

How does Finland's Socioeconomic Development Influence its Education System?

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Abstract—The education system is always closely linked to the country's economic development and social advancement; Finland's educational progress mainly attracts the public to explore the myth behind it. This research paper analyzes the correlation between Finland's socioeconomic development and its education system. To explore the answer to this question, various standardized surveys will be used to test education performance in different countries and provide a clear comparison. The results presented that Finland's education evolution followed its economic progress and revealed that many problems appeared due to the frequent educational reformation, such as marketization and privatization. The theory behind this study could be used to promote global educational reformation and acquire educational principles from Finland.

Keywords—economic development, education system, Finland, privatization of education, Neoliberalism, marketization, commercialization, Programmed for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, polarization, globalization

I. INTRODUCTION

Improving education quality and educational reform are two critical aims for all countries. China and Finland act as two classic examples in this context. Historically, the Finnish education system has experienced a transition from centralization to liberalism, mirroring a similar trajectory in Chinese education, albeit with a prevailing trend of centralization. Growing up in the conventional and strict Chinese educational environment, marked by the daily burdens of homework and examination stress, there are contrasting principles between the Chinese and the Finnish education system. Finland promotes providing children with a happy childhood, minimizing study-related stress. In contrast, the demand for after-school tutoring in China remains high mainly due to fierce competition for educational resources, leading to different teaching methods and attitudes towards education between the two countries.

According to the education researcher King [1], every Finnish student only has a half-hour reading assignment in which students can choose their materials. Finland's educational philosophy focuses on cultivating the

autonomy and equality of all students. Compared to China, Finnish students spend their time in school for a short time; primary education in Finland lacks after-school tuition fees. According to the Programmed for International Student Assessment (PISA) [2], Finland has a higher ranking than China and a high level of competence in international comparison. In 2018, Finnish students aged 15 and above achieved mean scores of 507 in mathematical literacy, 520 in reading, and 522 in science, surpassing the OECD averages (489, 487, and 489, respectively) [3]. Although students' performance in all subjects in Finland is lower than in China (591, 555, and 590, respectively), their learning efficiency was higher since students spend much less time in Finland than in China.

There are distinct differences between Finland's educational system and those of China. Finland adopted a double-track system after students turned 16 years old. This requires students to choose between academic training for higher education or specific working skills for polytechnics. In contrast, China has applied a single-track system centered on exams, such as the Senior High School Entrance and College Entrance Exams. These exams may determine the type of school a student can enter, classifying high schools into social science and natural science streams.

Public opinion asserts that Finland's shift from centralization to liberalism has stricter requirements for selecting and training primary education teachers than China. Finnish society places greater emphasis on research-based teacher education, allowing more freedom in teaching methods [4]. There are approximately no private tutoring institutions in primary education in Finland. Their egalitarian education system discourages private tutoring, which could lead to social inequality and disadvantages for specific children.

This research focuses on the influence of socio-economic development on Finland's education system. The primary motivation for this dissertation is to explore the realms of economic development and the education system in Finland. Through analyzing the correlation between the economic and education systems, neoliberalism, globalization, and the transformation of Finland's education system as a whole, the myth behind Finland's education system and how it provides a role model for other countries can be explored.

This essay contains four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which includes the historical background and the transition of Finland's education system. This is followed by the literature review, which includes education standardized testing, the impacts of various reformations, and the transition of the education system. Then, the discussion covers the influence of privatization on education equity plus the influence of globalization on Finland's education system. Lastly, the conclusion shows this essay's cohesive points and arguments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review consists of five sections. It opens by discussing the use of various tools and measurements for examining education outcomes, including applying standardized surveys. This leads to comparing the education systems in different countries, focusing on the relationship between the economic and social systems. This review also critically discusses the impact of neoliberalism, neo-institutionalism, privatization, and marketization.

A. Education and Economic Dynamics

Economics reshapes the role that education plays in society worldwide. Therefore, education that benefits individuals and nations is integral to economic prosperity. Moreover, globalization significantly alters the world's cultural landscapes, prompting the need for educational adjustments. Curriculum structuring, new teaching methods, and policy changes are necessary to prepare individuals for their roles on local, national, and international scales, contributing to future economic attainment [5]. Thus, it is essential to critically examine how educational achievement is associated with financial success.

The interconnected relationship between education and economics is well-established due to ever-changing opinions about education. Studies have found that a country's economic status determines the perception of its social systems, especially in education [6]. Accordingly, countries with a highly developed economy find much merit in their education system. Tobin *et al.* [6] found that students from Finland, mainland China, and Hong Kong achieved higher reading competence scores than those from other countries. One example is Japan's fast-growing economy in the 1980s, which caught the world's attention because its flourishing economy had given the education system positive reinforcement. However, in the 1990s, the economic decline in Asia (including Japan) led to blaming Japanese children's shortcomings; the Japanese also placed this blame upon their education system [6]. This historical pattern occurred during the Great Depression as well. The Great Depression was a worldwide economic downturn between 1929 and 1939. The unemployment rate surged, and many workers experienced a cost-of-living crisis. U.S. politicians underscored the importance of literacy and academic readiness in children's early years to keep the country's economic prosperity. Similarly, the UK

emphasized the professionalization of early years teachers, the importance of early years education on individuals' future lives, and the impact on the country's economic development. This overt historical pattern indicated that the correlation between education and economies profoundly influences policy-making in the education system. The economist Waldo [7] concluded that developing education policy reacts to the economies. There was a time lag between economic occurrence and the modification of education policy; therefore, the education policy often got modified after a certain period of financial constraints [8].

B. Neoliberal Influence on Education Worldwide

Speaking from an epistemological perspective, neoliberalism can be interpreted as a biopolitical mode of governing concerning human relations [9]. Reforms are framed within neoliberal ideas, sustained by three leading policy technologies: market, management, and performance [10]. Market technologies involve competition, rational choice, and exogenous and endogenous modes of privatization, creating market or quasi-market realities and encouraging the increasing withdrawal of the state from providing public service. Endogenous privatization introduces the market into the public sector through choice and competition, which creates a direct relationship between consumer preferences and institutional well-being [10]. In contrast, exogenous privatization permits new providers into the educational services market. For instance, in the UK, Ball [10] identified that the ongoing debate focused not on the identity of the state schooling providers but rather on whether these providers could profit directly from these provisions. Competition among individuals and organizations is essential for public organizations to reduce costs and enhance performance.

Detrimental reforms affecting education equity and school development have occurred. The privatization and marketization of education led to the commercialization of many education industries, driven by a decision-making process dominated by businesses and parents. This trend, unfavorable for a democratic society, can be understood in two ways: the transfer of activities, assets, and responsibilities from government or public institutions to private individuals and agencies, as well as liberalization, where agents are freed from government regulations. This leads to the involvement of marketization, where new markets appear as alternatives to state allocation systems or government services [5]. For instance, the reformation of the Swedish education system started in the 1990s and was initiated as part of the neoliberal market reforms. The market became the dominant educational policy orientation through intense competition, privatization, and a desire to transform consumers. This transformation, influenced by governance and the New Public Management (NPM) organization [11], has made multinational companies critical players in the Swedish educational landscape. The expansion of market forces is legitimized by principles such as 'free choice', 'competition', and 'individuality'. Concurrently, critical public voices have highlighted

concerns about the universal notion of valuable knowledge, norms, and values. In other words, the educational policy system, especially in compulsory schooling, neglects essential skills for sustaining democratic and public life.

These reforms profoundly influenced the school ethos, affecting students' socioeconomic status and achievement composition, school resources, and teacher quality [12]. Moreover, school choice, consumption of resources, and intense competition have adversely affected educational equity and exacerbated school segregation [13]. For instance, a highly selective education system can result in an uneven distribution of resources among children. Marketization is not unique to Sweden; the UK, for example, has employed this strategy to maximize profit by leading market-based competition in the education industry to enhance efficiency, innovation, and entrepreneurship, aiming for high-quality research and education provision. These actions have further changed the school's composition and culture, inducing essential changes in students' mental development [14].

C. Neoliberal Influence on Education Policies—A Case Study on PISA

Neoliberalism, promoting standardization and deregulation, supports privatization in education. However, critics argue that this approach, focused on revenue and consumerism, overlooks essential learning objectives such as creativity and imagination [15]. This is because competition and calculation favor standardized testing in education, which can provide visualized results for individuals to justify their decision-making process. However, standardized testing, as well as the competitive environment, can result in narrowing the curriculum. More emphasis has been put on subjects that can be tested, such as mathematics, literacy, and science, whereas subjects such as arts, music, and humanity, of which the learning outcomes may not be examined through standardized testing, are overlooked in the educational system and curriculum. Therefore, standardized testing and a narrowed curriculum create a competitive environment, aligning with neoliberal ideas. This competition matches Darwinian principles and has increased student disparity, favoring the highest academic achievers.

Neoliberal economic values emphasize human capital, economic growth, and global competitiveness. In the context of pervasive competitions at local, national, and international levels, academic success is often defined through standardized testing such as PISA, organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). International organizations, including the OECD, are pivotal in disseminating their values worldwide. As proposed by the OECD, PISA establishes a set of educational standards that contribute to its global dissemination. In addition, Wadlow [7] argues that neo-institutionalism also affects education policy discourse and formation, complementing the relationship between economies and education. Under the impact of globalization, the adoption of policies based on Western values becomes normalized, with international

organizations exerting influence on nation-states to conform and enhance their legitimacy on the world stage.

Standardized testing like PISA, which compares education standards and subject-specific learning outcomes internationally, especially within the European Union (EU), is a valuable tool [1]. Besides assessing academic performance, PISA helps disseminate the norms, models, and techniques for testing globally. For Finland, a member of the EU, PISA offers insights into the education systems of the other member countries, comparing weaknesses and strengths within the systems in different countries and strengthening their relationships. Finland's exceptional performance in PISA reflects its passion for education and its comparably high and stable economic development. In contrast, China, often stereotyped as a competitive environment with excessive working hours, surprises with unexpected PISA results. The overall performance of Chinese students exceeds the average level on a global scale, but there is no noticeable difference with Finland. Although Finland has shorter school days, less homework burden on students, and fewer standardized tests, its educational system yields outstanding academic performance, challenging conventional notions of educational success.

D. Neoliberal Influence through International Organizations

Transnational organizations such as the World Bank, OECD, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) advocate for policies that cultivate human capital, social capital, and social cohesion in societies. Thus, the envisioned outcome is an improved ability for individuals to access economic resources. However, there needs to be more clarity between transnational and international organizations in defining educational aims. Global institutions often treat education as a tool to encourage a country's economy. As national and global bureaucracies partake in democratizing the education decision-making process, international organizations thus have more power and influence in setting educational agendas, and the local and national stakeholders' influence on education policy diminishes. The administration is increasingly guided by global economic perspectives and competitiveness rather than considering national needs, thereby transforming the landscape of education policy-making.

Despite the role of the OECD, as discussed previously, it also influences neoliberal public policies in Finland. Neoliberalism significantly impacts the reforms of the Portuguese and Finnish higher education sectors. OECD proposes educational reforms based on three main components of neoliberalism: market, management, and performativity in different countries. This influence extends to public administration reforms in traditional welfare state areas, such as healthcare and education, forming joint practices among governments. These reform practices share a high degree of similarity in their changes and legitimating discourses [16], all highly influenced by or aligned with neoliberal ideas [17].

The hegemony of neoliberal discourses and practices triggers an acculturation process in which countries

worldwide share similar education policies despite their different cultural and political histories [10]. Neoliberalism emerges as a pervasive ideology, consolidating its position as a central and universal political discourse in compulsory schooling and higher education systems [18]. Focusing on Finland, an OECD member and a relatively small European country with double-track higher education systems, offers a valuable case study perspective. Furthermore, Watermeyer and Olssen [17] find that the dual nature of neoliberalism is an economic doctrine and discourse, establishing its dominance in world economic relations due to superpower sponsorship. Its connection to economic globalization, especially concerning the promotion of free trade, further solidifies its influence on global economic and educational dynamics.

E. Local Adjustments in Finland

While policy transfer and convergence circulate internationally, the local level consistently exerts mediating influences to shape how these manifestations unfold [9]. Convergence is the process of having similarities in practices and instruments that result in societies becoming more alike by developing comparable structures and performances. Furthermore, examining domestic adaptation through the perspective of the agenda from domestic actors helps identify the significance of divergences between different national settings, thereby enhancing cross-countries comparisons.

For example, school polarization has become more evident in Finland, reflecting the unequal distribution of municipality funds and the socioeconomic status composition of students [19]. Accordingly, students with lower literacy rates tend to have lower socioeconomic status since they entered a less competitive school with insufficient resources. In responding to resolving school polarization, Finland's resistance to extensive privatization of the school market has contributed to maintaining a socioeconomic gap in academic achievement [20]. The Finnish teachers' high autonomy and the country's political consensus regarding education and social trust in teachers also help narrow this gap in students' academic achievement. Moreover, it has also been found that 20 years later, peer and school contextual effects affect students' academic achievements [14].

Due to school polarization, peer stress and the school environment will severely influence students' academic performance. The type of school students attend determines a student's outcome through various school structures, compositions, and climates. Private schools have better funding and smaller size than public schools, so students have better academic performance and access to more resources [21]. Additionally, students who attend a school with more credentialed teachers tend to perform better. Moreover, trust between students and teachers builds up if the school encourages teamwork; students who trust their teachers become more motivated and thus serve better in school [22].

For example, research has shown that in Egypt, the joint economic and social forces brought by globalization impose isomorphic pressures to converge the national

accounting system to achieve public expectations [23]. The policy diffusion is shaped by globalization, internationalization, and Europeanisation, which refers to the movement promoting economic, political, social, and cultural convergence [24]. It is essential to recognize the role of intergovernmental organizations in promoting isomorphic trends when spreading neoliberal thinking and influencing the definition of new legal frameworks for public sectors [25]. For example, the OECD is essential in shaping global higher education policies and constructing and disseminating knowledge about different higher education issues, and this helps the OECD frame international educational policies in a colonial order. Plus, the OECD uses soft power to develop an imperial logic. The OECD's influence in spreading neoliberal reforms in higher education is relevant because this institution has no coercive power, which means it cannot impose new legislation. Neoliberalism is enforced globally by soft law mechanisms, such as country reviews from intergovernmental organizations in the public sector.

III. DISCUSSION

Based on the understanding of education and economic dynamics worldwide and in Finland, the following section aims to explore two interconnected discussion points. The first discussion point is the impact of privatization and marketization, specifically on education equity. The second point focuses on globalization and its effect on the development of Finland's education system.

A. How has Privatization Impacted Education Equity, Including School Ethos?

Education privatization has become a central and contentious issue, sparking debates about its influence on school ethos, students' socioeconomic status, and teaching quality. This global trend, evident in education reforms across developed countries such as Finland and the UK, is driven by the desire to alleviate governmental stress in meeting the increasing demand for high-quality education and reducing costs.

Privatization has two advantages: providing parents the freedom to choose the most suitable for their children, maximizing their welfare, and schools becoming more incentivized to form a more efficient education system. However, this action has two issues: involvement of accountability and encourage fierce competition between schools.

The first issue in privatization revolves around provision and accountability. Accountability is considered to be a cornerstone of contemporary education policy. It might be a corrupt action because even though they have a common goal, there might be unclear responsibility and compensation plans that reward poor performance. Most countries lack a structured democratic voice, especially that of stakeholders who work, learn, and are educated in schools and other educational institutions. For instance, the freedom to choose, a fundamental principle, refers to the right of families to choose schools for their children, aligning with their

values, religious beliefs, educational philosophies, and political outlooks. This principle heavily emphasizes the benefits of privatizing education and the liberty to maximize a family's potential for child-rearing practices. This approach promotes the idea that parents have freedom of choice and could be a way for policymakers, such as the Bureau of Education, to raise community support for educational system changes, such as utilizing standardized tests more often to make education outcomes more transparent and quantifiable to increase visualized and measurable results for parents and their decision-making. According to the current results of all schools, parents tend to choose the school with a high possibility of generating a positive subject-specific learning outcome for their children [26]. This is correlated with neoliberalism, which encourages schools to compete against each other to achieve better academic performance from their students. This principle causes education to be transformed into a concept centered around competition; the success of students is merely measured through revenue and consumerism [27]. This idea of competition between schools also matches the underlying logic of marketization, transforming education into a commodity.

By advocating the freedom for parents to choose suitable education practices and services for their children, there are two significant advantages for parents and the educational system. First, parents have the right to decide what is best for their children, and they have great incentives and responsibilities to sustain and improve their children's welfare rather than relying on public agents. The freedom of choice can offer opportunities for parents to tailor education to their children's needs. Second, the freedom to choose can contribute to the system's accountability. Supovitz [28] argued that accountability could be increased by a greater demand from the citizens and taxpayers for accountability and transparency of service providers. When families evaluate different schools, making choices to reduce the risk, the schools also work to meet parents' expectations, forming a more efficient and accountable education system. However, opponents of the freedom of choice in education argue that this perspective may not be sustainable in the current societal context, primarily due to pervasive peer and social pressures generated by competition. In a system that encourages schools to compete against each other, concerns arise about the potential negative impacts on students, fostering an environment of intense rivalry and social comparison.

Therefore, two significant concerns also emerge regarding the freedom of choice. Most importantly, choices may lead to socially, culturally, or politically unacceptable outcomes. The first concern is that a family might choose an education provider segregated from other social groups based on race, income, or religious beliefs. For example, Ball [10] argued that social class still dictated educational options—middle-class parents can be more skillful when choosing education providers than working-class parents. Meanwhile, schools will often only take students from certain catchment areas,

resulting in the best schools being in the wealthiest areas, while working-class students can be disadvantaged. To address this concern, Finland introduced two measures, open enrolment and voucher schemes, to achieve a relatively liberal allocation of students. Voucher programs allow local authorities to provide parents with a certain amount of public education funding for their children's tuition fees. This measure can help low-income families to have opportunities to choose a school and contribute to social equity. Open enrollment is part of the public-school choice policies that enable students to transfer from public schools to their preferred choice, enhancing the freedom and flexibility of school choice [29]. This measure can thus offer more choices for students, which might improve their academic performance.

Another concern is that the cost of choosing or deciding which school to attend is high for working-class or middle- to low-income families. Before choosing the school, parents will invest time and effort in assessing the quality of different schools by observing classes, finding out the background information of the school, identifying the students, teachers, and curriculum of candidate schools, and evaluating the quality of the teaching. Parents are also responsible for estimating costs after enrollment and matching the expected grades for their children, so if schools do not have much difference in the quality of the education provided for students through supporting schemes for students from less well-off families, fair training for teachers, and reconsidering the distribution of education resources, then it may exacerbate the gap of quality of education between schools rather than promote educational equity, especially in Finland, where the country faces the issue of uneven teacher training in different regions in the country and uneven distribution of resources.

In summary, the discussion on privatization of education emphasizes its universality globally and its multifaceted impact on educational equity. Privatization brings advantages such as parental freedom of choice and incentives for schools to improve efficiency while acknowledging concerns about accountability and fierce competition. Regarding accountability, there may be unclear responsibilities that result in provision failure. In addition, the high cost of choosing a school, especially for working-class families, remains a related issue. Finland's open enrollment and voucher programs attempt to address these issues. However, persistent challenges, including uneven teacher training and resource allocation, highlight the complexity of the impact of privatization on educational equity.

B. The Implications of Finland's Education System within the Context of Globalization's Impact

The second discussion point focuses on globalization and its impact on the development of Finland's education system. The advent of globalization placed greater demands on the OECD to establish an educational database capable of assessing countries' economic competitiveness [30]. With globalization being the prevailing trend of the 21st century, many countries have

recognized the significance of seeking innovation. Scholars have characterized globalization as a multidimensional political, economic, social, and cultural phenomenon [31]. This recognition has led to the integration of comparative education into main assessment models globally, with a renewed focus on the quality of education systems to develop competencies required for the 21st century [32]. To address these challenges, the United Nations (UN) formally incorporated Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) into the governance system in 2016, which targets promoting actions through a detailed framework.

The globalization era introduces challenges and opportunities for the worldwide education system. Specifically, in Finland, the system advocates for the quality of learning in the context of globalization. A fundamental principle is emphasizing teacher training and establishing an integrated pedagogical framework that combines instructional excellence with equitable treatment of children. Finland stands out as a successful example of education globalization; it emphasizes teacher training and a framework that combines instructional excellence with fair student treatment, thereby improving efficiency and promoting quality in education [26]. Studies highlight Finland's outstanding performance across all domains in the 2009 PISA tests, where Finnish students excelled in math and reading compared to European countries, underscoring the sustained international education trend [33]. Despite being outperformed by several Asian countries, such as China, in the PISA 2018 report, Finland continues to represent the top European education system [3].

Moreover, the modern trend of marketization has permeated education systems globally. Modern education has two roles: "to make a life and a living" [34]. While education plays a public role in letting students form a democratic, responsible, and critical attitude toward society and their peers, it also serves an economic purpose that aims to produce an efficient workforce aligned with the demands of the liberal market [35]. These two purposes contradict each other to some extent: the social purpose of education includes cultivating one's responsibility within relationships with others. At the same time, the economic drive is motivated and aimed at competitiveness [36]. This emerging clash contributes to a global trend where education becomes a tool for individual success within the broader context of national competitiveness [26]. This shift is exemplified in Sweden's move from emphasizing democracy to highlighting the importance of learning and knowledge characterized by innovation and specialization, aligning with the market's demands to maximize profits [37]. The marketization of education introduces a learning model that prioritizes acquiring essential transferable skills [36]. Hence, learning has strong links to the individualization and verification that follow the marketization of the education system; this transition is referred to as the 'verification' of education [38], where everything that belongs to education could be defined in terms of learning. The outcomes are valued through a lens of

potential economic productivity, providing meaning to whatever outcomes are produced in and by education. Following this logic, the education system will result in creating commercially oriented individuals rather than educating publicly benefit-oriented people. In other words, learning is to fit into an economic order of society. Consequently, education may be driven away from social togetherness and limited to students equipping themselves to compete against anyone [36].

Individualization and 'learnification' are products of the marketization of the education system. Due to this transition, the current system places the responsibility for learning outcomes on the individual rather than attributing them to contextual factors such as socioeconomic circumstances, family background, social network, and catchment area [39]. Furthermore, as noted by the National Agency for Education, the individualization of learning also places the responsibility burden on children's parents for their behavior and performance. This can result in the development of disadvantaged, low-performing students with disadvantaged educational backgrounds, which is a decisive factor, much more robust than factors such as gender and ethnicity regarding students' school performances [39]. This trend of measuring and valuing students' school performance without considering any contextual factors leads to the marginalization of those low-performing students. Thus, individualization is not just an individual issue but also a collective and geographic phenomenon [39]. This development, which focuses on individual students' school performances over other factors, diminishes the public value of education, leading to social change that fosters democracy. It is essential to emphasize that schools in socially and economically disadvantaged regions are more likely to fall short of national aims than those in socially and financially stable areas [39]. Therefore, a school's ability to provide chances for students to access learning varies depending on admission area, teacher-to-student ratio, educational background, student composition, and qualifications [40].

China and Finland's primary education principles represent two different results of globalization's impact. The significance of Finland's education with broad applicability can be found by comparing the two countries' education systems. The Chinese education system heavily relies on standardized tests and class streaming to assess students' learning abilities and teachers' teaching quality. Researchers have conducted interviews with 16 Chinese teenagers and found that all of them experienced anxiety and shame about the test results [26]. These results led to detrimental thoughts about their future learning. Teachers in China, often holding traditional beliefs that academic performance directly reflects their teaching quality, also struggled with self-accusation and harbored negative feelings towards test outcomes. These narrow and exam-oriented principles in China lack progressive strategies that hinder comprehensive personality development among students.

A more diversified approach to assessing students' abilities while reducing the frequency of tests is needed.

Finland applies non-regulative and non-evaluative classrooms, and its educational success provides a crucial lesson for China to reexamine the role of testing in educational assessment and evaluation. A more diversified approach to assessing students' abilities while reducing the frequency of tests is needed. For example, they are implementing various academic-based activities such as project-based evaluations, group cooperation assessments, peer reviews, and self-assessments. These methods might improve students' creativity, critical thinking, collaborative skills, and innovation, unlocking their potential across different aspects of learning objectives. This shift can also alleviate pressure on teachers, enabling teachers to better facilitate students' capabilities and potential for future achievement.

This section delves into the positive reforms of the Finnish education system in the context of globalization and its reference significance. The excellence of the Finnish system is reflected in its focus on high-quality learning and its emphasis on the influence of teacher training and comprehensive teaching frameworks. In addition, the personalization and "learnification" issues caused by the marketization of education may lead to inappropriate methods for evaluating student abilities. Finland's education system adopts diverse methods to evaluate students' abilities, presenting a good reference example for other countries. Ultimately, while globalization brings about beneficial changes, it also brings challenges, emphasizing the need for meticulous and balanced approaches in shaping education systems on a global scale.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this dissertation research explored education dynamics, particularly in Finland and the global landscape, uncovering multifaceted intersections between privatization, marketization, and globalization, each influencing the educational ecosystem uniquely. Starting with a discussion of the different educational principles and systems in China and Finland, this dissertation delved into the educational reforms in other countries, including marketization and privatization, aiming to move the current education systems towards more democracy and less commercialization. While privatization addresses the increasing demand for education and alleviates financial burdens on governments, concerns about accountability and equity persist. While the freedom of choice for parents empowers families, the potential for socially, culturally, or politically unacceptable choices and the burden of decision-making costs for working-class or low-and-middle-income groups must be acknowledged. Additionally, this dissertation research engages with neoliberalism and school polarization in Finland and globally, highlighting the challenges and opportunities of neoliberal reforms in education. Standardized testing, especially the PISA test, helps compare education standards in different countries and find the correlation

between education and the economic system. Lastly, the influence of marketization is not limited to national borders, as evidenced by the exchange of primary education principles between China and Finland. While Finland's non-regulative and non-evaluative classrooms challenge the exam-oriented system, other countries can learn valuable lessons in adopting diversified assessment methods and fostering creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills.

Looking forward, it becomes evident that education and the economic system are directly correlated, and Finland's tailored approach aligns education policies with national needs. The changing landscape of Finland's education system highlights potential effects, from school polarization to cultivating commercially oriented individuals for learning. This research lays the groundwork for future inquiries, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between education, economic systems, and the evolving needs of societies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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