

Research Article

The Historical Analysis of the Development of Educational Sociology in Mongolia

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Abstract

Educational sociology is a new and developing scientific field in Mongolia. In order to conduct a historical analysis of this science, past research in this field was collected and used as background information. This research has led to the development of educational sociology, an independent branch of sociology, guided by the theory and methodology of general sociological science. This study examines how educational sociology emerged and developed in Mongolia. It focused on the issues of education that were studied during the development of this science. No research has been conducted in this field in our country before, and this study will be first. The peculiarity of this study is that it attempts to classify the recent development of educational sociology in our country into specific stages and to identify their characteristics. Another feature is that the old narrow definition of education, which defined the process of cognition as its result, was abandoned, and education was considered not only as a process of cognition but also as a social system, social institution and social relations within the educational community. By understanding education in this broad sense, we have been able to fully understand its essence. The research used methods such as document review, comparison, calculating correlation between variables, conducting focus interviews, and benchmarking the current level of education against specific criteria. Using the theory and methodology of educational sociology, we analyzed the historical development of education in our country, especially the state of Education since 1990, when it transitioned to democracy and market economy and identified the problems that need to be addressed. The study concluded that Mongolian education is currently in a state of crisis. In order to overcome the crisis, it is important to make the state policy for developing education more clear and to implement it in practice, not just declare education as a priority sector. The urgent issues to be addressed are reforming the teacher training system, addressing the social problems of teachers, changing teaching methods to student-centered learning, unifying schools that provide 12 years of education and increasing the number of qualified workers.

Keywords

Education, Social System, Social Organization, Paradigm

1. Introduction

Today's scientific and technological achievements are fulfilling centuries-old dreams of mankind. As a result humans are mastering space, gaining deeper self-awareness creating

artificial intelligence and creating conditions for a comfortable life. However at the same time, it is creating new violations. And, in some cases, threatening the right to life and

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survival.

Scientists have concluded that the world today is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambivalence. It is clear that the only right way to recognize and overcome this situation is for everyone to receive a quality education.

Education is always a goal instead of waiting for the future to flow by, we must anticipate the future, invite it, organize it and bring it to us through education.

In doing so, the author compares the development of Mongolian educational sociology with that of foreign countries, examining it in relation to the development of science in his own country, especially the development of general sociology. And in considering the development of this science, we considered the connection between it and the problems facing education in the country at that time. Most scientists consider education in a narrow sense, as a process of knowledge transfer and its results. To understand the nature of education, it is necessary to define conceptual approaches, break education down into individual components, identify their patterns of functioning and development, etc. These and many other questions are in the research field of sociology of education as a special branch of sociological knowledge.

As a separate scientific direction, the sociology of education was formed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Its object is the sphere of interaction of social subjects in the process of educational activity. As for the subject, it is determined based on different approaches and scientific traditions. For example, the subject of the sociology of education in Russian (Soviet) science is considered to be the study of education as a social institution (F. R. Filippov), a social system and a socio-cultural process (V. Ya. Nechaev). In Western sociology, the subject of study is institutions: schools, universities (M. Trow), the connection of education with the social structure of society (P. Bourdieu, R. Boudon). The processes of social interaction of educational subjects at the micro level are also considered (D. Hargreaves).

The famous American sociologist Neil Smelser wrote that education can be defined as a formal process by which society transmits values, skills, and knowledge from one person or group to another. The education system is a social organization.

The development of Mongolian sociology of education can be into 3 stages:

1. The first stage development of educational sociology was laid in the 1960s, when first sociologists were trained and sociology laboratory for studying students was established.
2. The second stage began in the mid- with birth of Mongolian first PhD and the training of national sociologists in own country.
3. The third stage development began in 1990, when country transition to market economy.

At the present stage of development of society, scientific, technological and industrial revolutions determine economic

growth, improving the quality of life of the population and the competitiveness of states, which, in turn, has become one of the most important factors in ensuring the sovereignty, national security and welfare of the country. At the same time, these processes give rise to new contradictions, in some cases limiting human rights. The education system in this regard plays a decisive role - from creating conditions for the socialization of the younger generation to forming mechanisms for managing new opportunities for the benefit of humanity.

In this article, the author concludes that, from the perspective of educational sociology. Current Mongolian education is in a state of crisis and seeks ways to overcome it.

2. Historical Foundations of Sociology of Education in Mongolia

The science of sociology in Mongolia emerged and developed in the second half of the 20th century. The first training of sociologists in the Russia (Soviet) laid the foundation for emergence and development of the science of sociology, including the sociology of education.

The first Mongolian sociologist graduated from Moscow University in the late 1960s. The foundation for sociological research was firmly laid in 1972 with the establishment of an independent institute of Philosophy, Sociology and law at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

In 1972, a sociology laboratory was established at the Mongolian State University to study student training and education, and the first sociological research began.

In 1981, the first sociologist to receive a Ph. D. degree with the thesis "The scientific use of sampling methods is one of the important conditions for improving the efficiency and quality of specific sociological research" [1]. In 1991, the Department of Sociology was established at the Mongolian State University and the first national sociologists began to be trained.

From 1958 to 2021, 610 candidate dissertations (later Ph D degree) from 1977 to 2021 - 29 doctoral dissertations (Sc D) in educational studies were defended in Mongolia, of which only one touched on issues of sociology of education. As of today, in Mongolia there is only one dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Educational Sociology (Sc D), three dissertations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph D) have been approved [2]. At the same time, the issues that need to be addressed by modern Mongolian society require a scientific approach, research that will help resolve existing contradictions.

Most researchers tend to understand education as a purely cognitive process. Sociology should consider education a broader sense. UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education defines "Educational process as a purposeful activity that offers a specific form of Communication aimed at learning" [3]

Mongolian sociologists O. Sarantuya and Ts. Purev defined

“education as a social institution that forms a citizen”. [4]. Recent scholars in the sociology of education have defined education as, first, a cognitive activity and its results, second, a social institution, third, a social system, and fourth, social relations between communities. [5]

Mongolia implements its educational policy based on the global experience, but at the same time relies on the historical traditions of its people, the peculiarities of modern development and strategic vision of the future. Since 1995, the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia has adopted a number of fundamental documents in the field of education. Currently, the state development program "Vision-2050. Long-term development policy of Mongolia" is being implemented, aimed at sustainable development in the field of education. During the specified period, three master plans in the field of education were implemented, and now the next one - the fourth - is being implemented [6].

The law approved the establishment of non-governmental educational institutions at all levels. Curricula, plans and textbooks were modernized in accordance with international standards. Education for children begins at age 6 and is implemented up to grade 12. The country's achievements have not gone unnoticed by the international community. UNESCO officially recognized that Mongolia has become one of the leading countries in terms of online education.

According to official statistics, in 2010, over 98.3% of the country's citizens over the age of 15 were literate, in 2020 the literacy rate was already 98.7%. In 2010, 58.1% of citizens aged 6 to 29 attended school, and in 2020 this figure increased to 72.6% [7]

In 2015, the human development index was 0.775 points, and the education index was 0.732. In 2020, the human development index increased to 0.776, and the education index to 0.761 [6].

The employment rate of 2021 graduates reached 67%, up 21.6% from the previous year. Over the past 30 years, many reforms have been implemented in Mongolia's education sector. The most notable is the right to establish non-governmental educational institutions at all levels. In the 2022-2023 academic year, there were 428 private kindergartens, 171 private secondary schools, 30 vocational training centers and 53 private higher education institutions [7].

With regard to the legal framework for the functioning of the education system, a characteristic feature can be identified. During the reforms, the Law on Education was amended 26 times, the Law on Preschool Education - 6 times, the Law on Primary and Secondary Education - 13 times, and the Law on Higher Education - 10 times. [6]

The latest version of the laws on education, on pre-school and general education, on vocational and technical education and training, and on higher education was adopted on July 7, 2023. [8]

There are two main reasons that explain the large number of changes that the law on education has undergone. Firstly, the educational reality is changing rapidly, so it is necessary to

adapt the laws to the current and future state of education. Secondly, Mongolian society has transitioned to a market economy, but has not rebuilt the education system to market conditions. Legislators did not have much experience and the first laws developed and adopted under these conditions could not take into account absolutely all aspects. When developing the national law on education, the American model was taken as a basis. It can be considered that there are certain successes, but the quality indicators continue to decline.

According to the assessment of the quality of education in the 2021/2022 academic year, primary education – 36.62, basic education – 44.80, secondary education – 35.62, vocational education institutions – 27.72. The average level of quality in the country is 35.62 [7] Mongolian studies scholar Kubota Shinichi, who served as a representative of the Japanese Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Sasakawa Foundation during Mongolia's transition to a market economy, noted: “There have been no significant and effective changes in the field of education, with the exception of the transition from the 10-year general education system to the 12-year system” [9]

From this we can conclude that national educational standards and regulatory documents generally correspond to the world level, but in terms of the quality of education Mongolia still lags behind This is confirmed by statistical data. The academic performance of 60% of students is at the average and low levels. The provision of educational equipment in secondary schools leaves much to be desired. In April 2021, 1107 physics and chemistry teachers of comprehensive schools were surveyed, 86% of respondents said that they explain the material and look for data for experiments on the Internet because they do not have laboratory equipment [10].

In recent years, vocational education has become especially important. Since their inception, vocational schools have been mistakenly perceived as places where the least educated, undisciplined students are trained. Educational materials, clothing, food, and accommodation were provided at the expense of the state. This is currently changing radically.

The state has set a goal to build a knowledge-based society by ensuring the interconnection of science and production. This goal is very important, but not yet achievable. The main thing is the lack of funding for scientific work and support from the state. In the period from 2016 to 2030, funding for scientific research should reach 3% of GDP, while today it is 0.2%. [11]

One of the greatest thinkers of mankind, Hebbel Christian Friedrich, noted that "life is an endless improvement. To consider oneself perfect is to kill oneself." The development of continuous education has become one of the main goals in many countries. Mongolian culture has a tradition of learning since ancient times, but it has not been able to develop it into a system until now. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to continuous education.

Philip G. Coombs saw the essence of the world crisis in education in the gap between the established education systems and the rapidly changing conditions of society. In his

opinion, there were four specific reasons for the emergence of this gap: the inability of schools and universities to meet the sharply increased demand of the masses for education on the necessary scale; an acute shortage of funds; the inertia of the education system, due to which it changes its internal structure too slowly; the inertia of society itself - the heavy burden of established traditions, religious customs, considerations of prestige and material incentives hinder the rational use of education and educated personnel in the interests of national development [12].

It should be noted that today in Mongolia there are all the signs of an educational crisis. Along with the main reasons, there are also many aggravating factors in Mongolia. One of the main problems is the issue of financing the education system. In our country, the law passed in 1995 removed the provision that the annual share of education expenditures in total budget expenditures should not be less than 20 percent. As a result the education budget has decreased year by year, to 15,6% in 2018, 15% in 2019, 12% in 2020 and 11,4% in 2021. Our per-child spending is 528 US dollar, for preschool and 791 US dollar for secondary school, while in Luxembourg it is 21938 US dollar and 21938 US dollar. [13]

Although Mongolia ranks higher in the Human development index (51st) than in terms of income (92nd), it lags 4 years behind in terms of the quality of education and the length of time spent studying. [14]

According to the 2022 PISA results, Mongolian students are 2 years behind their peers in mathematics and 1 year behind in science and reading. [15]

First of all, this concerns the prestige of the teaching profession. The main problems are low salaries for teachers, unresolved social problems and a high workload. This is why there is a personnel shortage. One teacher can teach 4-5 subjects. The issue of the quality of education is of concern. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, over the past 20 years, the academic performance of all levels of comprehensive schools has been below 60%, and among high school students it is lower than that of primary school students.

The goal at all levels of education has been lost and has turned into a race only for academic performance.

To solve this problem, it is necessary to resolve a number of issues at various levels.

First, the state should abolish the method of financing education on a residual basis and approve a balanced budget, introduce strict control over the implementation of state-approved documents in the field of education.

The education system should train specialists who will serve the state and fulfill all obligations imposed on them, but today this does not correspond to the tasks of the country's development. One of the conditions for overcoming the crisis in education is the consistent fulfillment of mutual obligations by the state and the education system.

Secondly, production and education in Mongolia are separated from each other. Vocational schools advertise to attract young people, and think about recruiting as many students as

possible. Even for professions that, according to experts, will not be in demand in the coming years, there is a constant recruitment. The Ministry of Social Protection and Labor, which should monitor the needs and balance of the workforce, is not coping with the tasks set. The isolation of theory and practice is also expressed in the fact that scientists do not know about the problems arising in the industry, and the real sector is not aware of the problems that scientists are working on. It is necessary to bring the cooperation between universities and industry to a new level.

Thirdly, cooperation between science and education should be developed, but today this direction is quite far from the necessary level. The relationship between education and science is determined by how fully and deeply scientific achievements are reflected in the content of education, how they are applied in the development of education, how trained personnel and their intellectual potential are used in science. This cooperation does not go beyond the joint implementation of a small number of studies and the teaching of several courses by scientists of the Academy of Sciences.

Fourthly, education is part of culture, but Mongolian education is actually cut off from culture and is mainly theoretical.

The next important aspect concerns family education. Before democratic reforms, the family played a decisive role in a person's life, but at present the meaning and functions of the family have changed significantly. There are more divorces and single mothers. It has become the norm for young people to live in a civil marriage. The number of families that pay attention to their children's education is constantly decreasing.

Today, the role of the family in the upbringing and education of children is gradually weakening.

3. Conclusions

It is obvious that modern Mongolian education is in a stage of crisis. In order to find ways out of this situation, a thorough analysis and building a specific development strategy. In this case, education should be studied from the standpoint of the sociology of education.

This crisis cannot be overcome by the education system alone, interaction between the government, production, science, culture, family and society is necessary. In this case, the government must take the initiative and implement a policy of transforming education into a leading industry, and this should be in practice, not a political slogan. Education must be considered a key element of the national security system and reflected in state policy.

The education system itself requires a number of changes. In a comprehensive school, along with theoretical knowledge, it is necessary to pay significant attention to practical training. One of the most important issues in the modern education sector is the issue of increasing teacher's salaries, improving social security, and making changes to the work of training and selecting teachers.

Abbreviations

UNESCO	United Nations Education, Sciences and Cultural Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

Author Contributions

Sanjbegz Tumor Ochir is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no Conflicts of Interest.

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