
THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF PEDAGOGY OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES OF UKRAINE: RETHINKING MISSION UNDER MODERN TRANSFORMATIONS



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Abstract. In the paper the research results of the Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine in the framework of the research project “Trends in school education in the EU, USA and China” (2018–2020) analysed. The scientific-auxiliary bibliographic indexes of the published works and the final reports on the scientific activity of the Department were used as information sources. The author found the increase in number and expansion of types of the published works within the 2018-2020 research project in comparison with the previous ones (2012–2014 and 2015–2017) (0118U003360). Based on the results of the analysis the author came to the conclusion that such a transformation was caused by the demands of the national education (launch of the secondary education reform “New Ukrainian School” in 2017/2018 academic year; introduction of training component into the doctoral education within the Bologna process that actualizes the development of textbooks/instruction materials) and new societal challenges (COVID-19 pandemic). The author draws attention to the importance of constant rethinking of the comparative education mission to meet the needs of the national education. Priorities in these conditions are: synergy with the context, openness to change, quick response, flexibility of the essence and format of the research, innovative ideas, practical orientation of the results.

Keywords: comparative education; Department of Comparative Education; rethinking mission; modern transformations; challenges.

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2021, the Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences (NAES) of Ukraine celebrates 95 years since its founding. On April 2, 1926, the State Scientific and Methodological Committee of the People’s Commissariat of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist

Republic adopted a resolution to establish a single centre of pedagogical research in the Ukrainian Republic, i.e. the Ukrainian Research Institute of Pedagogy, which was finally formed in October 1926 on the basis of the Research Department of Pedagogy of the Kharkiv Institute of Public Education and the Kharkiv Research Station of the Department of Social Education of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic¹.

In 1971, a research group was formed within the Institute of Pedagogy, which in 1972 received the status of a separate unit called the Laboratory of Scientific and Pedagogical Information. The laboratory's activity concentrated upon the analysis of education systems and pedagogical ideas abroad in order to inform the scholars of the Institute, educators, the general pedagogical community. The criticism of the "bourgeois" pedagogy and education determined the research methodology in this period. However since the mid-80's under the "Gorbachev's perestroika" there has been some objectification of the research.

The review of education systems in foreign countries was in great demand by the Ukrainian educators (Mel'nichenko et al. (Eds.), 1988; Mel'nichenko et al. (Eds.), 1990). A Short Encyclopedic Dictionary of Foreign Pedagogical Terms published by the laboratory scholars (Berezhna et al., 1995) was no less relevant in the opening of the "window" to the West. The Foreign Pedagogical Chronicle was published in two issues a year (Abashkina et al., 1991; Roman et al., 1992).

With the proclamation of independence in 1991, Ukraine began building a democratic state. This presupposed the transformation of the national education into humanistic principles. In order to integrate it into the European and world educational areas it has become important to study foreign experience from the standpoint of objectivity. To this end, the Laboratory of Scientific and Pedagogical Information was renamed into the Laboratory (Department since 2015) of Comparative Education in 1991. The change of the name involved the transformation of the laboratory's mission and its research methodology. The Laboratory moved to the study of the best educational practices and global/regional/national trends in education from the standpoint of objectivity on the basis of comparison. Taking into account the methodological guidelines of the world-renowned comparativists the Laboratory researchers developed the Concept of Comparative Education with the outline of methodological principles (Krasovytskyi, 2015).

Since then, the Department of Comparative Education (DCE) has researched various topical aspects of education abroad in terms of the synchronization of the Ukrainian education with the world innovative standards. After Ukraine signed the Association Agreement with the EU (2014) (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2014), much attention is paid to researching the European education and training strategy in the context of the national education integration into the European educational area.

In 2009, the DCE jointly with the Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University founded a professional scientific journal "[Studies in Comparative Education](#)". In 2010, the DCE launched the annual scientific conference "[Comparative and International Education](#)". All this contributes to the institutionalisation of the comparative education in Ukraine.

Thus, the DCE promotes the development of the comparative education in Ukraine for years. At the same time, modern external challenges (COVID-19 pandemics) and the launch of the systemic reform of the national education have raised question about the need to rethink the DCE mission. The aim of the paper is to explore the character of the DCE activities in the process of the research project "Trends in school education in the EU, USA and China" (2018–2020)² under conditions of modern transformations.

¹ The city of Kharkiv was the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from 1919 to 1934.

² The Institute of Pedagogy of the NAES of Ukraine is a state institution. The activities of the DCE as a structural unit of the Institute of Pedagogy are funded from the state budget through a mechanism of a research project, usually lasting 3 years.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper “Comparative Education at the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine: Steps of Growth” highlights the history of the DCE, in particular, the period of its functioning in the format of the Laboratory of Scientific and Pedagogical Information, which is considered as a platform for the DCE (Lokshyna, Avsheniuk & Ovcharuk, 2016).

The paper “Comparative Education at the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine: Rise, Successes, Challenges” substantiates the contribution of the DCE into the development of the comparative education in the NAES of Ukraine (Lokshyna, 2018). It is emphasized that the DCE was the first comparative education unit within the NAES structure. The methodological guidelines for conducting comparative research developed and piloted by the DCE have been adopted and used by other newly created comparative education units of the NAES of Ukraine.

The paper “The Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine: scientific attainments for the period of 25 years” highlights the scientific results of the DCE since 1991 (Lokshyna, 2019a). The analysis was conducted on the basis of the scientific-auxiliary bibliographic index “Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine (1991–2016)”. Structuring the DCE works over the years provided an opportunity to analyze its quantitative and qualitative contribution to the development of the comparative education in Ukraine (Lokshyna & Glushko (Eds.), 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Chronologically, the paper covers the period of the research “Trends in school education in the EU, USA and China” conducted in 2018–2020. The methods of the analysis, comparison and synthesis were used in the paper. The scientific-auxiliary bibliographic index “Scientific works of the Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine (2018–2020)” (Lokshyna & Kravchenko (Eds.), 2021) and the Final Report on the Scientific Work of the DCE in the period of 2018–2020 (Lokshyna, 2021) were analysed to obtain information about the DCE research activity.

The DCE’s final reports on the scientific work within the research projects “Ensuring the quality of general secondary education in the leading countries of Europe and the United States” (2012–2014) and “Transformational processes in school education in the European Union and the United States” (2015–2017) were analysed to identify the dynamics of the DCE activities.

MAIN RESULTS

In the research “Trends in the development of school education in the EU, USA and China” (2018–2020) (0118U003360) the DCE researchers demonstrated the effectiveness of the trend analysis method to study the development of education phenomena in order to identify common transformations and characteristics of their essence. The DCE researchers have argued that the trend analysis method involves determining chronological boundaries, as a trend is associated with time, during which track transformations take place. The comparison of the national education development with the European/global trends provides outlining prospects of its synchronisation with the international benchmarks.

Within the research “Trends in the development of school education in the EU, USA and China” (2018–2020) the DCE has expanded the geography of its scientific research. The PRC

was first studied by the DCE researchers. All previous research projects – “Transformational processes in school education in the European Union and the United States” (2015–2017); “Ensuring the quality of general secondary education in the leading countries of Europe and the United States” (2012–2014); “Worldview potential of school humanities education in the European Union and the United States” (2008–2011); “Trends in the reform of general secondary education in the countries of the European Union” (2005–2007); “The content of education and the organization of the educational process in high school in the United States and Western Europe” (2002–2004); “Trends in the development of the content of general education in foreign schools” (1999–2001); “Development of education in the context of integration processes in European countries” (1996–1998) – focused on the educational phenomena in Europe and the United States. Inclusion of China has made it possible to explore the nature of the development of school education at the global level.

The quantitative analysis of the scientific results shows that DCE researchers published 193 scientific works during 2018–2020 (Table 1).

Table 1

**Comparison of the number and types of the published works by the DCE
by years (2012–2014; 2015–2017; 2018–2020)**

№	Type of a scientific product	2012–2014 research project	2015–2017 research project	2018–2020 research project
1.	A monograph published by DCE	1		1
2.	A chapter in a monograph published by other scientific structures/institutions		5	
3.	Scientific papers in periodicals (including foreign periodicals)	41 (1)	43 (3)	45 (5)
4.	Conference proceedings published by DCE	3	3	3
5.	Abstracts in conference proceedings published by other scientific structures/institutions	38	44	136
6.	A manual/textbook		1	1
7.	A chapter/part in manual/textbook published by other scientific structures/institutions	1		1
8.	Reference products (Indexes)			4
9.	Analytical products (analytical reports, analytical materials)			2
10.	<i>Total</i>	84	98	193

The comparison of the published works in the framework of the research “Trends in the development of school education in the EU, USA and China” (2018–2020) with the works published in the framework of two previous research projects “Ensuring the quality of general secondary education in the leading countries of Europe and the United States” (2012–2014) and “Transformational processes in school education in the European Union and the United States” (2015–2017) showed an increase in the number of the published products in 2018–2020 almost two times. This growth was achieved primarily through the publication of abstracts of the conference proceedings. This testifies to the strengthening of the practical orientation of

the DCE's activities, cooperation with colleagues to discuss the challenges and achievements of the Ukrainian education at the national and international levels.

Since 2010, the DCE has been the organizer of the scientific conference “Comparative and International Education”. The conference is the only professional event of comparative educators in Ukraine. Today it is a broad platform (since 2020 in a distance format), which is attended by more than 100 (doctoral students, teachers, researchers) participants from all regions of Ukraine and abroad. During 2018–2020 the DCE published three conference proceedings, i.e. “Comparative and International Education – 2018: transformations and innovations in education in the globalised world”, “Comparative and International Education – 2019: internationalization and integration in education under globalization”, “Comparative and International Education – 2020: the globalized space of innovations” (Lokshyna (Ed.), 2018; 2019; 2020).

The number of the scientific papers is almost the same as in the previous years, although there is a tendency to increase the number of papers published in foreign periodicals (Glushko, 2018; Lokshyna, 2018a; Lokshyna, 2019; Lokshyna & Topuzov, 2021a).

The expansion of the types of the published products is a characteristic feature of the research “Trends in the development of school education in the EU, USA and China” (2018–2020) (Lokshyna et al., 2021). It is obvious that a three-year term for a research project ensures the soundness of the obtained findings, but does not provide an opportunity to respond quickly to the rapidly changing demands of the society. The development of new types of products was the DCE response to new demands of the Ukrainian education in the context of new societal challenges.

The participation in the doctoral training in the framework of the Bologna Process has become a new area of the DCE activity. The DCE research findings have been used in designing the content of the textbook “The state and trends of school education development in the EU, USA and China” (Lokshyna (Ed.) et al., 2021). Besides, the DCE researchers took part in the development of the textbook “European Higher Education Area: Quality Parameters and Expertise” jointly with Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University educators (Sysoieva (Ed.) et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a global challenge. With the closure of educational institutions, the countries began to search for new formats for organizing the educational process. In the analytical report “The response of the world community to the challenges of the COVID-19 in education (February – June 2020)” the DCE has summarized strategies developed by the international organizations (UNESCO, OECD, EU) and the best practices of foreign countries during lockdown (Lokshyna (Ed.) et al., 2020).

The analytical report “General secondary education in Ukraine in the context of education in Europe: duration and structure” is no less relevant (Kremen, Liashenko & Lokshyna, 2020). In the context of the reform “New Ukrainian School” for the period up to 2029 (Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, 2016), which provides for the extension of its duration to 12 years, the introduction of specialized high school, the experience of the European countries is relevant for the Ukrainian educational policy developers.

Among the innovations is the publication of bibliographic indexes, the purpose of which is to facilitate the search for thematic materials. The bibliographic indexes, published during 2018–2020, have provided structuring of the works of the DCE by years and by types of the products. In particular, the bibliographic index “The Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine (1991–2016)” has provided consolidation of the published work of the Department for the entire period of its operation (as of 2016) (Lokshyna & Glushko (Eds.), 2019).

Under COVID-19 pandemic, the bibliographic index “Education and training in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic” offers a collection of foreign publications on the transformation of

education and training in the pandemic (Lokshyna (Ed.) & Kravchenko, 2020). The index contains the translated into the Ukrainian (with the permission of the authors) the OECD “[Framework guide: an education response to the COVID – 19 Pandemic of 2020](#)” by Fernando M. Reimers and Andreas Schleicher. Disseminated among the educational authorities and educators the index has been valuable during the lockdown.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the DCE research activity showed the increase in number and expansion of types of the published works within the 2018–2020 research project in comparison with the previous ones (2012–2014 and 2015–2017). Among the innovations are:

- Publication of the manual “The state and trends of school education development in the EU, USA and China” (Lokshyna (Ed.) et al., 2021) for doctoral education in universities/research institutions. It is based on the modular principle ensuring the flexibility of the learning process. The manual is an electronic publication with active links to the references/sources;

- Increase in the number of the published abstracts in the conference proceedings that provided a wide approbation of the DCE research findings;

- Development and publication of a new type of a scientific product, i.e. bibliographic index. The indexes perform the task of consolidation of the DCE published works; the indexes electronic formats, in which the works contain active links, provide quick access and work to increase citations of the DCE researchers’ works;

- Development and publication of a new type of a scientific product, i.e. analytical report. The DCE reports provide educational policy makers with up-to-date information/knowledge about the current state /challenges /innovations in education abroad as well as about the international organisations’ strategies/replies;

- Translation and dissemination of the relevant publications of the international organizations on education development strategies/topical issues, which is a source for decision-making by the national educational policy developers.

These changes are explained both by the new demands of the national education (launch of the secondary education reform “New Ukrainian School” in 2017/2018 academic year; introduction of training component into the doctoral education as a demand of the Bologna Process³ that actualizes the development of textbooks/instruction materials) and new societal challenges (COVID-19 pandemic).

Thus, the challenges of today’s rapidly evolving world are shaping new demands for the comparative education opening up new perspectives for it (Wolhuter, 2020). The example of the DCE reaffirms the importance to constantly rethink the mission of the comparative education. Priorities in these conditions are: synergy with the context, openness to change, quick response, flexibility of the essence and format of the research, innovative ideas, practical orientation of the results.

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³ Till 2016/2017 academic year the doctoral education in Ukraine consisted only of the research/writing dissertation component

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