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**For the Definition of the Term \_ Education System \_ in Post Soviet Countries**

**ABSTRACT**

The aim of the article is to define semantic and structural characteristics of the term \_ education system \_ on the basis of the analysis of regulatory documentation of education in the Post Soviet countries (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russian Federation). The author presents his views of definition and education system and tries to determine and define them. In order to properly perceive education system, essential elements of the terminological base of educational sciences \_ education and system \_ are defined and the author tries to fit them into the context of educational system as a whole. The author presents an ordered discussion concerning the essential characteristics of the educational system in the Post Soviet countries and draws conclusions. At the end of the article, it is noted that the essence and definition of education system varies all over the world, which is completely natural, as this difference depends on what is the fundamental principle of understanding the education system \_ all the organizations and characteristics that define the education system or the unity of educational and training institutions. The author argues, that the concept of education system should necessarily involve the unity of teaching and training institutions, as far as the system should be self-generating and be able to create something characteristically new, which none of the bodies that conduct educational policy are capable of. Accordingly, exactly the above mentioned way represents a more optimal, logical foundation principle.

**Key Words:** *Education System, Teaching, Structure , Education*

Geo-political processes in the early 1990-s, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in particular, led to the necessity of fundamental and extensive changes in the Post Soviet states. Consequently, an individual with democratic and liberal values and a strong sense of national identity replaced the ideal soviet citizen as the chief goal of the

educational system. All this naturally resulted in radical changes in the educational policies of all Post Soviet states. Instead of the soviet monolithic, clearly defined systematized approach, the new modernized conception had to be developed which would be based on national background and integrated with the goals of state policy. As a rule, such

critical changes entirely modify management, financing and quality assurance of any educational system. Also, there is a high probability that the structural characteristics of educational system will undergo significant changes. Discussion concerning this topic requires a great deal of information and extensive research apparatus, which is not allowed by the format of this paper. Consequently/Therefore, I intend to discuss one particular issue here \_ educational system \_ one of the most fundamental concepts in the field of pedagogics/educational sciences. In order to define the essence of the education system and discuss it properly, it would be more appropriate to begin by defining its meaning, which, before forming a systematic view, provides us with a better and more extensive outlook on the terminology and lexical base, which I believe, is a better way to correctly perceive the concept of education system. Such an approach requires separate definition and analysis of the terms \_ “education” and “system”.

Classical Pedagogics defines the term “education” as follows: education is a process and result of acquiring systematized knowledge [1, p. 12]. If we identify separate components of the systematized knowledge, then it, I think, can be represented as a unity of skills, views and beliefs, perceptive abilities and the level of practical preparation

[2, p. 612]. Education means the purposeful acquisition of systemic knowledge, skills and the experience accumulated by mankind in various fields of study. Thus education intends to develop physical, intellectual and moral skills and is a unique and necessary form of interaction between society and culture. Education is achieved mainly through learning and teaching \_ through an organized, diverse and unified process of transferring and acquiring knowledge and skills. Accordingly, organized nature of teaching mostly refers to the knowledge which is received at educational institutions.

The next term, “system”, is of Greek origin and means a set of elements, the interaction and relationships of which form an integrated whole. “Definition” has a similar meaning characteristic \_ system in a philosophical lexicon. Though one precision should be made \_ despite the fact that for the existence of a system multiplicity of elements is a necessity, not all sets of elements can be a system. The interaction and relationships between the elements must create an entity with some new characteristics. Consequently, the properties of the entire system cannot be deduced to the individual characteristics of the elements and their sum. Its place can be defined only by the function that it has as an entity.

The discussion above enables us to draw the following conclusions \_ educational

system should represent a unity of those institutions, that intend to run educational process with clearly defined goals. The construction and management apparatus of the system is defined and established by the state.

After presenting individual definitions, let us try to perceive and define the term “education system” as a whole. Judging from the discussion above, education system should be such an integrity of teaching institutions, which should be based on certain common principles, interactions and relationships. We should also precisely define what common principles or relationships are meant here. As a rule, all education systems are not self-produced/self-generating. Instead, they are formed by purposeful development and conduct of state educational policy in a particular ontological field. Consequently, by placing common obligatory principles for all comprising elements of the educational system – pre-school and other educational institutions – the government controls and manages it in accordance to its own purposes and goals. It should also be underlined, that the meaning, aim, direction and the level of the educational system is conditioned by the political and economic rule which created it. Educational system reflects the needs and demands of the society [1, 177 ]. Thus the above discussion enables us to conclude, that there are and

have been completely different educational systems throughout the world. Accordingly, the structure, meaning and organizational forms of educational institutions vary all over the world.

At the next stage of our discussion we shall try to look at how the term “education system” is defined in various countries, including Georgia and what meaning the state puts into this term. I have chosen countries here at random and reference to them is not based on priority. We are going to shortly review educational system structures of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia and Germany. Unlike Russia or Azerbaijan, no normative or official document of Georgian Education law includes a definition of the education system. Accordingly, our analysis has to be based on the scheme presented on the official website of National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of the Georgian Ministry of Science and Education. The scheme clearly illustrates that the educational system of Georgia involves pre-school institutions, general education institutions, including primary, basic and secondary education levels, vocational training/education and all three types of higher educational (college, university, research universities) institutions. Thus Georgia’s education system involves only **education and training institutions.** [3 ]

As for one more post Soviet republic, Russian Federation, in its education law, the meaning of educational system, includes not only the managing circles of the education in the country, but also all legal documents, standards and requests regulating the educational system; also, any legal person, public or state organization/entity that conducts its activities in the field of education [5, 12].

The present definition enables us to take a critical view of its meaning. Certainly, the above mentioned “managing circles of the educational system” (ministry, various departments and divisions) cannot be functionally united with educational institutions, which lets us conclude that their view of the system lacks in logic and requires more precision – system should be self-generating and capable of creating something characteristically new, which no institution or organ that conducts educational policy is capable of.

Besides, the definition – legal person that conducts its activity in the field of education, also requires attention. Such a condition sounds rather illogical, which becomes clear when discussing particular cases. To illustrate the above mentioned point let us take the case of a private legal person, who linguistically edits school books and, according to the law, is a part of the educational system, as the nature of his

activity is connected to education. From this model case it is clear that such an understanding of educational system is at least far from the scientific understanding of education system in general.

According to Azerbaijan’s law on education, educational system involves a unity of educational programs of various levels and creates a web of educational institutions. It also includes the managing or governing circles of education, as well as all institutions and organizations which conduct teaching process [4, Chapter II]. The given material illustrates, that Azerbaijan faces the same logical contradiction as Russia, especially if we look at the principles of constructing the educational system in this very law, which only presents a list of educational and training institutions. Managing circles and organs – ministries or departments – I think, can never become integrated into the structural context of educational institutions.

After shortly analyzing the meaning and structural characteristics of the three post Soviet countries, now I think, we should look at the European context of the given issue by discussing the example of German educational system.

German Federation is divided into 16 lands/states. The responsibility for the education lies primarily with the individual states. The education on each land/state is

conducted by the governing body of that particular state. Each state has its own educational law, which is constructed on the basis of the federal educational law. The meaning of education system, in the federal and individual state laws is represented by a classical multi-level structural framework, the essence of which is the unity of educational and training institutions. It is interesting, that managing bodies of the education system are subject to the ministry of Culture. The given discussion illustrates that for both, Georgia and Germany the basic principle for constructing the education system is the unity of educational and

training institutions. Accordingly, federal law does not include governing or managing bodies within the education system and any regulatory documentation [6].

In conclusion, I would like to note, that the essence and definition issues of education system are understood differently in all countries, which is quite acceptable because this difference depends on what is the initial/basic principle of the education system understanding – all those organs and characteristics that define education system or the unity of educational institutions. I think the latter forms a more optimal, logical principle.

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