

The Essence of Comparative Education in Social Sciences ماهية التربية المقارنة في العلوم الاجتماعية

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Abstract:

Comparative education is considered a new discipline which is specialized in a topic that links numerous social dynamics. Furthermore, it is a field of study that involves the analysis of educational systems in various countries around the world, as well as attempts to reform and develop these systems in light of their historical, Social, Cultural, and Political contexts. The latter is regarded as the driving force that directs the educational system in every country. This article aims at identifying the importance of this science in terms of the concept and the role it plays in educational systems by comparing some of them with each other or even with foreign systems. In order to reach the development of national education systems and adjust them in line with local conditions, education, like other sciences.

Keywords: education; science; Teaching; comparison; educational systems.

ملخص:

تعد التربية المقارنة علم جديد لموضوع قديم، قدم مختلف العمليات الاجتماعية. فهو العلم الذي يعنى بدراسة نظم التعليم في مختلف دول العالم، كما انه وسيلة لإصلاح وتطوير هذه النظم في ضوء السياق التاريخي والاجتماعي، الثقافي والسياسي، الذي يشكل قوة ضاغطة تواجه النظام التعليمي في كل دولة من دول العالم ككل، ولهذا نسعى في هذا المقال توضيح أهمية هذا العلم من حيث المفهوم والدور الذي يلعبه في الأنظمة التربوية من خلال مقارنة بعضها ببعض أو حتى بالأنظمة الأجنبية. وذلك للوصول إلى تطوير النظم القومية للتعليم وتعديلها بما يتماشى مع الظروف المحلية، فالتربية شأنها شأن العلوم الأخرى.

كلمات مفتاحية: التربية؛ العلم؛ التعليم؛ المقارنة؛ نظم التعليم.

Introduction:

Comparative education became associated with the discipline of education as a concept, and as a consequence of this association, it emerged as a promising area for research and study. Students of comparative education emphasized the importance of this area of education in the development of educational systems, with the assistance of people in charge of education formulating policies and programs to reform any country's educational system.

As a notion, the realm of comparison is a cognitive activity focused on perceived acts aimed at obtaining information via the establishment of correlations and connections. The formation of concepts and ideas, including the formation of various scientific theories, is based on the establishment of mental connections among them in relation to scientific thought, and the differentiation between sciences relies on comparisons between their curricula, topics, and concepts.

Comparative education is important due to the sheer role it can play in developing education and solving problems, as well as the role of this science - comparative education - in consolidating the relationship between education as a subsystem and society as a mother system, and looking at education as a societal issue that interacts with systems. The advancement of this science had a significant role, particularly in industrialized nations, where it was used to make judgments about the formation of educational policies and the processes to implement them. (Hajji, 1998, p. 15).

Moreover, it is also necessary to pay attention to comparative studies in the field of education because of the importance of their findings in assisting developing countries, in particular, in achieving sustainable development through well-planned educational systems that are linked to social and economic development.

1. The definition of comparative education:

The notion of comparative education varies from one country to the next, and a thorough and clear definition has yet to be agreed upon due to the various goals that are sought from its research.

1.1. Definition of Nicholas Hanner:

He described it as the study and analysis of educational and educational difficulties in various nations, as well as the interpretation of these problems in light of the elements that influence them

1.2. Definition of Marc Antoine Julien:

It is defined as an analytical study that is based on objective observation and documentation of educational systems in different countries.

1.3. Definition of Isaac Kandel:

It is a comparison of different educational philosophies and a study of these philosophies and their applications in different countries (Ahmed, 2005, p. 23) .

Kandel argues that "The aim of comparative education - as is the case in comparative law, comparative literature, and comparative legislation - is to reveal the differences that are found in the dynamics and causes that arise as a result of them in educational systems, in order to reach the basic principles that control the evolution of all national educational systems. (Morsi, 1994, p. 12).

1.4. Definition of Marc Antoine Julien:

Julian, also known as the "Father of Comparative Education," explains it as the way: "the analytical study that is based on objective observation and the compilation of documents on the different systems in different countries." (others, 2004, p. 23).

1.5. Definition of Berday:

Berday identifies comparative education as an analytical survey of foreign educational systems, as well as the political geography of schools in terms of its concern with political and social organizations from a global perspective, and its mission is to communicate using field methods; the other point is the lessons that can be drawn from the paradoxes or differences in educational practices in different societies as a means of evaluating the local educational system. (Somaida, 2005, p. 39).

2. Objectives of comparative education:

The objectives of comparative education can be summarized as follows:

2.1. The human goal:

Comparative education aims to achieve human goals by providing better opportunities for the life of the person as an individual, including education, by:

- Achieving equal educational opportunities for everyone.
- Providing full guarantees to achieve the so-called democracy of education.
- Developing each individual according to their abilities and inclinations. (Hassan, 2006, p. 17)
- It also aspires to achieve joint education, international cooperation, and true democratic education so that people can grasp the true meaning of democracy, which enshrines the principle of human respect for one to another, and by allowing for a free culture in which people are free to be the creators of their own culture, thinkers, and investigators. (Ahmed Ahmed Ibrahim, 1998, p. 33).

2.2. Cultural objectives:

Comparative education contributes to providing data on the customs and traditions of different peoples. The educational system of any country reveals to us the position of the citizen in society, the type of the prevailing political system, and the economic system. This helps to converge the views of people to achieve the idea of international understanding, which has been embodied in fact by institutions and international organizations that seek, in turn, to achieve global understanding between peoples in order to serve the issues of peace and security in the world.

2.3. Academic objectives:

Comparative education is considered a research field that depends on reality and on the analysis, understanding and interpretation of that reality. It proceeds from it and the imagination that you must have in order to analyze and interpret reality and understand what is behind it. Comparative education can raise reality to the level of theories and thus has provided many services to

educational sciences and achieved the academic and scientific goal that it seeks. (Khalil, 2009, p. 31).

2.4. Political objectives:

Comparative education's concerns, such as the state's interest in education, the individual's connection with the state, his position in society, his ideological system, and his philosophy, are nothing more than a study and analysis of political issues.

2.5. The reformist utilitarian objectives:

One of the objectives of comparative education is that it aims to crystallize laws and theories, as well as develop principles, that explain educational change trends and management processes in diverse social situations. It also aids in the development of these systems and the implementation of new educational policies including solutions to various educational problems. The goal of comparative education was not only a comparison of systems but also a re-adaptation between social and economic relations, as comparative education looked to the future, taking advantage of the past to reform what could be reformed (Hajji, 1998, p. 29).

3. The importance of comparative education:

The nature of the objectives that comparative education attempts to attain reflects its importance, including:

- Reforming and developing educational systems.
- Increasing understanding of education issues
- Rooting the objective trend in the study of education systems.
- Determining the factors affecting education as a social system.
- Enriching educational thought and educational theory.
- Evaluating educational systems.

4. The emergence and development of comparative education:

Comparative education is a considerably old field of study that dates back to ancient civilizations, as it originally relates to the movement of individuals and their migration from one region to another for the purpose of trade or war

(invasion), seeking knowledge, exploration, and so on, and their return with news about different cultures and peoples.

It is undoubtedly true that comparative education has evolved and progressed over time by looking at the various periods of human history. Its scientific history dates back to scientific research conducted by the French Marc Anton **Julien** in 1817. However, there have been past initiatives in the subject of comparative education that date back to the beginning of the discipline.

5. Comparative Education in the oriental world:

It witnessed two stages in the Islamic world:

5.1. Description stage:

This stage was characterized by numerous trips and visits in addition to a description of the places visited by travelers and researchers. The prosperity of this stage dates back to the Abbasid era when political, social and economic stability allowed Muslims to move forward on the path of science and civilization. (Badran, 2001, p. 17). Travelers, among whom were Muslim scholars, wrote many books, among the most prominent pioneers of this stage were **Ibn Jubayr** in Andalusia, and **Ibn Battuta** in Morocco (his famous book, *Tuhfat al-Ansar fi The Oddities of the Lands and the Wonders of the Travels*; and **Ibn Khaldun** 1332_1406 (*The Book of Lessons and Diwan of the Beginner and the News in the Days of Arabs, non-Arabs, Berbers and their contemporaries with the greatest authority*). Where he linked the education systems and the societies in which they exist. (Abboud, 1990, p. 109).

These travelers and scholars presented what they saw in those countries and described it accurately. They focused on two matters: schools and mosques as educational institutions. Even if the description at this stage was without comparison, it was considered a basis for comparison.

5.2. The stage in which educational systems and respective societies are linked:

IBN KHALDUN is considered the first to link education systems and the societies in which these systems exist. In the chapter on teaching children, he mentioned the different doctrines of the Islamic cities in his travels, and he

talked about many topics which are related to the method of education and upbringing in various countries.

5.3. Comparative Education for Western Scholars:

The latter has undergone a series of stages, which are outlined here:

5.4. The stage of describing educational systems in foreign countries:

It consists of the period between the end of the 18th century and the end of the 19th century, and the researchers' goal in it was to collect metadata about foreign educational systems and borrow from them what could be reformed national educational systems, as an example of that was sending Peter the Great Caesar of Russia and some of his employees to study at the famous Royal Naval Sports School in order to bring in foreign educational systems. In Germany, the government sent to Russia in 1801 some of its inspectors to study Pestalozzi's work in the field of education in order to learn from him his method of education and its application in their country.

The French **Marc Antoine Julien** published his article on comparative education in the year 1816 in the Journal of Education, and in the year 1817 he formulated the first organized scientific study of educational systems, "Preliminary schemes and views for the study of comparative education." This stage is called the stage of transfer and metaphor, which began in the second decade of the 19th century and continued until its end. Her writings are distinguished by the following:

- It was mostly descriptive based on case studies.
- It did not contain criticism or scientific study of educational systems
- Its purpose was utilitarian, with the intention of borrowing some aspects of foreign educational systems in order to reform their own educational system.

5.5. The stage of identifying education systems in the context of the cultural factors of society:

This period spans the early to mid-twentieth century. Similarities and variances in schooling are hidden behind the scenes. This trend emerged in particular in the last third of the 20th century, especially in the period following

the first world war, when many countries tended to reconsider their educational policies as a result of the great changes brought about by that war in the lives of countries and their societies, as well as the period that followed. The Second world war and the changes that occurred in the field of education coincided with recent trends in educational philosophies, and accordingly there were many writings in comparative education, whether by individuals or by UNESCO. The distinguishing feature of educational studies in that period was the interest in explaining the similarities and differences between the different educational systems.

6. Comparative education theories:

Comparative education scholars adopted a set of scientific theories, that influenced educational research through their contributions in one way or another to the following points:

- Formulating research questions.
- Hypothesizing on which the research is based.
- Providing the theoretical framework of the research.
- Demonstrating comparison of the aspects of the educational phenomenon under study.

6.1. Functional theory:

Sociologists use the term functionalism to refer to social processes, social actions, group structures and their multiple functions. On this basis, scholars of comparative education considered the functional theory as a reference framework for comparative research in education and benefited from it in many topics. Relying on the various models and abbreviating them as follows.

6.1.1. Functional Structural Model:

Proponents of this theory see that every society has a structure in which individuals represent the basic units in their association with different functions. The pattern of commodity production and consumption determines the roles of individuals and their position in the social structure and determines the quality of society's institutions and its national system. The aim of the educational system, for example, is to achieve the continuity of the structure of society, and accordingly, educational research is sheds light on how education supports the

form of society across several cultures or across a particular culture because this enables the researcher to derive general principles that explain how different social systems work to achieve this.

6.1.2. The development model:

This model sees that education has a role in bringing about the required change in societies, especially when it comes to societies on the path of growth, by answering the following questions:

- What role did education play in determining the economic, social, political and cultural conditions of a country?
- What are the future plans for education to participate in the progress?
- How can education plans contribute to achieving the aspirations of individuals and universities?

6.1.3. The human capital model:

The pioneers of this model assert that education raises the production of individuals by increasing their own income and that it deals with a number of questions, including:

- How can education contribute to increasing or decreasing the income of individuals?

The link between the capitalist model and comparative education may be explained by understanding the most essential contributions of education from a simple social-cultural viewpoint or from an international or global perspective.

6.2. Theories of global systems and dependency:

This article considers that studies concerned with conditions and institutions in any society must look at their social, economic, political and global cultural context by browsing through history and extrapolating our lived reality as countries on the path of development, we notice the domination of America, Europe and Japan over the various international relations (economy, culture and ideology.....), which led to the emergence of what is known as the dependency theory, which sees that industrialized countries the developed forms - within the global system - the axis that affects and controls other countries, where the third flag countries are still affiliated with their colonies. Hence, the comparative

educational studies of some pivotal and peripheral countries have dependency relations on which this theory can be based as a theoretical framework.

6.3. Interpretive theories:

Interpretive theory emphasizes the nature of the subject of truth and the need to study educational systems through what they represent for those who participate in the educational process from students, teachers and men in the field of education.

6.4. Convergence theory:

It is one of the outcomes of the field of comparative education, unlike previous theories that belong to different scientific fields. The convergence theory sees that the current cultural and technical requirements push educational systems in one direction. Examples of its applications include :

- The tendency for administrative centralization, even in countries with a long federal history, such as the United States of America.
- Practicality in teaching mathematics.
- Focusing on the contemporary world of teaching.
- Introducing new curricula at all educational levels, such as informatics (others S. M., 2000, p. 86)

It is worth noting that the researcher in the field of comparative education may rely on more than one theory in a particular study, and there are other theories that can be used.

7. Fields of research in comparative education:

All subjects of education are research areas in comparative education, whether they are related to the curriculum, methods of teaching, educational administration or examinations.

7.1. Logical (spherical) studies:

It refers to any complete examination of a country's educational system that includes an analytical foundation which analyzes and explains the educational system in its cultural and social context (example: for instance, comparing the educational systems in Algeria and Britain).

7.2. Comparative studies:

It refers to comparing educational conditions in more than one country or region, in which the researcher tackles a specific educational issue or aspect using a comprehensive analytical method aimed at identifying the forces and influences at play, as well as highlighting the similarities and differences between them.

The following are some of the fields that come within these two research areas:

- General comparison between two or more educational systems in light of all their aspects.
- Specific comparison as studying an educational problem or a type of education in one or different environments
- Comparison between different social factors (political, cultural, economic...).
- Statistical comparison in different countries with regard to the economics of education, such as budgets.

In addition, there are two sorts of comparative research. The first section looks at educational thought pioneers who had a significant effect on educational trends, such as **Sadler, Kandel, Hans**, and many more modern educational idea pioneers comparing what they created, and they saw in front of them, while emphasizing their part and attempting to assess it. The second category is global comparative studies, which are conducted by international organizations and bodies (such as UNESCO, which conducts studies on a global scale)

7.3. Case studies:

Researchers refer to a full analysis of a single educational system in a single country or state, with an analytical basis that explains and justifies the educational system in its socio-cultural settings, such as the educational system in New York, Russia, or France, (Badran, 2001, p. 35) Therefore, the education system in one country cannot be considered a comparative education, because comparison means that its two parts must be available in two or more countries. Studying the educational system in a foreign country can represent the first step in the comparative study, where the case study is necessary and cannot be avoided. Because through it, the educational system in the countries to be

studied is identified, and the case study can be considered one of the first steps of comparative knowledge (Hai, 2013, p. 65).

7.4. Studying problems:

This refers to the study of a specific problem in multiple countries, such as the one of evaluation systems in multiple countries, the study of girls' education in multiple countries, the study of educational curricula in various countries... and other phenomena and problems that the researcher will study in multiple countries based on his considerations.

7.5. The International study:

It is the study carried out by international organizations and institutions, which requires a large number of researchers at different levels, thus forming an integrated work team (Badran, 2001, p. 40).

7.6. Research difficulties in comparative education:

The comparative education of researchers' studies face many difficulties that are due to the nature of comparative education in itself. We have attempted to determine these difficulties in the following points:

- **Selecting scientific material from different disciplines:** comparative education is an interdisciplinary science that needs to select the necessary material from various sources representing different sciences in order to shed light on educational problems. Wide knowledge of sociology, economics, politics, geography, philosophy, history, statistics and law.... and this is what makes it difficult for the researcher.
- **The dependence of studies in comparative education on statistics:** It is difficult for the researcher to account for the latter's absence, if not complete absence, in undeveloped nations, as well as their inaccuracy, if any. Furthermore, statistics in industrialized nations are sometimes overstated, owing to the fact that they are directed in a propaganda-friendly manner. It does not reflect reality, obstructing the researcher's job and preventing him from discovering the facts he seeks.
- **The interpretation of statistics and numbers** represents a problem because they are rigid and do not explain the reality that the researcher seeks, for example, the education budget and the share of each learner require

knowledge of the currency price, its purchasing value, and the standard of living with it. The percentage of the budget allocated to education from the state's general budget to the national income may be small. It is limited to one country, but it is quite sufficient if the educational system in the country is old and ancient.

- **The difference in terms used in the field of education:** Secondary schools, for example, are referred to as middle schools in several Arab nations where this terminology fluctuates from country to country. The different terms used in the field of education, as well as the various stages of education and the length of each of them, vary greatly from country to country, requiring the researcher to be extremely cautious when translating these terms and comparing them to their counterparts in other countries where the comparative study is being conducted.
- **Communication with foreign educational systems and knowledge of their language:** Contacting educational systems and training in the observation of features associated with them and gathering information that would offer the capacity to have a thorough and correct vision of them is required for individuals seeking to engage in comparative studies, which may be accomplished by travelling to the countries studied by comparative education researchers and having a good understanding of their languages. By doing so, they will be better able to access the educational systems of those countries and gain a correct understanding of their problems, allowing them to benefit from their research. (others A. A.-G., 1997, p. 75.78).
- **Personal and cultural bias:** This is apparent in the work of people involved in comparative education when selecting issues, setting hypotheses, collecting and evaluating data, as well as in the conclusions and recommendations that may be drawn from them. Despite the frequent assurances of dedication to impartiality and abstract facts, many researchers may unconsciously succumb to prejudice, and their comparative interpretations may be affected.
- **Generalization:** this means reaching generalizations about countries that are subject to a single political and educational system. For example, when studying the American educational system, it is difficult to reach generalizations about it because of the different educational practices between different states (Khalil, 2009, p. 61).

Conclusion:

Comparative education has been able to meritoriously define its field of research, as its forefathers were able to impose scientific procedures in systematic and applied research that enabled us to analyze and interpret the relationship of education with the social, cultural, political, and ideological environment, as well as to solve educational problems, predict the educational future, and reform the educational system as a whole. Comparative education also contributed to imposing the globalization of education, which in turn imposed the need to adopt modern methods of education in all educational stages across different countries of the world.

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