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SYSTEM OF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY TEACHERS: THE EXAMPLE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF KOREA AND UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: This article provides an extensive comparative analysis of the primary teacher training systems in the Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan. In the context of globalization, the quality of primary education is directly dependent on the professional competence and continuous development of educators. The research explores institutional frameworks, the integration of digital technologies, and the effectiveness of practical mentorship. By synthesizing the high-standard Korean model with the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan, the study offers strategic recommendations to enhance pedagogical mastery and national education standards.

Keywords: primary education, teacher training, South Korea, Uzbekistan, comparative analysis, lifelong learning, professional competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global landscape, human capital is the cornerstone of economic competitiveness and social cohesion. The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers [9]. Primary education serves as the most critical stage, where a child's cognitive, moral, and social identity is formed [12].

The Republic of Korea has emerged as a global leader in education, consistently ranking at the top of international assessments like PISA. This success is not accidental; it is the result of a meticulously designed teacher training system characterized by high selectivity and rigorous state standards.

Conversely, the Republic of Uzbekistan is currently undergoing a systemic transformation. Guided by the Law "On Education" [1] and the "New Uzbekistan Development Strategy" [2], the country is modernizing its pedagogical training through credit-module systems and digitalization [3]. However, challenges such as the gap between theory and practice and the need for a more robust mentorship framework remain. This article aims to bridge these gaps by analyzing the Korean success story and its applicability to Uzbekistan.

2. METHODS

The research methodology is designed as a comprehensive comparative-qualitative study, utilizing both empirical observations and theoretical analysis. The framework of the study is built upon the systemic-functional approach, which allows for evaluating teacher training not as an isolated process, but as a dynamic component of the national socio-economic infrastructure.

2.1. Research Design and Approach The study adopts a descriptive-comparative research design. This approach was selected to identify the causal relationships between teacher preparation mechanisms and the overall quality of primary education in two distinct geographical and cultural contexts: the Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan.

2.2. Data Collection Sources To ensure high reliability, data was gathered from several primary and secondary sources:

- Regulatory-Legal Analysis: A systematic review of the Law "On Education" of Uzbekistan [1], the "New Uzbekistan Progress Strategy" [2], and various Cabinet of Ministers' decrees [3]. For the Korean context, South Korean Ministry of Education guidelines and pedagogical university standards were analyzed.

- Scientific Literature Review: An extensive review of 15 key academic sources focusing on modern pedagogical technologies [4, 5, 14], competence-based education [13], and education management [9, 15].
- Institutional Framework Analysis: Examination of the curricula of Specialized Pedagogical Universities in Korea versus the multi-disciplinary approach in Uzbekistan [10, 11].

2.3. Analytical Framework (The Competence Model) The methodology uses a five-factor competence model to evaluate the professional maturity of teachers. This model measures the following structural parts:

1. Methodical Competence: Ability to apply age-appropriate teaching strategies.
2. Communicative Competence: Skills in classroom management and psychological environment creation.
3. Information and Communication (ICT) Competence: Proficiency in using digital tools and AI-driven platforms [14].
4. Reflexive Competence: The capacity for self-assessment and "action research" [13].
5. Innovative Activity Competence: Readiness to implement STEAM and modern pedagogical technologies [6].

2.4. Comparative Parameters The comparison was conducted based on four strategic "Pillars of Teacher Quality":

- Entry Standards: How candidates are selected (Selectivity).
- Pre-service Training: The balance between academic theory and clinical school practice.
- In-service Development: The transition from periodic training to a "lifelong learning" model [10].
- Monitoring and Quality Control: Mechanisms for assessing teacher efficiency and output [15].

2.5. Limitations of the Study This study primarily focuses on the organizational and functional aspects of the systems. It acknowledges that socio-cultural differences (e.g., the traditional Confucian values in Korea versus the community-based "Mahalla" influence in Uzbekistan) play a secondary role in the institutional efficiency of teacher training, though they are not the primary focus of this technical analysis.

3. RESULTS

The investigation of the teacher training systems in the Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan reveals fundamental differences in institutional structure, selection mechanisms, and professional sustainability.

3.1. Institutional Structure and Access Control

The South Korean model is characterized by a "Closed-Circuit" institutional structure. Primary teachers are trained exclusively in 10 specialized Universities of Education and 3 pedagogical departments at general universities. This specialization allows for a curriculum that is 100% tailored to the developmental psychology of primary-age children.

In contrast, Uzbekistan employs an "Open-Academic" model where pedagogical personnel are prepared across various regional universities and specialized institutes. While this increases the quantity of graduates, it creates a variance in training quality across different regions.

3.2. Comparative Analysis of Training Components

A detailed breakdown of the curriculum and professional requirements highlights the following data:

Component	Republic of Korea	Republic of Uzbekistan
Admission Selection	Top 5% of NSEE (National Exam) scorers	Based on State Test Center (DTM) scores
Pre-service Practice	9-12 weeks of clinical practice	4-6 weeks of pedagogical practice

Certification	Multi-stage State Teacher Certificate Exam	University Diploma + State Certification
Digital Literacy	Integrated "Smart Education" modules	STEAM and Digital Competence modules [14]
Mentorship	Legalized "Senior Teacher" status	Informal "Ustoz-Shogird" traditions [11]

3.3. Professional Competence Development Stages

The research identifies that professional growth in Korea is a lifelong mandate supported by the government. After 3 years of service, teachers are eligible for a "First-Class Certificate," which requires an additional 180 hours of specialized training.

In Uzbekistan, the transition to the credit-module system has modernized this process. However, the results show that professional development is still largely periodic (typically every 3-5 years) rather than a continuous, weekly integration of new pedagogical skills [3, 11].

3.4. Teacher Prestige and Social Indicators

The results of the comparative analysis show a high correlation between the social status of teachers and education quality. In Korea, teachers enjoy high job security (Tenure) and competitive salaries, making it one of the most sought-after professions. In Uzbekistan, recent reforms have significantly increased teacher salaries and eliminated forced labor, which has led to a 25% increase in interest among male candidates in pedagogical fields over the last three years [2].

3.5. Digital Competency Integration

Research into digital transformation indicates that Korea focuses on "Artificial Intelligence in Education" (AIED) and personalized learning pathways. Uzbekistan is currently in the "Infrastructural Phase," focusing on the "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" strategy, where the primary goal is equipping teachers with basic and intermediate ICT skills to utilize electronic journals and multimedia platforms [15].

4. DISCUSSION

The comparative findings between the Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan reveal critical insights into how cultural, institutional, and economic factors shape teacher effectiveness. The core of the discussion revolves around the transition from a traditional "knowledge-provider" model to a "competency-facilitator" model.

4.1. The "Selectivity" Paradox and Social Prestige One of the most striking findings in the Korean experience is the extreme selectivity at the entry point of the teaching profession. In Korea, the prestige of being an elementary teacher is reinforced by the difficulty of the entrance exam. This creates a "prestige cycle": high standards attract high-caliber talent, which leads to better educational outcomes, further elevating the profession's status [9, 10].

In Uzbekistan, while the prestige of teachers is growing due to recent salary increases and legal protections [1, 2], the entry barrier remains lower than in Korea. The discussion suggests that Uzbekistan should consider a more rigorous screening process that includes not just academic knowledge, but also psychological and pedagogical aptitude to ensure that only the most dedicated individuals enter the field.

4.2. Bridging the "Theory-Practice Gap" The results show that the South Korean "Clinical Practice" model provides a deeper immersion into the school environment compared to the current Uzbek model. The sluggish integration between theoretical university training and real-world classroom challenges in Uzbekistan is a significant hurdle [11, 12].

In South Korea, student teachers are treated as junior colleagues within the school ecosystem, whereas in Uzbekistan, pedagogical practice is often treated as a formal administrative requirement. To overcome this, Uzbekistan must formalize the "Mentorship Institute." Experienced teachers (mentors) should be equipped with specific training on how to

coach adult learners (andragogy), ensuring that the transition from student to professional is seamless.

4.3. Digital Competence: From Consumption to Creation The discussion regarding digital transformation highlights a fundamental difference in maturity. Korea has moved beyond basic ICT literacy into the realm of "AI-Driven Education" and customized learning pathways. Uzbekistan, however, is largely in the phase of "Digital Consumption"—using technology to deliver traditional content [6, 14, 15].

The scientific discussion suggests that professional development in Uzbekistan should shift its focus from "how to use a computer" to "how to use data-driven insights to manage classroom diversity." This requires a shift in the reflexive competence of teachers, enabling them to evaluate the impact of digital tools on student learning outcomes rather than just their use.

4.4. Professional Development: Continuity vs. Periodicity A critical point of discussion is the nature of professional growth. The Korean model treats development as a "career ladder," where each stage of training leads to a new professional status or certification. In Uzbekistan, the credit-module system is a positive step, but it still risks being viewed as a periodic "chore" done every few years to maintain employment [3, 13].

The discussion argues for a shift towards a "Reflexive Practice" model, where professional development is integrated into the weekly school schedule. This would allow teachers to analyze their own lessons, collaborate with peers, and conduct action research—a practice common in Korea known as "Lesson Study."

CONCLUSION

To bring the national education system of Uzbekistan to international standards, the following strategic directions are recommended:

1. Strengthening Selection: Implement a two-stage admission process that includes a professional aptitude interview.
2. Institutional Mentorship: Establish a formal status for "Master Teachers" who oversee the practical integration of student teachers.
3. Continuous Evaluation: Shift from periodic qualification increases to a continuous, portfolio-based evaluation system that rewards innovative research and classroom excellence [13, 15].
4. International Cooperation: Expand exchange programs specifically for primary educators to study the Korean "Smart Education" framework firsthand.

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