The role of modern education in solving socio-cognitive problems of the modernization of public consciousness

This essay explores the ways in which contemporary processes of modernization of spiritual life and modernization of public awareness are associated with the modern educational system. The author discusses the key role of education in the formation of the value field of modern processes occurring in society. The author says that the modern education system should not follow social reality, but should indicate the contours of the future and play a providential role. Otherwise, it loses its meaning and becomes a serving component of social practice. The author addresses their idea of the role and significance of modern education in transformation processes to concepts and theories that confirm his position.

Keywords: education, knowledge, personality, modernization, information, social practice, social consciousness, cognitive activity.

Introduction

One of the most important functions of culture, along with the ability to accumulate and preserve accumulated knowledge, is the ability to transmit it to subsequent generations. This function is carried out through the education system. The state of the educational system in the modern world is extremely contradictory. During the second half of the 20th century, more individuals worldwide received training in the educational system than in all of human history. Education has emerged as one of the most significant fields of human endeavor in the modern era. Enormous achievements in the field of education formed the basis for grandiose social transformations and scientific and technological progress. On the other hand, the rapid expansion of the sphere of education and changes in its status are accompanied by a sharp aggravation of problems in this area in the XXI century.

It is well known that society seeks education not just out of altruism but also out of absolute need. After all, societal efforts to socialize the next generation continued even during the most trying of times. However, one of education's primary functions is that of a social need and value, one whose denial or undervaluation prevents sociality from continuing to be preserved, reproduced, and developed. It is evident that the advancement of civilization and the growing social significance of education are mutually determinative [1].

It is obvious that the study of education cannot be restricted to activities that take place primarily inside the official buildings where a certain person obtained their education. The generally acknowledged lack of a tight correlation between education and the sophistication of individuals and society serves as more evidence for this view. Education is therefore first and foremost viewed as a wide-ranging social process of interaction between people, groups, social groupings, social conglomerates, and systems.

The term "education" has historically encompassed a wide range of connected practices, forming the "education system", educational levels, educational institutions, etc. Due to the variety of ways that education is delivered, there are currently several opposing viewpoints about the goals, purposes, techniques, and ways in which they are carried out. This gives rise to disagreements on its values, content, and assessment and application opportunities. Nonetheless, the majority of these differences stem from deeper conceptual problems that are linked to different perspectives on the purpose and function of education. But we also have to acknowledge that there is still no clear definition of what education is at its core, either in theory or in practice.

Nor is it helpful to follow the historical tradition that views education as a development of the idea of “image”. In this sense, education is defined as the process by which an individual forms an image of an activity in certain contexts, an image of a person (or God) in others, a picture of the world in yet others, an image of culture in still others, etc. Everyone of these interpretations decomposes into several other attributes, which are then integrated into models of instructional action. Therefore, professionalization is linked to the
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initial idea of schooling. With the second — his cognitive growth, or the way God's image and likeness are formed in his person. An individual forms a particular worldview within the context of the third. With regard to the fourth, it involves bringing the younger generation “into life” and acquainting them with human civilization in general.

The prevailing opinion on education for a long time was that it played a crucial part in a person's professional growth. The public's actual opinion of education as a tool for social and professional advancement is currently rather negative. However, it is impossible to describe a society that is so circumspect about aiding and supporting education as being unaffected by events that take place within or outside of educational institutions. Consequently, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the educational system is linked in the public mind not just with professionalism but also with the status of a specialist [2].

The significance of education as a social institution is determined by its ability to serve as a source of formation and reproduction of stable parameters of cultural identity. The modern world is experiencing an identity crisis everywhere.

Accordingly, a crisis is also observed in the education sector. The uncontrolled emergence of a huge number of creative trends within educational processes should be regarded precisely as an attempt to overcome the crisis.

Before moving on to considering the main educational trends of our time, for a complete understanding it is necessary to determine what the essence of the crisis is and what are the reasons for its occurrence, what are the methodological foundations of this study.

Methods of research

If we look at the history of the formation of education, we will find that its content and, as a consequence, its form changed depending on the transformation of the dominant social ideology. In Antiquity, education served as a key marker that sharply drew the line between Hellenic culture and barbarian culture. In the Middle Ages, education transmitted Christian ideology and thereby legitimized it in the broad public consciousness. In the New Age, natural science became the basis of education. The work of educational institutions during this period actively contributed to the formation of a scientific picture of the world. The same picture that we all know from school textbooks. In modern times, the principles of mechanism on which natural science was built initiated processes of dehumanization. As a reaction to this, various currents of thought began to appear, emphasizing the humanitarization of education.

The humanitarianization of education set itself the goal of returning to the public consciousness the idea of the significance of the role of the individual, of its irreducibility to any general abstract scientific principles. Such authors as Dilthey, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and others made a great contribution to the advancement of this cause.

The catastrophic events of the 20th century undermined people's faith in traditional anthropological ideas. The image of man, formed within the framework of the Enlightenment and romanticism, which became a ubiquitous orientation model in almost all European universities, was disavowed.

The post-war crisis, of course, also affected education. If we give a brief description of the meaning of the crisis of that period, we can say that education has lost its normative basis. To paraphrase Adorno, “education became impossible after Auschwitz”.

Overcoming the post-war crisis in culture, and therefore in education, took two paths. The first way was to re-actualize once-rejected religious traditions. Anthropocentric arrogance, coming from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment, gave way to a humble search that turned to forms of extra-scientific knowledge. In Europe, this was expressed in the emergence of such an intellectual movement as neo-Thomism, which proposed looking for paradigmatic support in the works of the medieval scholastic Thomas Aquinas. In Russia, the search for new foundations, which rejected scientistic absolutism, manifested itself in turning to the works of Russian religious philosophers such as Pavel Florensky, Nikolai Berdyaev, etc.

The second way to overcome the post-war crisis was more radical. It lied in a fundamental rejection of any paradigmatic foundations, be it religious or secular universalism. The movement of thought moving in this critical and revisionist direction gave rise to postmodern reflection, which over time took shape into a whole philosophy.

Results and discussion

Education is often separated into three levels: elementary, secondary, and higher. A person who has finished all or part of the levels of the current educational system, from elementary school through university or
doctorate degrees, is referred to as having received formal education. These levels do not, however, correspond with the qualitative certainty of the educational process's outcome.

Education may be characterized as both the process of creating education and the end product of this process. Thus, the idea that education is a particular qualitative certainty realized in the characteristics of a single or group subject forms the foundation of the notion of education.

In turn, education is closely related to the subject's culture in both meaning and substance (in the sense of “cultural person”, “cultural community”). However, culture and education are not the same. First, culture has the ability to become apart from the subject and take on an independent existence when it takes the form of tangible items. Furthermore, education must be actualized, embodied, and integrated with the subject (here, the term “subject” is used very liberally to refer to any individual, group, layer, class, or society).

Second, education is not a part of every culture. The core and substance of education in each particular historical civilization will comprise its own unique set of subject characteristics, or aspects of the culture actualized in it, since education is linked to social approbation, or positive social judgment. And this set will be dictated by this society's system of socially relevant positive values.

One may contend that the core of education is the student's real engagement with that aspect of culture, that socio-historical experience, which encompasses all the beneficial outcomes of human effort (material and spiritual) that are important for a particular community [3].

The socio-historical variety of the ideal and actualized models of education is demonstrated when we turn to historical study, which also enables us to discuss the many forms of education throughout cultural history.

However, research on different kinds of education comes to the conclusion that, behind the range of historical approaches to education, there should be recognized a constant, recurring, fundamental feature known as the “heart of education”.

With all the diversity of social manifestations and functions of education, it is designed to preserve a given society, reproduce it in representatives of new generations, and contribute to the preservation, reproduction, and development of emerging forms of sociality in the process of the historical movement of society.

A distinctive feature of education until the mid-twentieth century was that it was, first of all, a fairly rigid and closed education system, which was one of the important elements of the government structure of a particular country.

Its main goal was to prepare the younger generation for industrial, professional activities, and for entry into “adult” social and industrial life. This preparation was thought of as providing students with a certain stock of social experience of previous generations, sufficient for functioning in specific social conditions throughout almost the entire life of a person.

For most people, education was a relatively short period at the beginning of life, a somewhat complete, discrete experience, most of which ended with graduation from school or vocational school.

Broadly speaking, education may be defined as the process and outcome of acquiring a certain system of information, abilities, and ways of thinking, and then assuring an acceptable degree of personal growth based on this foundation. Education encompasses both self-education and the process of training and instruction provided by teachers in educational institutions. A person who possesses the capacity for logical thought, a certain degree of intellect, and the drive to further their own education in order to fill in the gaps in their knowledge base and advance in life is considered educated.

The human society has long been convinced that the level of its civilization is directly related to the achievement of well-defined quantitative and qualitative parameters of both the entire education system in general and higher education in particular. At the same time, the prerogative in the higher education system has always belonged to universities.

First of all, this was due to the fact that it was them who worked on the educational problems society faced on the basis of the most advanced and fundamental achievements in various fields of scientific knowledge, which made it possible to combine together both the technology of scientific research and the process of education and upbringing of students. It is no coincidence that one of the attributes of universities at all times has been the presence in them of various scientific schools and directions, demonstrating a fusion of mature wisdom and daring youth.

It was the university (lat. Universitas — a whole) that was a type of higher education institution that, under one roof, united different faculties, representing different areas of research into the universality of the world around man. At the same time, it is the person who has always remained the highest value, and university life has always been distinguished by its humanistic orientation [4; 25].
Schools and higher education institutions, as global educational systems, have gone through a centuries-long path of historical development. On the one hand, they had a significant influence on the accumulation, preservation and progress of culture and society as a whole and, on the other hand, they felt the variety of fundamental changes taking place in society, science and culture of all countries and peoples.

Concluding a brief historical excursion into the field of formation of education as a social institution, we can now clearly formulate the answer to the question “what is the essence of the crisis of modern education and what are its causes?” The answer will sound like this: “The essence of the crisis of modern education lies in the absence of a common cultural paradigm, whose meanings could be consistently translated into public consciousness. The cause of the crisis lies in the collapse of metanarrations (Lyotard), that is, in the undermining of people’s trust in total ideological systems, which led to the catastrophic events of the XX century (two world wars, mass repressions, genocide, etc.) [5].

As we noted above, modern educational trends represent various types of attempts to solve emerging problems and, accordingly, overcome the crisis. However, it should be clearly understood that these attempts do not offer a final solution. Rather, these are some steps “by trial” rather than a clear methodology with a specific vector.

**The first trend** reflects the change in the status of knowledge in the information (post-industrial) society. Knowledge is gradually transforming into the main source of value. In other words, profit today comes primarily from innovation. Innovation is only possible thanks to the presence of multifaceted knowledge. This means that education is closely intertwined with the economic sphere and, to some extent, determines it. At a practical level, the convertibility of knowledge into direct financial benefit is expressed in the fact that specialists need to constantly improve their own qualifications and be ready even to change them.

**The second trend** in the modern educational process is to provide a developed information infrastructure. The difference between the countries of the first, second and third worlds, as is known, manifests itself in socio-political backwardness. The reason for the latter rests on the lack of sufficiently developed technologies. The introduction of technologies requires highly qualified skills in handling them, which is impossible without progressive educational practice. Therefore, the very gradation of countries according to the level of quality of life today is based on a double information and technological gap. The tendency to make up for this backwardness is intended to ensure relative balance between countries at the global political level.

**The third trend** is to begin to understand education in an extremely broad way. First of all, this means abandoning stereotypical formalized ideas that education is only training in special institutions (school, college, university). Educational activities today are understood as any actions that contribute to changing the behavior and worldview of an individual through mental, cognitive and intellectual practices. This is not just a metaphor, it is a requirement made by the modern world to all social institutions that have not traditionally dealt with educational processes. One of the provisions of the UNESCO report “Learning to Be” states that “education should no longer be limited to the walls of the school. All existing institutions, whether intended for teaching or not, should be used for educational purposes” [6].

**The fourth trend** valorizes individual orientation in education. This is manifested in a change in the target setting of educational institutions. If previously the result of the activities of one or another educational institution was the functional training of a specialist, today educational activities are directed towards multi-aspect personality development. The implementation of this humanistic orientation becomes possible through the creation of various educational programs that take into account the individual characteristics of students. At the same time, one of the main ways to form a multifaceted personality, which is practiced in modern education, is to instill the ability to independently acquire knowledge and improve one’s own cognitive potential.

**The fifth trend** can be expressed by a simple motto — “education throughout life.” If we return to the scientific language, then this trend can be designated as the concept of lifelong education. The increase in the volume of social communication caused by the growth of technology (gadgets, media, the Internet) also entails an increase in the speed of de-actualization of information. A modern student must be prepared for the fact that the specialized knowledge he has acquired will no longer be relevant to subject practice in 5–10 years. The president of one of the leading modern multi-corporations, General Motors, spoke about this as follows: “We need specialists not with four or even six years of education, but with forty years of education.”

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**The sixth trend** is associated with the phenomenon of totalization of the so-called media environment. In the context of a globalizing world, one of the most important qualities of education should be its integration. Traditional education carried out the procedure of codifying certain fundamental texts, thereby constituting a single academic canon. Mastery of this canon was the content of traditional education, and its presence and widespread recognition ensured the unity of the educational space. Modern education, which is predominantly procedural in nature, cannot be integrated through the implementation of a certain final procedure, so it uses technological advances for these purposes. Thus, the integration of modern education is ensured by connecting to a single information space, represented by the above-mentioned media environment, or, which is almost the same thing, the Internet.

Of course, the trends we have listed do not exhaust all existing trends in the field of modern education. We focused on key parameters, such as: the relationship of education with the current cultural paradigm; features of the information society; moments of fundamental adaptation of education to the requirements of the post-industrial era; the basic importance of the technological component in educational processes, etc.

The main drawback of these trends, in our opinion, is the almost complete ignorance of the projective potential of education. The common point of all educational trends of our time is their adaptive nature, the desire to adapt education to the current social situation. We should not forget that education is not only the transmission of meanings, but also their reflection. From this follows a direct opportunity to turn to education as a resource for programming the social situation. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of modern theorists recognize the extremely unstable nature of the current sociocultural paradigm ("Fluid Modernity" by Sigmund Bauman [7], "Risk Society" by Ulrich Beck [8]).

In this state of affairs, it is reasonable to raise the question of the advisability of adapting education to the current situation, in view of the extremely short period of sustainability of its (adaptation) results.

**Conclusions**

Rather than further differentiating the many approaches to the global civilizational growth, integration ought to be the distinguishing feature of today's educational process. Interdisciplinary study, a methodical approach, and the concepts and principles of synergetics can serve as the foundation for a comprehensive understanding and consciousness of the surrounding universe.

This focus takes on particular critical importance in the third millennium, when the very nature of scientific, technological, and social progress brought human civilization perilously close to extinction. Knowledge alone cannot solve every problem; rather, knowledge must be combined with a person's inherent qualities, namely his capacity to act independently and rationally. As a result, the standard of knowledge takes on the form of a value-qualitative attribute like "humanity".

The notion of non-closure, which characterizes the system during its creation phase, is also a crucial element. He demonstrates that only in open systems with input from the outside world is development feasible. This was likewise the case with the educational system as human society was transitioning into the information era. As a crucial element of open education, education digitization enables us to elevate the learning process to the level of active social creativity, which increases the possibilities for human growth while also encouraging the integration and processing of diverse kinds of information in an open social setting.

The entire toolkit of contemporary communications and cybernetics technology, as well as all information technology, can be introduced into the realm of philosophy generalization models of open education through a methodical approach. This leads to a significant conclusion: open education, which integrates everything valuable that science has developed and accurately reflects the humanistic orientation of the educational process, is the dominant feature of society's civilizational development.

Concepts of educational growth may only be associated with the standards of philosophical validity, according to A. Nysanbaev and V. Kurganskaya, if they meet two essential requirements:

1) the development of educational infrastructure need to be viewed as the means and end of social transformation, with a spiritual and ontological foundation;

2) a problem-semantic, cognitive, axiological, and communicative pedagogical paradigm, philosophy must be viewed as such.

Several versions of the categorical imperative of the philosophy of education may be found in these postulates [9; 39-40].

The association between education and everything related to it and the unique characteristics of the civilizational development of civilizations that have passed the threshold from the post-industrial to the information eras serves as the foundation for solving problems in the philosophy of open education. The industrial
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era of human existence has largely exhausted itself in terms of providing people with more deserving, comfortable living conditions, limiting their existence to the potent influence of technology, and erasing people’s needs and interests in terms of culture and spirituality. There is now a chasm between social and economic advancement and the individual has not benefited from its closure thus far. The industrial era’s social structures are no longer able to meet the demands of individual growth. For the benefit of society and the individual, socialization has to be updated seriously.

Under these circumstances, education need to be viewed as a process of the person’s actual fundamental self-education, developing the capacity to establish an internal creative system of means of action. With this mindset, the main focus of educational initiatives is on creating environments that help people develop their own creative thinking styles. Only if we actively focus on the theory of human activity from the position of multidimensionality and complexity and give up extreme empirical and scientist ideas on education will this become achievable, at least in a methodological sense. This attitude, in turn, necessitates a precise articulation of the foundational methodological concepts that underpin open education theory models and the actual practice of putting them into practice [10].

The tasks of modern education are increasingly understood as creating conditions for individual self-expression and the development of critical thinking, as developing the skills to learn and independently acquire knowledge, predict the future and effectively solve problems in various life situations. The essence of a modern educational program understands that grows from joint discussion, solving a problem in the context of a person’s entire life, creating knowledge through experience.

Understanding, first of all, is a person’s comprehension of the meaning of his existence, his achievement of productive manifestation in life of his mature powers, focused on solving socially significant problems. Why is it necessary to determine the zone of proximal development of the educational process and promptly use the general methodological principles of humanitarian knowledge (comprehensive, systemic, subjective approaches and the principles of determinism, development, humanism), deeply penetrate into the processes of optimizing education, upbringing, management and achieve timely actions, decisions, actions person and groups, their compliance with the tasks of activity.

References


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Қоғамдық сананы жаныртудың зәлеуметтік-тәнімдік мәселелерін шешудегі заманауи білім берудің ролі

Макалада рухани әмірді жаныртудың, қоғамдық сананы жаныртудың заманауи процестерің және бұл зерттеу жағдайларында заманауи білім беру жұмысын қалай қарабақты талқылайық. Автор қоғамда ыңғай
жатқан заманауи процестердің құндылық өрісін қалыптастырудың білімнің негізгі рөлі туралы айтады. Қазіргі білім беру жүйесі әлеуметтік шындықты ұстанбауы керек, бірақ болашақтың контурын көрсетіп, провиденциалистік рөл атқаруы керек дейді. Әйтпесе, ол өзінің мәнін жоғалтып, әлеуметтік тәжірибенің қызмет етуші құрамдас бөлігіне айналады. Автор өз ұстанымын растайтын тұжырымдар мен теорияларға сілтеме жасай отырып, трансформация процестеріндегі заманауи білім берудің рөлі мен маңызы туралы идеясын қалыптастырады.

Кілт сөздер: білім беру, білім, тұлға, жаңғыру, ақпарат, әлеуметтік тәжірибе, қоғамдық сана, танымдық белсенділік.

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