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Pedagogical Education: History, Present Time, Perspectives

HOMESCHOOLING AS A NEW SOCIAL PHENOMENON IN THE USA AND RUSSIA

M. P. Antufeva (a), E. Yu. Ignateva (b)*, S. V. Stanevich (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) St-Petersburg Academy of In-Service Pedagogical Education, St. Petersburg, Russia, umbra-amp@mail.ru

(b) Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russia St-Petersburg Academy of In-Service Pedagogical Education, St. Petersburg, Russia, ieyl@yandex.ru

(c) Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russia, Svetlana.Stanevich@novsu.ru

Abstract

The article considers family education as a modern social phenomenon that has a tendency to increase worldwide, particularly in the United States of America, where it has acquired the status of a social, cultural and political movement, and in Russia. The paper gives a brief historical overview of the development of family education in the USA and Russia, highlights the key stages of its implementation. The characteristic features that determine the essence of family education in modern implementation are highlighted and specified. Among the specific features of the modern type of family education, the voluntary and deliberate refusal of parents to educate their children in an institutional setting, that is, in public or private educational institutions, is essential. Based on the analysis of the research literature, it is concluded that it is impossible to transfer the accumulated experience in the implementation of family education to modern practice due to a change in the goals of education, an increase in the diversity of social groups involved, as well as an expansion of the socio-cultural context. The paper analyzes the causes of this social phenomenon in the modern interpretation in the USA and Russia, which are determined by both global trends and specific national features. The current state of family education in both countries is considered, which is determined by the degree of its “normalization”, which includes legislative acts that guarantee the legality of its implementation, as well as the integration of the analyzed social phenomenon into other social processes.

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1. Introduction

Family education is the first (at certain periods, the only) and the longest form of education, the history of which has several millennia. At the early stage of its development, this form of education was determined, on the one hand, by the optional nature of regular attendance at school or its absence, by the low practical need for education, and, on the other hand, by the need to reproduce traditional cultural patterns and guarantee the stabilization of traditional society (Brewer & Lubienski, 2017; Shevelev, 2003).

In the United States, family education was actively practiced until the end of the 19th century, when compulsory school attendance began to be introduced. Until 1970, family education in the United States was extremely limited (Hanna, 2012). Since the 70s., we can talk about the renewal of interest in this form of education. In Russia during the pre-Petrine period, the deeply national family character of education was supported. In the 18th -19th centuries, governance was its most pronounced form among the nobility. In the late 19th - early 20th centuries, family education was still a form of education along with public and private education (Flit, 1991). This form of education was prohibited at the beginning of the 20th century and was practically absent until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

2. Problem Statement

Currently, an increase is recorded in the number of children whose parents, for one reason or another, have chosen a family form of education. International studies show that this trend is observed in many countries (Blok, Merry, & Karsten, 2017; Isenberg, 2017). However, to say that family education as a historical form of education and family education in the modern form are identical is impossible.

Gaither (2017) separates the historical form of education, that is, the practical use of the home as a place for the education of children (domestic education), and the trend that arose as an alternative to education in a mass school (homeschooling). In a modern form, family education, according to J. Murphy, is determined by: 1) the decision of parents not to educate their children in an institutional setting, if this is possible; 2) the decision of parents to educate their children at home (Murphy, 2012). Parents' choice of this form of education is determined by various factors (Guterman & Neuman, 2018). In our opinion, the second statement should be clarified and the subjective attribute should be added to the territorial one, since education is organized and carried out by the subjects of the family system and it is the parents who are responsible for its quality. Based on this, we can say that the parents' choice of the form of education is based on voluntariness and awareness, and not on the compulsion or lack of the opportunity to attend school. As a result of this, when considering this phenomenon, there arises a need to take into account a number of additional aspects that are not taken into account when studying traditional forms of education, for example, the causes of occurrence, legal justification, etc.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. What is the development of family education in the USA and Russia at the present stage?
- 3.2. What are the causes of family education at the present stage in the USA and in Russia?
- 3.3. Is it possible to apply the accumulated experience of the past in the implementation of family education in a modern form?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to identify the causes of family education in a modern form in the USA and in Russia and to analyze the state of the current stage of its implementation in selected countries.

The results of the study may be of interest to sociologists, educators, researchers studying the phenomenon of family education and working with families who have chosen this form of education, as well as to comparative researchers involved in comparing educational systems of different countries.

5. Research Methods

5.1. In order to study the essence of family education, its historical development, condition at the present stage of implementation, an analysis of research literature, regulatory legal acts, and judicial practices related to family education was carried out.

5.2. To compare the implementation of family education in the United States and Russia, to identify the general and special in this cultural and historical phenomenon, as well as to assess its current state in both countries, a comparative approach was used as part of a general scientific comparative method.

6. Findings

6.1. The modern stage in the development of family education is determined by its “normalization”

According to Mitchel L. Stevens, “normalization” means a process in which a phenomenon becomes legally recognized, socially acceptable and successfully (unhindered) integrated into other social processes (Stevens, 2003, p. 90). In the USA, from the 70s of the 20th century family education has grown from the practice chosen by representatives of "left" countercultural views, hippies and conservative Protestants, motivated by religious and racial reasons, into social (Murphy, 2014), cultural, political (Gaither, 2008) movement. Since 1993, family education in the United States has been officially approved in all 50 states. Surveys show a change in attitudes toward family education in American society. So, Basham et al. give data on the perception of family education, in 1985 16% of respondents approved this form of education, and in 2001 - 41% (Basham, Merriemfield, & Hepburn, 2007). Until recently, the quality of family education was questioned and criticized. However, a number of studies (Ray, 2010; Rudner, 1999) on the positive academic successes of home school children, as well as the work of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), have made it possible to change attitudes toward family education in society. In addition, we can talk about the successful integration of family education into other social processes. Since family education is recognized as equivalent to institutional education, the possibility of continuing education in higher education institutions and receiving a number of other state educational services is becoming available for home-school children (Basham, Merriemfield, & Hepburn, 2007).

In the Russian Federation, one can talk about a partial “normalization” of family education, relying on parameters distinguished by Mitchel L. Stevens. During a more than 70-year existence of the Soviet Union, when, according to Marchenko (2003), getting an education was equivalent to attending school, family education was in a latent state. With the advent of the Law on Education in 1992, family education was separated as a form of education. Further, in the Law on Education in 2012, this form was also

preserved as education received outside educational organizations. Two other parameters are not fully implemented. Researches performed by Yakunina (2014) confirm the low awareness of parents about family education and the low degree of readiness of teachers and leaders to accept family education. Surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation showed that, if this possibility is available, 8% of respondents are ready to educate their children at home (Public opinion foundation, 2015). In addition, an analysis of litigations related to family education allows us to conclude that there are problems in the interaction of parents of home-school children and state educational organizations, in particular, when children pass intermediate and final attestations (The site of the state automated system of the Russian Federation “Justice”, n.d.). Children at family education do not receive social benefits, for example, preferential travel by public transport provided to schoolchildren.

6.2. The reasons for the emergence of family education in its modern form have both similar and specific, nationally determined, features

Numerous reasons for the emergence of the modern trend of family education in the United States can be reduced to the 4 main ones after M. Gaither, including: non-conformist currents; suburbanization; cult of the child; changes in families (structure, foundations, etc.) and in state educational organizations, the occupancy of classes in which increased and influenced the consideration of the individual characteristics of children and their physical and psychological safety. In this case, there is a desire to protect the child from mass society (Gaither, 2008). Stevens (2003) points to a global trend in the neoliberal perception of the state as a provider of educational services, and of citizens as consumers of these services. As a result, parents have the right to independently choose the form of education for their children.

In the Russian Federation, it is not possible to talk about the existence of all the above reasons, since the phenomenon of suburbanization is not typical for Russia, most parents who choose family education live in megacities. Non-conformist and neoliberal movements are also not massive. The main reason for the emergence of family education is the crisis of the education system in Russia, dissatisfaction with the quality of public education (52% of parents), and also the school's low readiness to be focused on promoting individual trajectories, routes, and programs, taking into account the characteristics of the child (Polivanova & Lyubitskaya, 2017). Other reasons include the ideas of the humanization of education and the development of information technologies, which provide the opportunity to include a child who does not attend school in the global cultural and educational space (Asmolov, 2001).

Thus, we can say that the causes of family education are nationally determined, but similar features are also observed.

6.3. Family education is a new social phenomenon

Despite the wealth of experience in the field of family education, its wide distribution in pre-revolutionary Russia cannot serve as the basis for understanding modern implementation, since not only its significant internal transformations have occurred, but also the change in the external environment into which it is incorporated. In its modern form, family education has a number of peculiar features, unlike pre-revolutionary one. The purpose of family education in modern society is the development of educational programs in accordance with state educational standards, herewith the child undergoes intermediate and

final certifications in a comprehensive school, which, with positive results, guarantees a certificate. In addition, the basis for the implementation of family education at the present stage can be the expression of the will of the parents only, taking into account the views of the child, therefore it is accessible to the "wide sections of the population", i.e., it is not elitist (Yakunina, 2014).

American researchers are also convinced that family education in its modern form is a new social phenomenon, the development of which is correlated with neoliberal ideology, the growth of individualistic tendencies in society, and the development of markets. If in the early stages of its development limited groups of the population were involved in family education, then at the moment we can talk about a wider social trend affecting national minorities, wealthy people, religious groups, etc. Family education at the present stage of its development is characterized by a wider socio-cultural context.

7. Conclusion

Family education is a new social phenomenon. Despite a long history, the accumulated experience cannot serve as the basis for family education implemented at the present stage both in Russia and in the USA, on the one hand, due to internal changes that affect, for example, the goals of education, and, on the other hand, due to a wider social and cultural context.

The current stage of development of family education is associated with its "normalization", integration into the state education system, and other social processes. Unlike the United States, in Russia one can only talk about its partial normalization, connected only with the legislative consolidation in the "Law on Education in the Russian Federation" of the possibility, along with the education received in educational institutions, to implement this form of education.

The reasons for the emergence of family education differ in the analyzed countries, however, the common feature is impossibility of the school to provide an individual approach and the appropriate, from the point of view of parents, quality of education.

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