

Modern Reforms in Enhancing Higher Education Quality: Philosophical Foundations and Legal Frameworks

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Abstract

This article examines modern reforms in the higher education system of Uzbekistan, analyzing their philosophical foundations and legal frameworks. It highlights international experiences in educational quality assurance and the essential role of human capital in sustainable socio-economic development. Based on the Concept for the Development of Higher Education in Uzbekistan until 2030, the paper evaluates recent reforms, identifies existing challenges, and proposes recommendations for raising the quality of education to international standards.

Keywords: Higher education, educational reforms, educational quality, personnel training, educational policy, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

Today, efforts to improve the quality of education worldwide are gaining momentum, as the development and prospects of society largely depend on human resources. This has led to a growing understanding that education plays a pivotal role in societal progress. In this context, achieving quality and effectiveness in education is of utmost importance. In recent decades, various approaches to understanding the philosophical essence of educational reforms in our country have intensified, with scientific research increasingly focused on cognitive analysis.

2. Methods

The research is based on a qualitative methodology, including:

Literature analysis, comparative analysis, document analysis, statistical review.

3. Results and Discussion

The reforms implemented in Uzbekistan's higher education system in recent years are particularly significant as they aim to improve the overall quality of higher education. This, in turn, requires the development of a system for training highly qualified personnel to meet the demands of a modern civil society, studying advanced international technologies, and introducing innovative educational processes to deepen the comprehensive modernization of the education system.

It is worth noting that the concept of "quality of education" gained international recognition at the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education held in Paris. The conference, with participation from 29 countries, emphasized that ensuring educational quality is a long-term strategic task for all educational institutions [1].

In philosophical and academic literature, there is no universally accepted approach or methodology for defining the philosophical essence of educational quality. According to many theorists and practitioners of education, providing a single, comprehensive definition is difficult due to the numerous objective and subjective factors influencing education systems. Factors such as regional specifics, national mentality, historical traditions, cultural and civilizational influences, and the absence of an ideal educational system worldwide must all be considered. Moreover, ongoing reforms and the evolution of social relations impose new demands on the education sector, necessitating the continuous improvement of educational quality. New scientific discoveries and innovations further drive the need for educational transformation.

Among the key factors ensuring the quality of education, experts highlight the following:

- a) educational institutions;
- b) faculty members;
- c) students and graduates;
- d) parents;
- e) employers and consumers of qualified personnel.

The 1998 World Conference on Higher Education organized by UNESCO adopted the "World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century" [2]. This declaration defined the concept of educational quality as follows:

"Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept encompassing all functions and activities of higher education institutions, including teaching, academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, facilities, equipment, services, and the employment of graduates. It requires internal self-assessment and external review by independent specialists, as well as regular quality enhancement processes."

Among scholars, Jim Collins noted: "The leaders of great companies began their transformations by getting the right people on board and removing those who did not fit. Only after assembling the right team did, they determine the path forward. The central idea is that people matter more than strategy because personnel represent strategy, structure, and tactics"[3]. This idea supports the notion that the quality of educational outcomes is directly tied to the quality of personnel preparation. To achieve high standards, it is necessary to train highly qualified specialists capable of carrying out innovative activities within educational institutions. Success in any field is impossible without thorough training and a deep appreciation for human resources.

Modern developments in science, engineering, and technology present new challenges for higher education, requiring:

- guaranteed, quality training of specialists;
- increased academic and student mobility;
- improved evaluation mechanisms for academic programs;
- and the adaptation of education to meet labor market needs [9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14].

Over the past three years, Uzbekistan has actively developed and implemented several important legal and regulatory documents aimed at improving the higher education system. One such

strategic document is the Presidential Decree of October 8, 2019, "On Approval of the Concept for the Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030". The philosophical essence of this decree is reflected in its priority goals: training highly qualified specialists with modern knowledge and high moral standards, promoting independent thinking, modernizing higher education, and developing the social and economic spheres through advanced educational technologies.

According to this decree, the following tasks must be consistently implemented:

- Develop public-private partnerships in higher education;
- Increase higher education coverage to 50% through the establishment of state and non-state higher education institutions;
- Create a competitive environment in the education sector;
- Introduce internationally recognized educational standards;
- Shift from a knowledge-based curriculum to a skills-based, practice-oriented system;
- Improve the content of higher education and establish a system for training qualified personnel capable of contributing to sustainable economic and social development [4].

The successful implementation of these reforms is expected to enhance not only the quality of the national higher education system but also Uzbekistan's international standing and competitiveness. Furthermore, as one of the fundamental laws of philosophy asserts, the quantitative growth of education coverage leads to qualitative changes in society [5]. A competitive educational environment ultimately serves the needs of the nation by producing high-quality professionals.

To achieve this, it is essential to increase the efficiency of educational processes and introduce modern pedagogical technologies. In this regard, President Sh.M. Mirziyoev emphasized two key priorities:

1. Strengthening the material and technical base of educational and scientific institutions to meet international standards and the needs of national scientific progress.
2. Developing and implementing comprehensive support measures for academics, including financial incentives and social guarantees [6].

Significant practical steps have been taken to expand the participation of the higher education system in national development, meet the growing demands of the economy for qualified specialists, and address the strategic development of regional and sectoral priorities.

Psychologist T.V. Volodina highlights that to improve teachers' professional activities, it is necessary to understand the educational process as a comprehensive system. This means that the quality of university graduates depends largely on the professional dedication of university faculty [7].

Statistical analysis of Uzbekistan's higher education system reveals several social challenges. As of January 1, 2013, the higher education enrollment rate was only 9%, far below regional and international averages, while primary and secondary education achieved near-universal coverage. The centralized management system determined both the number of university admissions and fields of study. Only 57% of pedagogical university graduates entered the education sector. Similar mismatches were seen in other sectors, highlighting the disconnect between education and labor market needs [8].

Despite reforms initiated in 2019, many bureaucratic barriers persist, and shortages in higher education coverage remain. Furthermore, weak collaboration between universities, industries, and employers continues to hinder innovation and economic modernization.

International experts also note the fragmented nature of higher education governance in Uzbekistan, with overlapping responsibilities among multiple organizations. Various governmental bodies and committees, including the Presidential Administration, Parliament, Cabinet of Ministers, and sector-specific ministries, oversee different aspects of education policy, often leading to inefficiencies and duplication.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the rapid development of the nation requires a dynamic, highly qualified workforce capable of adapting to changing demands. Therefore:

- The human factor must be prioritized in educating specialists within the higher education system.
- The content of higher education must be raised to a qualitatively new level.
- A system for training highly qualified specialists who can contribute to the sustainable development of the economy and social sectors, and successfully compete in the labor market, must be established.

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