

“EDUCATION” AND “HIGHER EDUCATION” TERMS AND THEIR MEANINGS

LOBAR SAIDNABIYEVA

MASTER’S DEGREE STUDENT

ASIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGIES

Tel: +998889548887

E-mail: saidnabiyevalobar8887@gmail.com

Abstract. This paper examines the essence and meaning of the concepts of education and higher education, their social significance, and their terminological features from a scientific perspective. The study analyzes the origin of the term “education,” its semantic development, and its interdisciplinary scope of application. In addition, the main goals, objectives, and functions of education are revealed, and their role in social development is substantiated. Higher education is interpreted as the highest stage of the education system, and its scientific-pedagogical and normative-legal aspects are highlighted. The paper also justifies the interrelation between the concepts of education and higher education, their role within the system of lifelong education, and their importance in the intellectual and economic development of society. The results of the study contribute to the deepening of theoretical knowledge in the field of education.

Keywords: education, higher education, social institution, education system, functions of education, lifelong education, terminology, scientific-pedagogical interpretation

Education manifests itself as an important social institution in the life of society and represents a complex and continuous process aimed at shaping an individual socially, culturally, and professionally. Through education, scientific knowledge, cultural values, and social experience accumulated by humanity over centuries are transmitted from generation to generation. This process is a crucial factor in ensuring the stable development of society. Education broadens an individual’s worldview, develops critical and independent thinking skills, and fosters social activity and a sense of responsibility. The higher the level of education in society, the more stable economic development, technological progress, and social stability become. Education serves as the primary means of developing human capital and enhancing the intellectual potential of society. At the same time, education helps individuals achieve self-awareness and realize their potential. From a social perspective, education promotes equal opportunities, reduces social stratification, and contributes to the establishment of just social relations. Thus, education is not merely a process of knowledge transmission but one of the main driving forces of social development.

The term “education” originates from the Arabic word *ilm* (knowledge) and was initially used to mean “imparting knowledge,” “teaching,” and “instruction.” In historical sources, this term was employed to describe the process of acquiring knowledge and transmitting it to others. Over time, the semantic scope of the concept of education expanded, coming to denote not only the teaching process but also a socially organized institutional system. In modern Uzbek usage, the term “education” has a generalizing and abstract character, simultaneously expressing process, system, and outcome. Semantically, it is multi-layered and encompasses various levels and forms. The concept of education includes all stages, from preschool education to higher and lifelong education. The broad semantic range of this term explains its active use in interdisciplinary studies such as pedagogy, sociology, and psychology. From a linguistic perspective, the word “education” is an abstract lexical unit that reflects the dynamic nature of the process. Therefore, the term possesses not only linguistic but also socio-philosophical significance. The main goal of education is the comprehensive development of the individual and the formation of a knowledgeable and competent professional who meets the needs of society. The educational process is aimed at enabling individuals to acquire scientific knowledge,

develop practical skills, and assimilate social experience. The objectives of education are closely linked to social development and are continuously updated in accordance with economic, cultural, and scientific needs. Through its instructional function, education enhances intellectual potential, while its educational function fosters moral standards and social values. Its developmental function ensures the growth of thinking abilities, creativity, and independent reasoning. The socialization function adapts individuals to social life and develops civic awareness and a sense of responsibility. These functions are interrelated and ensure the integrity of the educational process. The effectiveness of education largely depends on the harmonious implementation of these goals and functions.

Higher education represents the highest and most complex stage of the education system and is aimed at training highly qualified specialists and scientific personnel. In the process of higher education, students are provided with fundamental and specialized knowledge, and their professional competencies are formed. Higher education develops individuals' abilities to conduct scientific research, analyze problems, and generate innovative solutions. Within the education system, higher education occupies a central position, systematizing and deepening the knowledge acquired at previous stages. It plays a crucial role in enhancing the intellectual and scientific potential of society. By directly influencing the development of science, engineering, and technology, higher education serves as one of the main sources of innovation. Therefore, the system of higher education is regarded as a key factor in the strategic development of society. The term "higher education" is interpreted in scientific-pedagogical literature as a stage of education aimed at providing individuals with deep theoretical and practical knowledge. In normative-legal documents, higher education is defined as an essential component of the lifelong education system. This term represents a complex system that includes bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. In scientific interpretation, higher education is viewed as a system that develops professional and academic potential. In normative interpretation, it is considered an educational stage organized according to clearly defined standards, norms, and requirements. Terminologically, "higher education" is a specific form of the general concept of education and denotes a high level of knowledge and competence. Therefore, this term occupies an important place in scientific, official, and pedagogical discourse.

The concepts of education and higher education are closely interconnected in terms of content and are manifested as general and specific notions. While education is a broad concept that encompasses the process of acquiring knowledge at all stages, higher education refers to the advanced and specialized stage of this process. Higher education is a logical continuation of the education system and is implemented based on the knowledge and skills acquired at earlier stages. Higher education cannot exist without education, and higher education serves as an important criterion for determining the quality level of the education system. The interrelation of these concepts ensures the continuity and systematic nature of education. Consequently, education and higher education together contribute to the scientific, cultural, and economic development of society.

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