

ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ ВНЕДРЕНИЯ ФИНСКОГО ОПЫТА В СФЕРЕ ШКОЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ

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Аннотация. В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ систем школьного образования Узбекистана и Финляндии, а также рассматриваются перспективы внедрения финского опыта. В настоящее время правительство Узбекистана уделяет особое внимание реформам в сфере образования. Цель состоит в том, чтобы перенять передовой опыт, изучая достижения развитых стран, особенно в области школьного образования. В последние годы применение финской модели школьного образования, которая достигла высоких результатов в программе PISA, стало одной из актуальных задач современности.

В статье раскрываются различия между системами двух стран в таких аспектах, как управление образованием, экономические факторы, типы школ и образовательные ступени. Особый акцент делается на отличительных особенностях финского опыта в каждой из этих областей. Данное исследование, выполненное с исторических позиций, преимущественно использует исторические методы.

Официальные документы служат важным источником для понимания государственной политики в области школьного образования в Узбекистане, тогда как для освещения специфических аспектов финской системы школьного образования в качестве основных источников использовались научные статьи и книги исследователей.

Историческое развитие финской системы управления школами помогает понять, каким образом этот опыт может способствовать решению проблем в школьном образовании Узбекистана. В статье также предпринимается попытка ответить на вопрос, могут ли результаты недавних реформ в Узбекистане преодолеть барьеры на пути внедрения финского опыта. В то же время высказывается предложение, что предоставление более широкой автономии школам и учителям, как это делается в Финляндии, может предложить решения некоторых управленческих проблем в Узбекистане. Однако конечные результаты тесно связаны с общественными установками по отношению к образованию, включая престиж учителей в обществе.

Ключевые слова: управление школой, менеджмент в образовании, оценка качества образования, подготовка учителей, финансирование школ, язык обучения.

THE PROSPECTS OF IMPLEMENTING FINNISH EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

Annotation. This article provides a comparative analysis of the school education systems in Uzbekistan and Finland, and examines the prospects of implementing the Finnish experience. Currently, the Government of Uzbekistan is paying special attention to educational reforms. The aim is to adopt best practices by studying the achievements of developed countries, particularly in school education. In recent years, applying the Finnish school education model, which has achieved high results in the PISA program, has become one of the pressing tasks of today.

The article reveals the differences between the two countries' systems in aspects such as education governance, economic factors, school types, and educational stages. Special emphasis is placed on the distinctive features of the Finnish experience in each area.

This study, written from a historical approach, primarily employs historical methods.

Official documents serve as an important source for understanding the state policy on school education in Uzbekistan, while scientific articles and books by researchers were used as the main sources to highlight the specific aspects of the Finnish school education system.

The historical development of the Finnish school governance system helps to understand how this experience can contribute to solving problems in Uzbekistan's school education. The article also seeks to answer the question of whether the outcomes of recent reforms in Uzbekistan can overcome the barriers to implementing the Finnish experience. At the same time, it is proposed that granting broader autonomy to schools and teachers, as is done in Finland, could offer solutions to certain governance issues in Uzbekistan. However, the final results are closely linked to societal attitudes towards education, including the prestige of teachers in society.

Keywords: *school governance, education management, educational quality assessment, teacher training, school financing, language of instruction.*

INTRODUCTION.

The education system is the foundation of the intellectual, social, and economic development of any society. Indeed, the higher the quality of education, the broader the opportunities for societal progress in all spheres. Historical experience shows that countries with a high-quality education system have undoubtedly also achieved sustainable economic growth rates. This is because well-educated individuals are more competitive in the labor market and have the opportunity to pursue high-income professions, which in turn leads to a reduction in poverty and unemployment rates among the population. Thus, the effectiveness of the education system directly serves the socio-economic development of the country.

Studying the education systems of economically developed countries makes it possible to identify numerous achievements and best practices in this field. These countries have achieved significant results by implementing effective governance models, innovative teaching methodologies, and modern assessment systems at various levels of education — from pre-school to higher education. However, success in education is not determined solely by economic indicators. Some countries, even if they are not among the most economically developed, can form unique and effective models in organizing and managing their education systems, becoming recognized as examples worldwide. The Republic of Finland is precisely such a country.

On December 4, 2001, the results achieved by Finnish 15-year-old students in the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) international study attracted the attention of the global pedagogical community. In all three areas of this test — mathematical literacy, reading literacy, and science — Finnish students recorded the highest results among the OECD member countries (Sahlberg, 2015).

The significance of these results is particularly noteworthy because Finnish students achieved these accomplishments without additional preparatory courses, private tutoring services, or increasing homework loads. This situation further intensified interest in the Finnish education system and deepened the global need to uncover the secrets of its success.

As a result, education experts, policymakers, and researchers from various countries began to visit Finland to study the scientific-pedagogical, managerial, and organizational foundations of this success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research was conducted based on two types of literary sources with the aim of a comparative study of the education systems of Uzbekistan and Finland. The first group of sources consists of official legal documents, which serve as the legal and regulatory framework for assessing the current education system of Uzbekistan. This group includes the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, laws adopted by the Oliy Majlis (Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan), decrees and resolutions signed by the President, and relevant decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers (Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2023; Oliy Majlis, 2019, 2020; President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020; Cabinet of Ministers, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021; Statistics Agency, 2023). These documents make it possible to determine the main directions of educational policy in Uzbekistan, its priority tasks, and the legal mechanisms of the ongoing reforms.

The second group of sources consists of the works of researchers devoted to the scientific and theoretical analysis of the Finnish education system. In particular, the book by Pasi Sahlberg, who played an important role in the in-depth scientific study and international promotion of the Finnish education system, systematically illuminates the structural composition, methodological foundations, and success factors of this system (Sahlberg, 2015). Furthermore, the book by Timothy Walker, who worked as a teacher in Helsinki, provides valuable information on everyday pedagogical practice in Finnish schools (Walker, 2023). The collection edited by Ilkka Taipale contains important scientific information about the interrelationship between social innovations and the education system in Finland (Taipale, 2019). In addition, the works of a number of other researchers devoted to analyzing the historical formation, political-economic factors, and pedagogical foundations of the Finnish education system also served as important sources in this article (Simola, 2005; Simola et al., 2017; Kauko, 2019; Thrupp et al., 2023).

These scientific works serve as a theoretical and methodological basis for analyzing the stages of development of the Finnish education system, its global impact, and its comparative analysis with the experience of other countries. Thus, the combination of official documents and scientific-theoretical sources serves to ensure the reliability and scientific validity of this research.

METHODS

The research is aimed at a comparative study of the education systems of Uzbekistan and Finland, and to achieve this goal it was carried out relying on comparative methodology. The main structural elements of the education systems of both countries — governance structure, financing mechanisms, school types, curricula, and educational stages — were juxtaposed, and their similarities and differences were identified. As a result of the comparative analysis, scientifically based conclusions were formed regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each system.

During the study of the education system of Uzbekistan, in addition to examining official documents and the regulatory legal framework, the author's views based on personal observations and practical experience in this field were also incorporated into the analysis. This approach made it possible to consider practical problems in the education system beyond the scope of official documents and to assess their real situation more objectively. The author's personal experience served as supplementary information complementing the official data.

In studying the Finnish education system, the scientific conclusions of experts and researchers who had the opportunity to directly observe this system, operate within it, or study it

in depth scientifically were accepted as the main source. The scientific works of these experts provided reliable, evidence-based information about the practical activities of the Finnish education system, its governance principles, pedagogical methodologies, and national characteristics.

After a thorough analysis of the specific features of both countries' education systems, their historical formation processes, governance models, and pedagogical approaches, scientifically grounded considerations were expressed regarding the feasibility and appropriateness of applying the advanced pedagogical and governance practices used in Finland to the conditions of Uzbekistan. The application of the comparative method served to ensure the scientific validity and objectivity of the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In recent years, a number of practical efforts have been undertaken in Uzbekistan to introduce Finland's advanced educational technologies. In particular, the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers on the establishment of the Uzbekistan-Finland Institute of Pedagogy can be recognized as one of the important steps in this direction. This decision takes into account regional development prospects, priority tasks in the field of pedagogy, modern methods and technologies, as well as Finland's advanced experience in teacher training (Cabinet of Ministers, 2021). The main purpose of this institute is to implement Finland's best educational practices into Uzbekistan's education system.

However, adapting the educational experience of any foreign country to national conditions requires a deep analysis of certain systemic factors. In particular, it is necessary to consider factors such as the specific features of the education system, economic and demographic conditions, as well as the stages of the country's historical development and their impact on the education sector. In introducing Finnish educational experience to Uzbekistan, a deep understanding of the fundamental differences between the two countries' education systems is of particular importance. Table 1 reflects in detail the specific aspects and systemic differences between the school education systems of Uzbekistan and Finland.

One of the main challenges facing Uzbekistan's education system is the issue of school autonomy. According to the results of PISA studies, setting clear requirements for student learning outcomes and granting schools autonomy in curricula and assessment positively affects the entire education system. Independence encourages schools to adopt new pedagogical approaches and innovative methods, which is a difficult outcome to achieve under conditions of rigid formalism and bureaucratic governance (Pulatov, 2023). School autonomy ensures flexibility in organizing the educational process, allows teachers' creative potential to be realized, and serves to improve the quality of education. However, the centralized governance system in Uzbekistan significantly limits the ability of schools and teachers to make independent decisions, which can serve as a serious obstacle to implementing Finnish experience.

Study of Education Quality Assessment

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, control over the quality of education is carried out by higher state bodies such as the Cabinet of Ministers and the Education Quality Control Inspectorate. In particular, the Education Quality Control Inspectorate performs the functions of conducting attestation and accreditation of educational institutions and monitoring the quality of the educational process (Oliy Majlis, 2020). Uzbekistan's quality assessment system also includes international studies such as PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA, and TALIS to assess students' knowledge levels and the educational environment (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018).

These assessments serve as important tools for identifying existing problems in the education system and finding solutions to them.

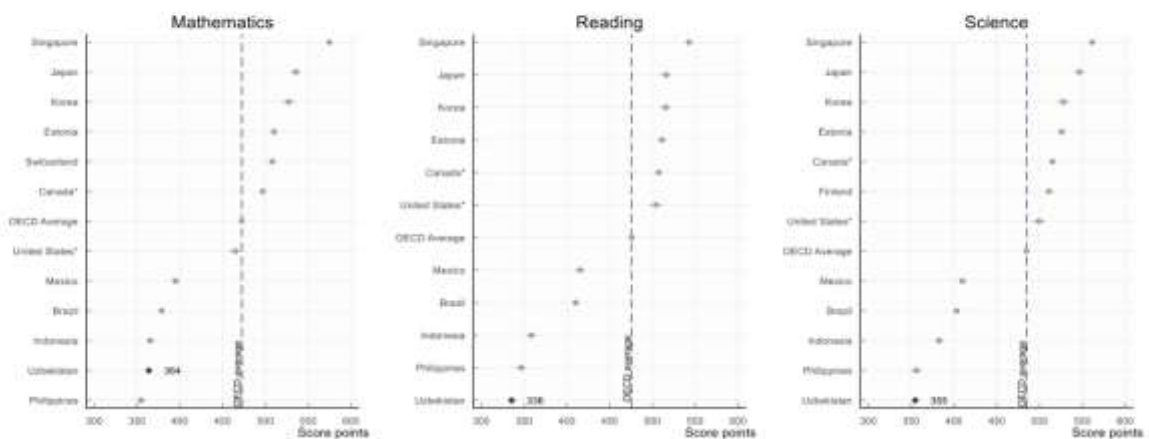
In Finland, quality control is mainly based on sample-based national assessments and the self-evaluation of schools and municipalities, and does not rely on testing and monitoring by higher authorities (Thrupp et al., 2023). Municipalities take responsibility for their own education systems, while the government provides non-binding recommendations (Kauko, 2019). This approach prioritizes the self-evaluation of schools and minimizes constant inspections by higher organizations.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in mathematics, reading and science. The tests explore how well students can solve complex problems, think critically and communicate effectively. This gives insights into how well education systems are preparing students for real life challenges and future success. Uzbekistan participated for the first time in PISA in 2022. By comparing results internationally, policy makers and educators in Uzbekistan can learn from other countries' policies and practices

How well did 15-year-old students in Uzbekistan do on the test? How does Uzbekistan compare?

Figure 1. Mean performance in mathematics, reading and science in PISA 2022

Uzbekistan, OECD average and selected comparison countries



Notes: Comparison countries include the six highest-performing countries in each subject and the five countries with the largest population of 15-year-old students. Horizontal lines that extend beyond the markers represent a measure of uncertainty associated with mean estimates (the 95% confidence interval). Source: OECD, PISA 2022 Database, Tables I.B1.2.1, I.B1.2.2 and I.B1.2.3.

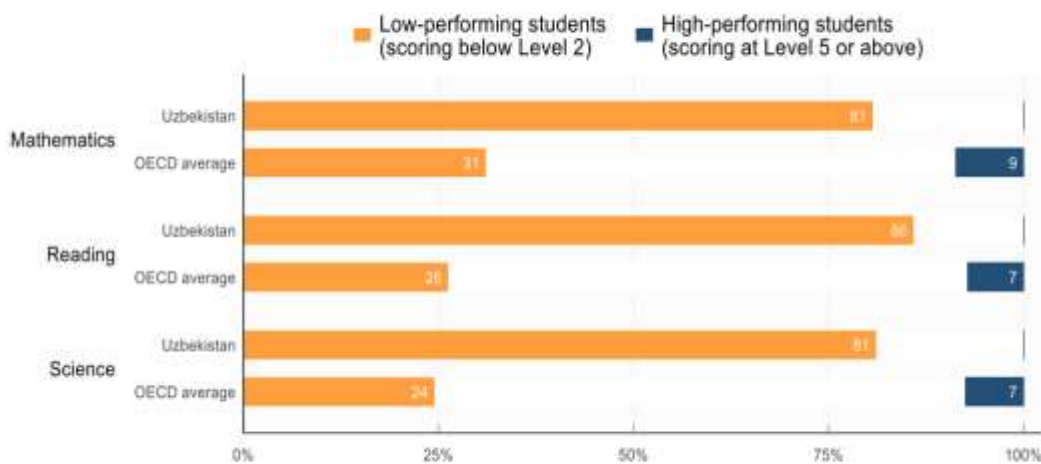
Students in Uzbekistan scored less than the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science.

- A smaller proportion of students in Uzbekistan, than on average across OECD countries, were top performers (Level 5 or 6) in at least one subject. At the same time a smaller proportion of students in Uzbekistan than on average across OECD countries achieved a minimum level of proficiency (Level 2 or higher) in all three subjects. What students know and can do in mathematics • In Uzbekistan, 19% of students attained at least Level 2 proficiency in mathematics, significantly less than on average across OECD countries (OECD average: 69%).

At a minimum, these students can interpret and recognize, without direct instructions, how a simple situation can be represented mathematically (e.g. comparing the total distance across two alternative routes, or converting prices into a different currency). Over 85% of students in Singapore, Macao (China), Japan, Hong Kong (China)*, Chinese Taipei and Estonia (in descending order of that share) performed at this level or above.

- Almost no students in Uzbekistan were top performers in mathematics, meaning that they attained Level 5 or 6 in the PISA mathematics test (OECD average: 9%). Six Asian countries and economies had the largest shares of students who did so: Singapore (41%), Chinese Taipei (32%), Macao (China) (29%), Hong Kong (China)* (27%), Japan (23%) and Korea (23%). At these levels, students can model complex situations mathematically, and can select, compare and evaluate appropriate problem-solving strategies for dealing with them. Only in 16 out of 81 countries and economies participating in PISA 2022 did more than 10% of students attain Level 5 or 6 proficiency.

Figure 2. Top performers and low-performing students in mathematics, reading and science



Note: Numbers inside the figure correspond to percentages.

Source: OECD, PISA 2022 Database, Tables I.B1.3.1, I.B1.3.2 and I.B1.3.3.

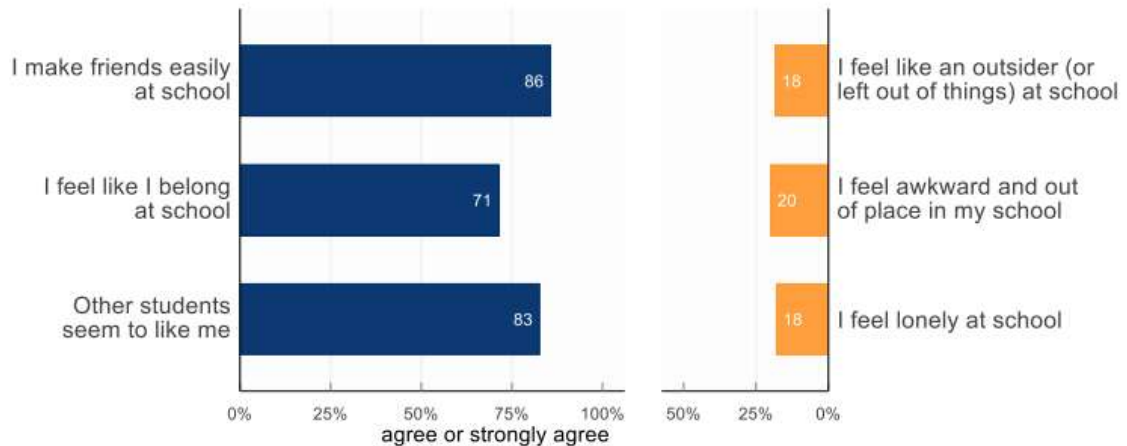
What students know and can do in reading?

- Some 14% of students in Uzbekistan attained Level 2 or higher in reading (OECD average: 74%). At a minimum, these students can identify the main idea in a text of moderate length, find information based on explicit, though sometimes complex criteria, and can reflect on the purpose and form of texts when explicitly directed to do so. The share of 15-year-old students who attained minimum levels of proficiency in reading (Level 2 or higher) varied from 89% in Singapore to 8% in Cambodia.

- In Uzbekistan, almost no students scored at Level 5 or higher in reading (OECD average: 7%). These students can comprehend lengthy texts, deal with concepts that are abstract or counterintuitive, and establish distinctions between fact and opinion, based on implicit cues pertaining to the content or source of the information. What students know and can do in science
- Some 19% of students in Uzbekistan attained Level 2 or higher in science (OECD average: 76%). At a minimum, these students can recognize the correct explanation for familiar scientific phenomena and can use such knowledge to identify, in simple cases, whether a conclusion is valid based on the data provided.

- In Uzbekistan, almost no students were top performers in science, meaning that they were

Figure 4. Students' sense of belonging at school



Note: Numbers inside the figure correspond to percentages.

Source: OECD, PISA 2022 Database, Table II.B1.1.4.

proficient at Level 5 or 6 (OECD average: 7%). These students can creatively and autonomously apply their knowledge of and about science to a wide variety of situations, including unfamiliar ones

Support and discipline in mathematics lessons

- In Uzbekistan, 78% of students reported that, in most mathematics lessons, the teacher shows an interest in every student's learning (OECD average: 63%), and 79% that the teacher gives extra help when students need it (OECD average: 70%).
- Some students study mathematics in a disciplinary climate that is not favourable to learning: in 2022, about 20% of students in Uzbekistan reported that they cannot work well in most or all lessons (OECD average: 23%); 25% of students do not listen to what the teacher says (OECD average: 30%); 20% of students get distracted using digital devices (OECD average: 30%); and 18% get distracted by other students who are using digital devices (OECD average: 25%). On average across OECD countries, students were less likely to report getting distracted using digital devices when the use of cell phones on school premises is banned.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of the school education systems of Uzbekistan and Finland demonstrates that both countries have their own unique approaches and governance models in the field of education. The success of the Finnish education system is primarily explained by its decentralized governance structure, the broad autonomy granted to schools and teachers, the high prestige of the teaching profession in society, and the fact that its assessment system is developmental rather than merely supervisory in nature. The PISA 2022 results show that Uzbek students' scores in mathematics, reading, and science are significantly lower than the OECD average, and that the majority of students failed to achieve even the minimum level of proficiency (Level 2) in all three subjects.

The prospects for implementing Finnish experience in Uzbekistan are associated with the following aspects:

1. **Expanding school autonomy** – granting schools independence in curricula and assessment allows them to adopt innovative approaches. The centralized governance system in Uzbekistan remains one of the main obstacles in this process.

2. **Improving the education quality assessment system** – in Finland, quality control is mainly based on the self-evaluation of schools and municipalities, with constant inspections by higher authorities minimized. In Uzbekistan, however, education quality assessment is carried out in a centralized manner.

3. **Enhancing the prestige of teachers in society** – in Finland, teaching is a highly respected profession, attracting the most talented applicants. In Uzbekistan, restoring the prestige of the teaching profession is an important task.

4. **Reforming the teacher training system** – while the establishment of the Uzbekistan-Finland Institute of Pedagogy is a positive step in this direction, long-term systemic changes require a comprehensive strategy.

However, the Finnish experience cannot be directly replicated, as the historical, economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the two countries are fundamentally different. In the process of adapting the Finnish experience to the conditions of Uzbekistan, it is essential to deeply consider factors such as societal attitudes towards education, the role of teachers in society, and the state's priorities in educational policy. Thus, while implementing certain elements of the Finnish experience into Uzbekistan's education system may yield positive results, this process must be carried out gradually and with due regard for national characteristics.

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