DIGITALIZATION OF EDUCATION AND THE ISSUE OF DIGITAL INEQUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY COMPARATIVE PEDAGOGY

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In today's fast-paced era, keeping up with the times is a necessity. For this reason, developing countries are undergoing far-reaching changes in the socio-economic, political, and spiritual-cultural spheres. Of course, they implement these changes in a measured manner. The experiences of developing countries are being analyzed comparatively and implemented in the education system, institutional framework, and cultural and educational spheres from a comparative perspective. In particular, significant changes are being made in the education system.

This is because a country's level of development is also measured by the literacy rate of its population. In the context of global globalization, the digital transformation of education systems has become a central issue in contemporary comparative pedagogy. A comparison of the educational experiences of different countries clearly reveals not only the achievements but also the problem of the "digital divide" between developed and developing countries. The objective of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of digitalization strategies in the education systems of developed countries (e.g., Estonia, Singapore) and Uzbekistan, and to identify existing challenges.

Throughout the study, comparative-historical analysis, a systematic approach, and methods for interpreting education statistics from various countries (based on PISA and TALIS reports) were employed.

For example: The digitization of Estonia's education system began in the late 1990s. It was launched with the active participation of national and local governments, self-governing bodies, as well as entrepreneurs, investors, and universities, and this successful collaboration continues to this day. The heads of local self-government bodies oversee the technical equipment of educational institutions and, when necessary, purchase new equipment.

Universities (e.g., Tartu University of Technology and Tallinn University of Technology) conduct courses and training sessions where instructors develop skills in using new equipment. They learn about innovative teaching methods and become closely acquainted with the latest advances in the field of education. As of today, Estonian schoolchildren regularly use the e-Schoolbag and Opiq services, which provide electronic learning materials. Through Roboversity, they have the opportunity to learn about robotics. Meanwhile, parents can continuously monitor their children's learning progress and communicate with teachers through the dedicated eKool platform.

In the early 1990s, the Singapore Ministry of Education began modernizing the education system. In the context of this knowledge economy, Singapore took its first steps in preparing schools for life: for the first time, a "Computer Fundamentals" class was included in the curricula of secondary schools and colleges. During these classes, teachers taught schoolchildren how to use computers and explained the importance of actively utilizing technology to develop the country's economy. Gradually, the ratio of students to the technical devices they used was increased to 1:1. New technologies began to

be recognized as a means of enabling everyone, regardless of their place of residence, to receive an education: this was a key factor in the emergence of the concept of "lifelong learning."

The active phase of digitizing Uzbekistan's education system began in 2017–2018, particularly with the adoption of the "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" strategy and state programs for modernizing education. In the initial stages, the focus was on connecting schools to the internet and implementing electronic grade book systems. Work has begun in schools to improve internet infrastructure and create electronic learning resources. From 2020 to the present, within the framework of "Digital Uzbekistan 2030," efforts have been made to fully digitize educational institutions, including: The implementation of information systems (e.g., EMIS, HEMIS) in preschool education and higher education has accelerated. Currently, the transition of educational process management, assessment, and teaching methods to fully digital platforms is ongoing. Classrooms in schools located in remote areas of our country are also being equipped with modern technologies.

If we conduct a comparative analysis of the digital education systems in Estonia, Singapore, and Uzbekistan, we can observe that, since these countries transitioned to digital education systems, they have become more advanced in socio-economic, political, spiritual, and cultural terms. The implementation of digitalization is one of the factors that enables countries to become leaders in various fields. Such changes are implemented gradually, as changing an entire system presents challenges.

These are as follows: As a result of the comparative analysis, the following pressing challenges in modern pedagogy were identified:

1. Infrastructure disparities: Distance education opportunities are not the same in all regions due to internet connectivity issues in remote areas.

2. Pedagogical readiness: The challenge of teachers' proficiency in using technological tools and their reluctance to abandon traditional teaching methods.

3. National Mentality and Global Standards: Challenges in Adapting Western Digital Technologies to the Eastern Educational Environment

In conclusion, it can be noted that comparative pedagogical research indicates that digitization is not merely about equipping schools with computers, but rather about transforming the educational paradigm. In the context of Uzbekistan, rather than directly replicating foreign experience, it is important to integrate it with national pedagogical traditions, to enable students to gain a deeper understanding of modern technologies, and to study the educational systems of other countries. Enhancing teachers' skills and conducting lessons using electronic devices will undoubtedly yield effective results.

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