



Improving The Theoretical Foundations of Using The Pirls International Assessment Program In Educational Integration

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Abstract: The significance of international evaluation initiatives, specifically the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) programme, in raising educational standards is examined in this article. By evaluating primary school pupils' reading and comprehension abilities, this program – which involves more than 100 countries worldwide – assists in determining the advantages and disadvantages of national educational systems. Additionally, the article compares research conducted by local scholars, historical pedagogical heritage, and international experiences, including creative approaches in Finland's educational system. The PIRLS programme should be seen as an opportunity to enhance education rather than as a tool for teachers and students to control one another. This strategy is essential to bringing Uzbekistan's national education system up to date with contemporary, global norms.

Keywords: Education, Collaboration, Pedagogy, Technology, Literacy, Communication, Society, Mentality, Development

Introduction

The rapid transformation of social processes on a global scale necessitates accelerated development in the field of education. In developed countries, the PIRLS assessment is utilized to monitor global trends in educational achievements, identify weaknesses in the education system, ensure fairness, and evaluate the potential of the new generation to effectively contribute to all aspects of society. The use of the PIRLS international assessment program for primary school students has become increasingly relevant for improving the quality of education.

More than one hundred countries around the world are participating in international assessment studies such as PIRLS, PISA, TALIS, EGRA, TIMSS, and EGMA in order to objectively evaluate the quality of education implemented in their countries and the reading literacy of their students. Most of the studies conducted by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) focus on assessing students' academic performance in one or more subjects, or on an interdisciplinary basis. This, in turn, helps conduct an in-depth analysis of educational processes both globally and within individual countries. In the global community, the focus has shifted from assessing students' ability to memorize curricula to evaluating their competencies – that is, their

ability to apply knowledge acquired in school to real-life situations, and to develop creative and logical thinking skills.

In our country, special attention is being given to “establishing a national system for assessing the quality of education based on the PIRLS program, which determines the level of reading and comprehension skills of primary school students, in order to implement international programs for assessing education quality within the public education system”. The PIRLS international assessment program is important not only for primary school graduates, but also for older students, as it helps them successfully continue to the next stages of education, find their place in social life, and gradually improve their level of competence. Therefore, in today’s context, it is essential that every teacher and student view this assessment program not as a “testing tool” or a “control method”, but rather as an “opportunity to improve the education system”.

Methodology

In 2021, our country participated in this assessment program for the first time. Scientific literature related to the PIRLS assessment program is reflected in the official reports and newsletters of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In addition, the program is being studied through the scientific articles of scholars who serve as experts in the program, as well as through popular science programs in the media.

In the scholarly heritage of our ancestors – Munavvar Qori Abdurashidkhanov, Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, and Abdulla Avloniy – special attention was given to the necessity of introducing changes in teaching and learning practices in schools. They emphasized moving away from rote memorization and instead encouraging students to study with understanding, as well as the importance of drawing on international experience to ensure quality education.

In our country, the issues of developing primary school students’ knowledge of literary concepts have been researched by Q. Abdullayeva, S. Matchonov, B. Makulova, T. G’afforova, R. Safarova, and A. Hamroyev. The improvement of methodological training for future primary school teachers has been addressed by K. Qosimova, Sh. Yo’ldosheva, X. G’ulomova, and A. Nishanbayeva. Issues related to active participation in international studies conducted in primary grades have been explored by S. Khidirov, A. Ismoilov, Y. Asadov, M. Vahobov, and A. Matkarimov. Scientific research has also been conducted by A. Karimboyev, M. Sardiboyeva, K. Abrorkhonova, and Sh. Boychayeva on improving education based on the analysis of PIRLS international monitoring results and making relevant amendments to the State Education Standards.

Within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), issues related to creating a research materials base for the PIRLS international assessment programs and training trainers to apply these materials in practice have been studied by G. Kavalyova, T. Zhukova, G. Sidorova, and M. Kuznetsova. These scholars have conducted scientific research on the active participation of primary school students in international studies.

Result and Discussion

A number of international programs aimed at determining and assessing the high quality of education have been developed worldwide. In particular, the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) program, which measures reading comprehension, is being effectively used by developed countries to improve the quality of education. In the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-5712 dated April 29, 2019, "On the Approval of the Concept for the Development of the Public Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030", it is stated that by 2030, Uzbekistan aims to be among the top 30 leading countries in the international student assessment program rankings.

It is advisable to view the PIRLS international assessment program not as a "tool for testing" or "monitoring method", but as an "opportunity to improve the education system". According to the decree, the strategic goals of the public education system have been planned, and they are as follows:

- to create opportunities for quality education in the general education system that align with the innovative development of the economy, advanced international experience, and the modern requirements of society;
- to develop human capital as the key factor determining the competitiveness of students in the labor market and the country as a whole.

In the third chapter of the "Concept of Developing the Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030", approved by the presidential decrees, it is firmly stated as a goal to "create a national system for assessing the quality of education based on PIRLS, which aims to evaluate students' literacy levels in reading, mathematics, and natural sciences in the field of international programs for assessing education quality in the public education system, specifically determining the level of students' reading comprehension in primary schools".

PIRLS is an international study program for reading comprehension, which allows for the assessment of reading and comprehension skills among primary school students in different countries around the world, as well as identifying differences within national education systems.

The purpose of studying PIRLS is to compare the level of reading comprehension among fourth-grade students in different countries around the world, as well as to identify the disparities in reading literacy across national education systems. According to the international glossary of the study, "literacy" is the ability of an individual to understand and logically interpret various written languages, which are essential for fully expressing oneself in life and achieving personal goals.

In developed countries, the PIRLS system for assessing the reading and comprehension skills of students, including those in elementary grades, has been conducted periodically every five years, and so far, it has been held five times: in 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021. Uzbekistan signed relevant agreements with the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and participated in the PIRLS program for the first time in 2021. The reading literacy results of students from one country from each

continent participating in the PIRLS studies were selected and analyzed. In this study, the results of our country's students in reading literacy placed us 49th out of 57 countries.

PIRLS holds a prominent position among international studies, and within the framework of these studies, the reading quality and the level of comprehension of the text read by 4th-grade students from countries with various educational systems are examined. The selection of 4th-grade students for these studies is significant, as at the fourth year of reading, students are expected to have reached a high level of reading proficiency. This, in turn, helps develop their ability to acquire knowledge in further education and assists them in successfully adapting to the modern world.

In Finland's education system, changes in the education and upbringing of students are noticeable. Additional activities are conducted not only with the student but also with their parents or guardians. As a result, students develop personal skills such as collaboration, expressing opinions, self-confidence, interaction, self-expression, and taking care of themselves. They also develop skills in analyzing thinking and learning, managing cultural and daily life, understanding information and communication technologies, acquiring entrepreneurial skills, being active in life, participating in social processes, and building a sustainable future. This leads to creating unique opportunities for societal development. In particular, it contributes to the development of practices that promote literacy skills across all fields, providing opportunities for every citizen to continuously improve and strengthen their literacy throughout their life, and encouraging a culture of public reading.

Conclusion

In the integration of Uzbekistan's education system with the global education system, the legal and regulatory documents related to the use of international assessment programs reflect the scientific and theoretical ideas promoted by advanced countries, serving as a methodological foundation. The application of the PIRLS international assessment program, which focuses on literary concepts and approaches to the analysis of artistic works from philosophical, pedagogical, psychological, literary, and linguistic perspectives, represents a comprehensive understanding related to students' literacy and their artistic-aesthetic thinking. Therefore, primary education plays a crucial role in the development of the foundations of knowledge for the younger generation, as well as in their moral and ethical growth.

In the era of globalization and information-communication technologies, the use of interactive methods such as tests, comparative analysis, discussions, and independent work through literary concepts plays a crucial role in shaping students' reading and literary culture, ensuring the effectiveness of reading education. In reading lessons, using PIRLS research methods to teach students to understand literary texts and grasp the educational and ecological ideas derived from them requires direct connection with literary concepts. This, in turn, creates the foundation for primary school graduates to achieve high results in international assessment programs.

It will be possible to further improve the national education system by assessing how the reading literacy of our country's primary school (4th grade) students has developed and

comparing it continuously with the education systems of other countries. Parents are considered one of the main factors in improving students' reading literacy, and based on national mentality, efforts will be made to develop positive public perceptions of education. In the educational process, tasks similar to those of the PIRLS international assessment program will be used to continuously improve the development of students' core competencies through educational and testing assignments.

Based on the above, the following proposals have been developed:

1. Based on the principle of consistency and systematization in education, through integration with global education, in applying international assessment programs: reinforcing theoretical knowledge; planning literary concepts to be studied according to grade levels; and creating conditions for gradually mastering reading skills are essential.
2. To improve the reading literacy of primary school students, it is recommended to strengthen cooperation with school libraries, extracurricular libraries, television, and museums based on studying the materials used in PIRLS. Additionally, plans for organizing excursions to nature reserves and implementing projects such as "Books Unite Us" at educational institutions are advised.
3. When studying the rankings of educational institutions, factors such as their specialization and location should be taken into account, with a focus on the fact that the quality of education depends not only on teacher-student relations but also on family, environment, and conditions. It is important to view the results of international studies not as a means to penalize schools with low scores but as analytical data to assist in the later implementation of reforms in the education system.
4. In preparing primary school students to understand and comprehend the content and essence of literary and informational texts, it is necessary to consider their intellectual potential, mentality, aspirations, and interests at each stage of the educational process.

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