan_have__unsatisfactory__knowledge_and_skills
7. UNESCO; International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. Global Report on Teachers: Addressing Teacher Shortages and Transforming the Profession. Paris: UNESCO, 2024.
8. Wright, P.M., McMahan, G.C. Theoretical Perspectives for Strategic Human Resource Management // Journal of Management. 1992. Vol. 18, No. 2. P. 295–320.
9. Boxall, P., Purcell, J. Strategy and Human Resource Management. 4th ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
10. Barney, J. Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage // Journal of Management. 1991. Vol. 17, No. 1. P. 99–120.
11. Huselid, M.A. The Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Turnover, Productivity, and Corporate Financial Performance // Academy of Management Journal. 1995. Vol. 38, No. 3. P. 635–672.
12. Delery, J.E., Doty, D.H. Modes of Theorizing in Strategic Human Resource Management: Tests of Universalistic, Contingency, and Configurational Performance Predictions // Academy of Management Journal. 1996. Vol. 39, No. 4. P. 802–835.
13. Combs, J., Liu, Y., Hall, A., Ketchen, D. How Much Do High-Performance Work Practices Matter? A Meta-Analysis of Their Effects on Organizational Performance // Personnel Psychology. 2006. Vol. 59, No. 3. P. 501–528.
14. Jiang, K., Lepak, D.P., Hu, J., Baer, J.C. How Does Human Resource Management Influence Organizational Outcomes? A Meta-Analytic Investigation of Mediating Mechanisms // Academy of Management Journal. 2012. Vol. 55, No. 6. P. 1264–1294.
15. Appelbaum, E., Bailey, T., Berg, P., Kalleberg, A.L. Manufacturing Advantage: Why High-Performance Work Systems Pay Off. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.

16. Bowen, D.E., Ostroff, C. Understanding HRM–Firm Performance Linkages: The Role of the "Strength" of the HRM System // Academy of Management Review. 2004. Vol. 29, No. 2. P. 203–221.
17. Darling-Hammond, L. Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence // Education Policy Analysis Archives. 2000. Vol. 8, No. 1. P. 1–44.
18. Hanushek, E.A., Rivkin, S.G. The Distribution of Teacher Quality and Implications for Policy // Annual Review of Economics. 2012. Vol. 4. P. 131–157.
19. Bloom, N., Lemos, R., Sadun, R., Van Reenen, J. Does Management Matter in Schools? // The Economic Journal. 2015. Vol. 125, No. 584. P. 647–674.
20. Leithwood, K., Louis, K.S., Anderson, S., Wahlstrom, K. Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning. New York: The Wallace Foundation, 2004.
21. Ingersoll, R.M. Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis // American Educational Research Journal. 2001. Vol. 38, No. 3. P. 499–534.
22. OECD. Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2024 Results. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2025.
23. Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Number of Private Schools Has Increased 4.5 Times, November 18, 2025. URL: https://stat.uz/en/press-center/news-of-committee/65203-khususij-maktablar-soni-4-5-barobarga-oshgan-4
24. UzDaily.uz. Number of Schools in Uzbekistan Rises to 11,118, Students to 6.87 Million, April 1, 2026. URL: https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/number-of-schools-in-uzbekistan-rises-to-11118-students-to-687-million/
25. The Diplomat. Uzbekistan's Educational Challenge: Scaling up for a Booming Population, April 2024. URL: https://thediplomat.com/2024/04/uzbekistans-educational-challenge-scaling-up-for-a-booming-population/