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SPECIFICS OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN UKRAINE IN 1917–1918

Introduction. The study examines the legal aspects of education development in Ukraine during 1917–1918, a period that played a pivotal role in shaping the national education system. Amid political instability, governmental changes, and socio-economic challenges, educational reforms were driven by the need to establish a new model that would align with both national and European standards. The research focuses on the impact of legal regulations on key reform processes, including the Ukrainization of education, the democratization of access to knowledge, and the creation of a unified school system.

Purpose. The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the legal aspects of the development of Ukraine's education system in 1917–1918, to identify the key organizational and legal foundations of educational reforms during this period, and to assess their impact on the formation of the national education system in the context of political and social changes.

Scientific novelty. The study analyzes regulatory and legal acts developed during the governance of the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadskyi, and the Directorate. Particular attention is given to the **Law on the Unified School**, which aimed to integrate various social groups into the education system through the introduction of universal access to education. The process of Ukrainization, which was legally established in relevant acts, is also highlighted. For the first time in history, education became a powerful instrument for fostering national consciousness by introducing the Ukrainian language as the primary medium of instruction.

Results. The study explores innovative approaches such as the establishment of «**adult gymnasiums**» and **people's universities**, which provided educational opportunities for socially and geographically marginalized groups. The research emphasizes the role of women in educational reform, particularly in ensuring gender equality in access to education. At the same time, it examines the challenges faced by the education system, including financial constraints, a shortage of qualified teachers, and insufficient material and technical resources.

The study employs historical-legal and systemic approaches, enabling an assessment of the influence of socio-economic and political factors on the implementation of reforms. The findings indicate that the educational policy of the period was comprehensive and strategic, incorporating democratic values, national interests, and aspirations to integrate Ukrainian society into the global educational landscape.

Key words: *education, legal regulation, Ukrainian People's Republic, Hetmanate, Directorate, Ukrainization, unified school, national identity, educational reform.*

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПРАВОВИХ АСПЕКТІВ РОЗВИТКУ ОСВІТИ В УКРАЇНІ В 1917–1918 РР.

Вступ. У дослідженні розглядаються правові аспекти розвитку освіти в Україні протягом 1917–1918 рр. – періоду, який відіграв вирішальну роль у формуванні національної системи освіти. В умовах політичної нестабільності, урядових змін та соціально-економічних викликів освітні реформи були зумовлені необхідністю запровадити нову модель, яка б відповідала як національним, так і європейським стандартам.

Метою дослідження є проведення комплексного аналізу правових аспектів розвитку системи освіти України 1917–1918 рр., виявлення основних організаційно-правових засад освітніх реформ цього періоду та оцінка їх впливу на формування національної системи освіти в контексті політичних і соціальних змін.

Наукова новизна. Дослідження зосереджено на впливі законодавчого регулювання на ключові процеси реформування, зокрема українізацію освіти, демократизацію доступу до знань, створення єдиної шкільної системи. У дослідженні аналізуються нормативно-правові акти, розроблені за часів правління Української Центральної Ради, Гетьманату Павла Скоропадського та Директорії.

Результати. Особливу увагу приділено Закону про єдину школу, метою якого є інтеграція різних соціальних груп у систему освіти шляхом запровадження загального доступу до освіти. Висвітлено також процес українізації, який був законодавчо закріплений у відповідних актах. Освіта вперше в історії стала потужним інструментом виховання національної свідомості, запровадивши українську мову як основний засіб навчання.

Висновки. Дослідження вивчає інноваційні підходи, такі як створення «дорослих гімназій» і народних університетів, які надають освітні можливості для соціально та географічно маргіналізованих груп. Дослідження підкреслює роль жінок у реформуванні освіти, зокрема у забезпеченні гендерної рівності в доступі до освіти. Водночас розглядаються виклики, з якими стикається система освіти, зокрема фінансові обмеження, нестача кваліфікованих викладачів та недостатні матеріально-технічні ресурси.

У дослідженні застосовано історико-правовий та системний підходи, що дає змогу оцінити вплив соціально-економічних та політичних факторів на реалізацію реформ.

Висновки свідчать про те, що освітня політика того періоду була комплексною та стратегічною, включала демократичні цінності, національні інтереси та прагнення інтегрувати українське суспільство у світовий освітній ландшафт.

Ключові слова: освіта, правове регулювання, Українська Народна Республіка, Гетьманат, Директорія, українізація, єдина школа, національна ідентичність, освітня реформа.

Introduction. The period of 1917–1918 was one of the most significant stages in the formation of Ukrainian statehood, marked by profound changes in social life, particularly in the field of education. This time was characterized by both rapid political transformations and active efforts to create a national education system that would align with new realities. The development of education in Ukraine during this period was shaped by legal aspects that laid the groundwork for national identity formation and integration into the European educational space.

Amid the existence of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) and subsequent political shifts, legal initiatives in the educational sphere became a crucial tool in state-building. The adoption of key legal acts, the initiation of Ukrainization in educational institutions, and the reform of the education system aimed not only at improving the quality of education but also at affirming the Ukrainian language and culture as essential components of state policy.

This period is unique in terms of legal regulation of education, as in the context of political instability and the struggle for independence, issues of education and civic upbringing gained particular significance. In the study of

the legal aspects of education development in 1917–1918, it is essential to understand how new political regimes influenced educational policies and what consequences these changes had for the future of the Ukrainian state.

Recent studies on the legal aspects of education development in Ukraine during 1917–1918 highlight various scholarly approaches and contributions to this topic. Below is an overview of some of them:

- **Larysa Berezhivska**, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, in her article «*The Unified School Project in Ukraine on Twelve-Year General Secondary Education (1917–1921)*» analyzes the concept of a unified school developed during the Ukrainian Revolution and its legal foundations [1–2].

- **Halyna Ivanyuk**, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, in her article «*Normative-Legal Support for the Formation and Functioning of the New School During the Ukrainian Revolution (1917–1921)*» examines legislative acts and legal documents that regulated the education sector during this period [5–6].

- **Tamara Vysotska**, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, in her article «*Education in Ukraine During*

the 1917–1921 Revolution: An Unfinished Attempt at Reform» explores the reform of education in Ukrainian lands during the national liberation revolution, reflected in legislative acts and the practical activities of the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Hetmanate, and the Directorate of the UNR.

Purpose. The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the legal aspects of the development of Ukraine's education system in 1917–1918, to identify the key organizational and legal foundations of educational reforms during this period, and to assess their impact on the formation of the national education system in the context of political and social changes.

The research is focused on identifying the key legal acts that regulated educational policy, determining their role in shaping national identity, and analyzing the contribution of educational reforms to the establishment of the foundations of the modern education system in Ukraine.

Presentation of the Main Material. The analysis focuses on the legal aspects that shaped the development of education in Ukraine during 1917–1918, a period of significant transformations in the formation of the national education system. This stage was marked by large-scale political and social changes triggered by the Ukrainian Revolution, the collapse of empires, and efforts to establish an independent Ukrainian state. The study examines legal and regulatory acts developed and adopted by the key state entities of the time, including the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadskyi, and the Directorate of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

Particular attention is given to legislative initiatives aimed at reforming the education system, including the creation of a unified school, the introduction of the Ukrainian language as the language of instruction, the establishment of new educational institutions, and the training of teaching staff. The study also explores the process of Ukrainization of education, which became a significant aspect of the reforms and had a well-defined legal foundation.

Beyond the analysis of legal documents, the article highlights the political context that influenced the implementation of educational reforms. Government changes, political instability, and limited resources had a considerable impact on the effectiveness of legal measures and the realization of reforms in the education sector. This research allows for an assessment of the successes and challenges of the reforms, as well as their impact on the further development of Ukraine's education system [8].

The study examines the Ukrainization of education as one of the key directions in the reform of Ukraine's education system in 1917–1918. This process was not only an educational initiative but also a socio-political effort aimed at strengthening national identity through the education system. The legal reinforcement of Ukrainization was carried out through a series of legislative acts adopted by governing bodies, including the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Hetmanate of Pavlo

Skoropadskyi, and the Directorate of the UNR. These documents laid the foundation for the development of education in the Ukrainian language, addressing the need to form a nationally conscious society.

One of the core aspects of the reform was the introduction of Ukrainian as the primary language of instruction in schools and other educational institutions. This was a crucial step toward creating an education system aligned with national interests. Special emphasis was placed on establishing Ukrainian educational institutions, including schools, gymnasiums, and universities, which became essential platforms for the promotion of the Ukrainian language, literature, and history, as well as for fostering new generations with a strong national consciousness [7].

At the same time, the study highlights several challenges encountered during the reform process. One of the main issues was the lack of funding, which limited the ability to establish new educational institutions, print Ukrainian textbooks, and improve teachers' salaries. Another significant obstacle was the shortage of qualified teachers proficient in the Ukrainian language and capable of delivering quality education in line with the new standards.

Additionally, political instability, including frequent changes in government and the challenges posed by the civil war, affected the pace and consistency of reform implementation. These factors considerably complicated the creation of an effective and stable education system.

Thus, despite numerous challenges, the Ukrainization of education became a crucial stage in the development of Ukraine's educational system. It laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Ukrainian language and culture within the educational process, although many initiatives remained incomplete due to the objective difficulties characteristic of the historical context of that time.

A historical-legal and systemic approach was applied, enabling a thorough analysis of legislative initiatives related to the reform of Ukraine's education system in 1917–1918, as well as an assessment of their practical implementation. The historical-legal approach allowed for the study of the development of legal acts within the political and socio-economic context of the time, while the systemic approach provided a framework for viewing the educational reform as a multifaceted process incorporating legislative, administrative, cultural, and economic aspects.

The study examines a range of key legislative initiatives adopted during the governance of the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadskyi, and the Directorate. Among these, the **Law on the Unified School** played a foundational role in building a new education system, establishing Ukrainian universities, and developing Ukrainian-language curricula and textbooks. Special attention is given to the legal framework supporting the Ukrainization of education, which was crucial for the consolidation of the Ukrainian language in the educational process and the formation of national consciousness [10].

The study also explores the influence of socio-economic and political factors on the implementation

of these reforms. Notable achievements include the creation of a legal foundation for the establishment of a national education system, increased attention to the cultural and educational needs of Ukrainian society, and broader public access to education. A significant milestone was the formal recognition of Ukrainian as the primary language of instruction, contributing to the cultural unification of the Ukrainian people.

However, the study highlights the constraints that hindered the successful implementation of educational reforms. Political instability, frequent changes in government, the civil war, and a challenging economic environment posed substantial obstacles to enacting legislative initiatives. Additional issues included insufficient funding, a shortage of qualified personnel, and difficulties in providing educational institutions with the necessary material and technical resources [3].

Thus, the historical-legal and systemic approaches allowed for the identification of both the achievements and weaknesses of the educational reforms of that period. The analysis demonstrated that socio-economic and political factors had a decisive impact on the effectiveness of educational changes, defining the limitations of their implementation amid the complex conditions of Ukrainian state formation.

One of the distinctive features of the legal aspects of education development in Ukraine during 1917–1918 was how different political regimes utilized educational policies to reinforce their ideological priorities. For instance, the **Ukrainian Central Rada** focused on democratizing and Ukrainizing education, striving to establish a school system that not only aligned with national interests but also reflected aspirations for social justice. Meanwhile, the **Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadskyi** emphasized centralizing educational administration, aiming to preserve elements of the traditional approach while simultaneously supporting Ukrainian identity [4].

A particularly noteworthy initiative was the implementation of the **Law on the Unified School**, which envisioned the creation of a single general education system accessible to all social groups. This concept was innovative for its time, as it sought not only to ensure equal access to education but also to cultivate a sense of national belonging among students. The

model aimed to combine accessibility with improved educational quality, representing a significant step toward integrating Ukrainian society.

During this period, teachers played a crucial role as key agents of Ukrainization. As a result, significant attention was devoted to training pedagogical personnel, establishing teacher training institutes, and launching specialized courses. However, a major challenge remained the shortage of qualified educators capable of teaching in Ukrainian, which hindered the full realization of educational reforms.

Another significant aspect of this period was the role of **mass media** in supporting educational reforms. Newspapers and journals regularly published articles discussing the changes in the education system, their societal importance, and the obstacles that had to be overcome in the reform process.

Ultimately, the experience of educational reforms in 1917–1918 served as an important lesson for future attempts to develop Ukraine's education system. Reflecting the challenges of their time, these reforms illustrate how the interplay of politics, law, and society can shape an educational model that addresses both national interests and global challenges [9].

This table 1 provides a summary of the key legal and social changes in Ukraine's education system during 1917–1918. It is divided into two columns:

- **Aspects** – the main directions or phenomena that characterized the reform of the educational system during the revolutionary transformations.
- **Description** – a brief characterization of each aspect, reflecting its impact on the development of education and society.

Explanation of Specific Points:

1. **The Ukrainian language as a tool of national unity.** This highlights the significance of introducing the Ukrainian language into the educational process as a fundamental means of consolidating society and fostering national consciousness.
2. **The phenomenon of «adult gymnasiums».** This represents an innovative approach to education, where specialized institutions were established for adults who had not previously had the opportunity to receive basic education.

Table 1

Legal Aspects of Education Development in Ukraine (1917–1918)

Aspects	Description
The Ukrainian language as a tool of national unity	The introduction of Ukrainian as the primary language of instruction to promote societal integration.
The phenomenon of "adult gymnasiums"	Establishment of educational institutions for adults who did not receive formal education in childhood.
The role of women in educational reform	Ensuring equal educational rights for women and their active participation in the reform process.
The concept of "people's universities"	Organization of courses and lectures for peasants and broader social groups to improve access to education.
Generational conflict in the educational sphere	Tensions between older and younger generations of educators caused by the introduction of reforms.
The influence of international experience	Adoption of educational models from European countries to facilitate integration into the educational space.

3. The role of women in educational reform.

This aspect emphasizes gender equality, particularly the active involvement of women in education both as students and educators, which was a crucial step toward social progress.

4. **The concept of «people's universities».** This reflects a democratic approach to education through the creation of courses and lectures for peasants and broader social groups, helping to spread knowledge in remote and less accessible regions.

5. **Generational conflict in the educational sphere.** This highlights the tension between older educators who adhered to traditional teaching methods and younger teachers who supported innovative reforms, which influenced the pace of their implementation.

6. **The influence of international experience.** This emphasizes the integration of European educational practices into the national system, contributing to its quality improvement and competitiveness.

The table 1 illustrates the multifaceted nature of educational reforms in 1917–1918, showcasing both their innovative potential and the challenges faced by reformers. It serves as an effective tool for structuring information, allowing for a deeper understanding of this historical period.

Conclusions. The analysis of the legal aspects of education development in Ukraine during 1917–1918 highlights the scale and significance of educational reforms during this period. These transformations were closely tied to the processes of national revival and state-building, which unfolded amid intense political changes. The educational policies implemented by the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadskyi, and the Directorate aimed to establish a nationally oriented education system capable of addressing the cultural and social needs of Ukrainian society.

A major achievement of this period was the introduction of the **Ukrainian language** as the primary language of instruction. This not only contributed to the consolidation of the Ukrainian people but also facilitated the integration of the education system

into the broader European context. A key focus of the reforms was the **democratization of education**, ensuring equal access to knowledge for all social groups, including the inclusion of women in education. The establishment of a **unified general education school, adult gymnasiums, people's universities, and teacher training institutes** was an innovative step that, despite numerous challenges, had a lasting impact on Ukraine's educational landscape.

At the same time, several obstacles hindered the successful implementation of these reforms. Limited funding, insufficiently trained teaching personnel, political instability, and a difficult socio-economic environment significantly restricted the effective introduction of new initiatives. Frequent changes in government created additional challenges, particularly in maintaining **policy continuity** and ensuring the stability of the education system.

Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the reforms of 1917–1918 laid the foundation for the future development of Ukrainian education. The adoption of **European educational practices**, the combination of national traditions with progressive approaches of the time, and the creation of a **legal framework** for educational transformation were crucial steps toward shaping Ukraine's modern education system.

This period remains a **valuable source of lessons for the present day**. It demonstrates that education is a powerful instrument for **state-building, social consolidation, and national revival**. The experience of the 1917–1918 reforms proves that even in the face of political instability, it is possible to establish the groundwork for a **high-quality and effective education system**, one that meets contemporary challenges and fosters **identity formation, civic consciousness, and cultural integration**.

Further study of this period is essential for both scholars and education practitioners, as it provides a deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind effective education reform in times of social and political challenges.

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