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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF EDUCATION IN UKRAINE: SOCIO- PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

V. A. Mandragelia*

The article argues the need to improve the quality of education as a key factor determining the innovative models of social development and achieving the goals of sustainable development, defined by the UN. Improving the well-being and living standards of people, achieving success in economic, political and socio-cultural reforms are impossible without significant investment in education, the introduction of new pedagogical approaches in the general context of information and communication technologies. This problem has become especially relevant in connection with the pandemic, which has dramatically increased the requirements for the formation of digital and soft skills of teachers and students. The concept of lifelong learning has become a categorical imperative. This is evidenced by the realities of life, the results of opinion polls, numerous documents of the UN, EU, OECD, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, laws and regulations of many countries in the world.

Despite the strengthening of research activities of academic institutions, cooperation with international partners, the range and depth of research in the field of education is much inferior to the relevant foreign counterparts. First of all, there is a lack of systematic research on the relationship between the quality of education in Ukraine with the pace of economic development of the state, material, technical and methodical base of educational institutions, the level of social, medical, sanitary protection of teachers and students (listeners), legislation in the field of education, the influence of certain external factors, migration processes.

A comparative analysis of the number of educational institutions in Ukraine and European countries, their public funding, annual costs per student, etc. were considered. Emphasis is placed on the insufficiently dynamic development of high-quality Internet, limited opportunities for its use due to technical problems and low living standards of ordinary citizens of the country. The need to update the efforts of the state and educational institutions to improve digital skills, soft skills, knowledge of foreign languages of teachers and students was emphasized. The necessity of carrying out systematic researches of the sphere of education taking into account all internal and external factors influencing its functioning is argued.

Keywords: *education, learning process, online learning, distance learning, digital skills, soft skills.*

* Ph.D (Philosophy), Professor

(BilaTserkva Institute of Continuous Professional Education of State Institution of Higher Education «University of Educational Management» National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine)

mandra09@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0807-5309

ПРОБЛЕМИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ОСВІТИ В УКРАЇНІ: СОЦІАЛЬНО-ФІЛОСОФСЬКИЙ АНАЛІЗ

В. А. Мандрагеля

У статті аргументується необхідність підвищення якості освіти як ключового фактора, що визначає інноваційні моделі розвитку суспільства та досягнення цілей сталого розвитку, визначені ООН. Підвищення добробуту та рівня життя людей, системне поєднання економічних, політичних та соціокультурних реформ неможливі без значних інвестицій у освіту, запровадження нових педагогічних підходів у загальному контексті розвитку інформаційно-комунікативних технологій. Особливої актуальності ця проблема набула у зв'язку з пандемією, яка різко підвищила вимоги до формування цифрових і м'яких навичок педагогів і учнів. На категоричний імператив перетворилася концепція навчання протягом життя. Про це свідчать реалії життя, результати соціологічних опитувань, численні документи ООН, ЄС, ОЕСР, Світового Банку, Міжнародного Валютного Фонду, законодавчі та нормативно-правові акти розвинутих країн світу.

Незважаючи на посилення науково-дослідницької діяльності академічних інститутів, співробітництва з міжнародними партнерами, спектр і глибина досліджень в сфері освіти значно поступається відповідним зарубіжним аналогам. Насамперед, не вистачає системних досліджень щодо взаємозв'язку якості освіти в Україні з темпами економічного розвитку держави, матеріально-технічною і навчально-методичною базою освітніх установ, рівнем соціальної, медичної, санітарно-гігієнічної захищеності педагогів і учнів (студентів, слухачів), станом законодавства в сфері освіти, впливом певних зовнішніх чинників, міграційними процесами.

Здійснено порівняльний аналіз кількості закладів освіти в Україні і європейських країнах, їх державного фінансування, щорічних витрат на одного студента тощо. Акцентована увага на недостатньо динамічному розвитку швидкісного якісного Інтернету, обмежені можливості його використання через технічні проблеми та низький рівень життя пересічних громадян країни. Наголошено на необхідності актуалізації зусиль держави і закладів освіти щодо покращання цифрової компетенції, м'яких навичок, знання іноземних мов педагогів і учнів. Аргументується необхідність проведення системних досліджень сфери освіти з урахуванням усіх внутрішніх та зовнішніх чинників, що впливають на її функціонування.

Ключові слова: освіта, навчальний процес, он-лайн навчання, дистанційне навчання, цифрові навички, м'які навички.

Introduction of the issue. The quality of education has always been considered as one of the key issues of state policy, which directly affects the dynamics of its economic and social development, and well-being of citizens. The future Nobel laureates in economics T. Schultz (1972) [1] in the early 1960's concluded that the economic growth of countries depends largely on the level of education. Another Nobel laureate, G. Becker (1992), found that a 25% increase in per capita income in the United States from 1929 to 1982 was due to improved schooling.

China demonstrates the dependence of economic development on the level of education. The country's GDP in 1978

was 149.551 billion dollars. USA (11th place in the world), and in 2010 it reached 6 087, 165 billion dollars (2nd place). At the same time, Chinese investment in education has grown by an average of 19% annually over the past fifteen years, and in 2012 its funding exceeded 4% of GDP for the first time and remained high. The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China has identified five priority areas in education: rural, remote, poor areas; primary education in rural areas, vocational and preschool education; subsidies for students from the poor; creating a quality team of teachers [3: 14-16].

The world economy has entered a new stage of fierce competition, joined by national education systems. In particular, we can state the redistribution of spheres of influence in the field of higher education at the global level. In the top 25 leading universities in the world, in addition to the traditionally authoritative American, English and Swiss, recently included 2 - (China), 2 - (Singapore), 1 - (Hong Kong), 1 - (Japan) [4].

Requirements for the quality of education are increasing at all its levels. In the OECD report «Teachers and Leaders in Vocational Education and Training, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training» (2021) states that use of advanced technology in the workplace has increased in recent years for workers in all sectors and occupations, including elementary occupations that generally require lower levels of cognitive skills. Today, craft and trade workers – who often have a VET qualification – make more intensive use of their digital skills, as their workplaces adopt electronic devices, complex machinery or robots [5: 120-121].

There is an urgent need to improve education at all levels, from preschool, school, technical, vocational to higher. At the same time, teaching and learning in educational institutions should be focused on the formation and development of such knowledge and skills that have prospects and exceed the current requirements for professionals of all levels and specializations. In addition, the pandemic has significantly raised the issue of accelerating the introduction of effective forms of teaching for educational institutions of all levels in online and distance learning.

Degree of scientific development.

Many works of domestic scientists (V. Andrushchenko, V. Astakhova, V. Kremen, V. Lugoviy, T. Lukin, Y. Nazarenko, O. Polishchuk, N. Protasova, P. Sauh, S. Sparlet, K. Vashchenko, etc.) and foreign experts

(K. Amadeo, P. Andres, P. Biribonwa, J. Gresham, I. Katsarova S. Parandekar, D. Perkins) are devoted to general theoretical issues of education and accompanying concepts. Issues of online and distance learning in Ukraine were studied by A. Andreev, V. Bykov, A. Khutorskaya, N. Korsunskaya, V. Kukharenko, T. Murashchenko, V. Soldatkin, O. Tikhomirov, V. Vashchenko, N. Zhevakina. Among foreign researchers have dealt with this issue T. Adebisi, R. Frazze, M. Henda, O. Oyeleke, D. Painter, A. Rossett, R. Schank. International organizations UNESCO, EU, OECD, World Bank, International Monetary Fund have made a significant contribution to the assessment of the current state and prospects of education development as an influential Think Tanks (Brookings Institution, Chatham House, RAND Corporation, Heritage Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Fraser Institute and so on).

The outline of unresolved issues. It should be noted that despite the rather extensive system of research institutes within the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, the range and depth of research in the field of education is significantly inferior to the relevant foreign counterparts. First of all, there is a lack of systematic research on the relationship between the quality of education in Ukraine with the pace of economic development of the state, material, technical and methodical base of educational institutions, the level of social, medical, sanitary protection of teachers and students (listeners), legislation in the field of education, the influence of certain external factors, migration processes.

The aim of our study is a comprehensive analysis of various factors influencing the state of modern education in Ukraine in the context of world experience and prospects for its improvement.

Results and Discussion.

Spontaneous market relations after Ukraine's independence had a negative impact on educational institutions at all levels, especially higher education. As the academician of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine V. Luhovyi rightly points out, the system of higher education in Ukraine underwent turbulent changes during 1991-2019, which led to its insufficient competitiveness. For example, only in 1994, in terms of GDP reduction, 73 new universities, academies, and institutes were opened. On the contrary, in 2014, 48 higher education institutions (HEIs) ceased to exist. Since then, the number of HEIs has increased again and remains excessive, and institutions are fragmented [6]. Despite the slow decline, the number of institutions of high education remains significant. According to the data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine in the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 515 [7] in the country compared to 363 (Germany), 234 (France), 166 (Great Britain) [8]. Therefore, there is an urgent need to optimize the number of higher education institutions in accordance with world and European standards.

Another situation is observed in institutions of technical and vocational education and training, where there is a steady downward trend. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, their number decreased from 1246 in 1990 to 711 in 2020, i. e. by 43 %. The number of students (listeners) during this time decreased even more, from 643.4 thousand people to 246.9 thousand people or 2.6 times [9].

Commercialization has affected school, technical and vocational education and training to a lesser extent. Access to the school is open and transparent. In Ukraine, almost 100 % of children attend school. This is a positive fact compared to about 258 million children and youth are out of school, according to UIS data for the school year

ending in 2018. The total includes 59 million children of primary school age, 62 million of lower secondary school age and 138 million of upper secondary age.

As countries strive to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030, the UIS is providing the data and analysis needed to reach the children and youth who remain excluded from education. Through its website, publications and data visualizations, the UIS aims to strengthen the availability of detailed internationally-comparable data on out-of-school children and youth, to make it possible to better identify who they are, where they live and the barriers they face [10].

However, there are other problems in the field of school education in Ukraine. First of all, it concerns the material and technical base of education. As of the end of 2018, in Ukraine 454 (2.9 %) schools do not have heating system; in 1,331 schools (8.2 %) there is no water at all; in 7,821 schools (48.3 %) there is no hot water; in 1,331 schools restrooms are located outdoors [11]. There are significant problems in the activities of technical and vocational education and training institutions. The report under the United Nations Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program (UN RPP) 2020 "Regional Strategy for Reforming the Vocational Education System in Donetsk Oblast" identifies the following unresolved issues: outdated material and technical base that does not meet today's requirements; unsatisfactory conditions for study, living and recreation of applicants for vocational education in most TVET institutions; reduction of the number of applicants for technical and vocational education and training, increase in the share of understaffed TVET institutions; obsolete content, structure and methods of training workers, the preservation of the actual Soviet system of technical and vocational education and training; the focus of TVET institutions on the training of

workers at the end of the twentieth century; discrepancy between the areas of training and the number of graduates of institutions TVET on the needs of the regional labor market [12].

As you know, on March 11, 2020, the WHO announced that the epidemic situation caused by the coronavirus is becoming a pandemic. At the time of writing (early November 2021), according to the information panel of the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, there were about 250 million people worldwide from 196 countries that fell ill, of which more than 5 million died. In Ukraine, these figures are close to 3 million and 71 thousand, respectively [13]. This situation has seriously affected the education system in the world. As of April 2, 2020, the number of students who were forced to stay at home due to the closure of educational institutions at all levels reached a peak - 1, 484 billion people (86.3 % of the total) in 194 countries. In Ukraine, this figure was 6,785 thousand people. Despite the measures taken, at the end of October 2021 in Europe there were only 2 countries where schools were partially open (Ukraine, Serbia) [14].

The transition to online and distance learning required appropriate digital skills of teachers and students, quality equipment and access to quality high-speed Internet. In particular, the World Bank report (2020) «Tertiary Education and COVID-19: Impact and Mitigation Strategies in Europe and Central Asia» states, that in some ECA countries, around 40 percent of the population still do not use (or do not have access to) the internet. Countries like Bulgaria, Georgia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan may thus face difficulties in the full implementation of distance learning.

Among global challenges, the following are related to the online infrastructure:

- Weakness of internet connection and internet speed in many countries

- High prices for a good internet connection

- Absence of computers/laptops/tablets/smartphones that support online teaching and learning

- Many online instruments, platforms, and websites crashed when an unexpectedly high number of clients connected to them.

There are also the following logistical, social, and psychological challenges:

- Not all students and professors have a separate room/workplace at home that provides an opportunity to focus on teaching and learning.

- The distance mode does not always allow for advanced ways of teaching in terms of group work, discussions, interactive project work, etc., which as a result affects the development of soft skills among students.

- Long periods of self-isolation can have an adverse impact on the psychological well-being of students and staff, especially for those who live alone, international students, and students/staff that are not in their place of origin [15].

The World Bank's conclusions can be illustrated by the example of Ukraine. In particular, M. Fedorov, Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine on July 30, 2020 announced that more than 5.5 million Ukrainians do not have access to high-quality fixed Internet [16]. There are significant problems with the online education infrastructure: weak Internet connection and Internet speed, high prices for quality Internet services. The share of individual Internet users in Ukraine is just over 70 % compared to the nearest neighbors: Slovak Republic – 90 %, Poland – 87 %, Russia, Belarus, Hungary – 85 %, Turkey – 78 %, Moldova – 76 % [17]. There were 29.47 million internet users in Ukraine in January 2021. The number of internet users in Ukraine increased by 2.0 million (+7.3 %) between 2020 and 2021 [18].

To this should be added the lack or poor quality of computers / laptops / tablets / smartphones that support online learning. First of all, this is a problem of educational institutions that are insufficiently funded by the state and do not modernize digital devices in a timely manner. On the one hand, education in Ukraine has long been funded at over 5%, which meets world and European standards. But in absolute terms, the numbers differ significantly. In the State Budget for 2021, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine envisages expenditures amounting to UAH 139.5 billion, which is UAH 26.6 billion more than in 2020 [19]. This amounts to about 4.3 billion euros (mainly funds to increase wages from January 1 by 20 % and from December 1, 2021 – by 8.4 %). Slovakia spends about the same amount, Romania and Hungary spend a little more (over 5 billion euros), not to mention Poland (over 21 billion euros). Education funding looks even more contrasting compared to the high-income countries of the world. In 2017 in Ukraine the annual cost per 1 student of high education per year was not more than 1 thousand dollars, but in the OECD countries on average 16 327 dollars, and in Canada, Sweden, Great Britain - more than 25 000 dollars, the USA - more than 33 000 dollars [21].

Since a significant number of classes students (listeners) are forced to conduct using their own electronic devices, the question of their acquisition is acute. This becomes a serious problem given that the average monthly salary in Ukraine in September 2021 was only UAH 14,239 excluding taxes [22]. The average citizen of Ukraine actually receives UAH 11,462 or about \$ 430 US per month. This does not allow timely updating of distance learning tools, limiting access to high-quality and high-speed Internet. As of September 2020, Ukraine ranked 59th among the world's countries by the fixed broadband

Internet access speed, with an average download speed of 59.13 mbit/s, and 80th by the mobile network Internet access speed with 25.63 mbit/s. [23].

An important issue is the level of digital competence of teachers and students. Concentration of attention on knowledge of digital technologies, possibilities of their use in educational process, creation of original digital content carry other very important questions to the periphery of consideration. First of all, this applies to what is called digital wellbeing. This concept usually includes comfort, safety for physical, mental and emotional health when using digital media, as well as maintaining a reasonable balance between works and personal life. This issue is just beginning to be studied by domestic experts. Issues related to the organization of interaction between teachers and students, the exchange of information and not only that directly related to the educational process have not yet become the subject of proper scientific consideration. Significant opportunities exist in the development of civic responsibility and participation in socially significant projects through digital technologies. Principles and rules of network etiquette are in the initial state and the formation of [24: 175].

The quality of education in the state largely depends on the status, role and prestige of the teaching profession in society, its material and financial support. At the moment, the average salary of a teacher of the first category in a public institution is 6.6 thousand UAH or 210 euros. In Poland, which the Ukrainian government likes to emulate, the average salary of a teacher in a public educational institution is 1,210 euros per month. In other neighboring countries of Ukraine, teachers earn on average: in Slovakia – 1 thousand 342 euros per month, in Hungary – 1 thousand 116 euros, in Romania – 979 euros. Compared to other European countries, teachers in Montenegro,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Serbia receive little - 803 euros, 748 euros and 630 euros, respectively, compared to other European countries. On average, teachers in Latvia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Estonia and Greece receive between € 1,300 and € 1,500. In Western and Northern Europe, teachers earn much more. The average teacher's salary in Denmark is 6,207 euros, in Iceland - 5,935 euros, in Germany - 5,788 euros, in Finland - 4,644 euros, in Austria - 5,446 euros [25].

The transition to online and distance learning has raised the issue of quality of living conditions. It is difficult to expect high efficiency from students when classes in different subjects are taught in the same room in different educational institutions. According to the State Statistics Service, one person in Ukraine (2021) has an average of 24.3 square meters of living space. The largest number of housing per capita was recorded in Kyiv region, namely 37 square meters. In Kyiv, there is only 20 square meters per one registered citizen. And the leaders in the regions per capita are: Vinnytsia region - 32 square meters, Chernihiv region - 31 square meters, Khmelnytsky region - 30 square meters, Cherkasy region - 30 square meters. The worst indicators with housing stock are in the Nikolaev area - 23 square meters on the person, Donetsk - 13 sq.m. per person. At the same time, the dynamics of improving the living conditions of the average Ukrainian is rather weak. In particular, in 2017, an average of 23.1 square meters per capita of housing, in 2014 - 22.6 square meters [26]. As a comparison, we can cite Germany, where in 2019 the average apartment area of 91.9 square meters per 1 sq. m. more than in 2010. In 2019, each inhabitant of Germany had an average of 47 square meters of living space (in 2018 - 46.7, and in 2010 - 45) [27]. In the United States and Canada, each inhabitant has from 70 to 75 square meters of housing.

Globalization and internationalization of education, strengthening communication with foreign colleagues, participation in international conferences, seminars, etc. urgently requires knowledge of all participants in the pedagogical process of foreign languages, especially English. It has achieved prime status by becoming the most widely spoken language in the world - if one disregards proficiency - ahead of Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. English is spoken in 101 countries, while Arabic is spoken in 60, French in 51, Chinese in 33, and Spanish in 31. From one small island, English has gone on to acquire lingua franca status in international business, worldwide diplomacy, and science.

EF English Proficiency Index covers only those countries and territories where English is not a native language. The assessment is based on the results of the assignments in English by the representatives of the participating countries. Ukraine ranks only 49th in the top 100 in English language assessment. All countries are divided into five categories depending on the level of English proficiency: from very high to very low. Analysts rated the level of language skills in our country in 2019 as low [28]. In 2020, the result has improved slightly, but it remains extremely low. In contrast, more than 70 % of students learn 2 or more foreign languages in the Netherlands, Latvia, France, Sweden, and Lithuania. In Denmark, Cyprus and Portugal, it exceeds 80 %. Almost 100 % of students study two or more foreign languages in Malta, Poland, Estonia, Romania, Italy, Greece, Finland, and Luxembourg [29]. Despite British people having lost their EU citizenship, the overall number of EU citizens who can speak English has only dropped to 44% - if we apply the 2012 data to the EU's new population. English is still the most spoken language in the EU by far, with German now spoken by 36 % of citizens

and French spoken by 29 % of the EU's new smaller population of 446 million people. Italian comes fourth at 18%, followed by 17 % for Spanish [30]. Отже, виглядає доволі логічним, що серед сучасних учнів шкіл та студентів країн ЄС англійську мову вивчає 91 %[31].

Conclusions and research prospects. The issues discussed in the article are only a small part of the general range of problems that require comprehensive theoretical research and practical measures to solve them. Usually, the subject of analysis in the field of education are the content and direction of educational programs, pedagogical approaches and methods of teaching disciplines, increasing the level of competence of teachers and students. Surveys and researches usually do not covers the following topics: information flow and information provision from authorities, leadership teachers of educations' institutions; reactions to the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 crisis; perceived stress due to the COVID-19 crisis; teachers' and students' current situations at home; care and tutoring for students during the lockdown by parents and staff of educations' institutions; motivations of parents and students and so on. It should also be emphasized that there is no effective partnership among the Ministry of Education and Science, educational institutions, and public organizations for the improving the quality of education.

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