EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN ALGERIA THROUGH THE EDUCATION LAW

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Abstract

Schools are the fundamental pillar for establishing the Algerian character and consolidating the unity of the Algerian people. This is achieved through the principles established by the Education Law, which proposes the idea of strengthening the role of schools in consolidating Algeria's image and sense of belonging, consolidating the concept of a unified collective historical identity, and establishing a modern school whose mission is to teach the culture of democracy and build the concept of citizenship by instilling a set of values. In this article, we attempt to clarify educational policies in Algeria through a review of the Education Law.

Keywords: Educational policy, Education Law, Curricula, Algeria.

Introduction

The Algerian education system has undergone changes since its inception, and educational historians differ on its history. During the colonial era, Algerian schools operated along two axes: a French school and a parallel school in the zaouïas, whose objective was to preserve the Arab identity and language. After independence, the Algerian school inherited all these colonial legacies, and the issue of language and identity was its main concern in education. Consequently, the Algerian school sought to adopt a policy of Algerianization, particularly after the absence of a legal arsenal at that time, which forced the authorities to adopt French law itself, excluding anything that conflicted with national sovereignty. The situation remained unchanged until the publication of the first decree in the field of education,

Ordinance No. 76-35 of April 16, 1976, consisting of 87 articles, which enshrined the concept of Algerianization, the objective of which was to make education compulsory, free and monopolized by the State, taking into account the adoption of the socialist system of the time, the predominance of the Arabic language and the need to link education to the supreme interests of the country and development plans. All this in the context that Algeria was going through. Subsequently, legislation in the field of education continued in the form of decrees and orders amending or supplementing decrees until 2008, the date of the promulgation of Framework Law No. 08-04 of January 23, 2008. Chapter seven, and more specifically Article 105, stipulates: "All provisions contrary to this law are repealed, in particular the provisions of Ordinance No. 76-35 of 16 Rabi' al-Thani 1396 corresponding to April 16, 1976, relating to the organization of education and training, amended and supplemented." This repeal and the delay of more than forty years in this new proposal lead us to question the novelty of this law, its context and its circumstances. What are its foundations, its philosophical starting points and the references that aim to establish the modern Algerian school?

Research Methodology:

To successfully conduct this research, it is necessary to clarify the methodology used. According to Maurice Angers, a methodology is an organized set of processes aimed at achieving a goal. Therefore, the nature of the subject requires the use of a descriptive and analytical methodology to achieve the study's objectives.

One cannot understand educational policy in Algeria and its legal framework without describing it. Therefore, descriptive methodology is an organized and scientific method of analysis and interpretation to achieve specific objectives. It is a method for quantitatively describing and outlining the phenomenon under study by collecting standardized information about the problem, analyzing it, and subjecting it to in-depth study. Description involves gathering information from observations of a phenomenon in order to create a coherent and in-depth picture. In addition to description, we used analysis, which relies on both quantitative and qualitative elements. This allows us to understand the details of the subject under study by exploring the 2008 Education Orientation Law.

One of the techniques used is content analysis. This technique allows us to understand the factors of social change and individual reactions. It allows us to process written texts, audio recordings, and films, regardless of their era. Therefore, our study requires a descriptive and analytical aspect of the published content of the Education Orientation Law.

Furthermore, we reinforced our study with observational techniques, which involve engaging the senses to observe and monitor a specific behavior or phenomenon, and to record certain aspects or characteristics of that behavior.

1- Educational Policy in Algeria

After independence, Algeria made considerable efforts, particularly with a focus on educational projects. These efforts included: - Providing Algerian children with access to education and building the next generation on new foundations. The number of students in primary and secondary schools now exceeds eight and a half million, taught by more than half a million teachers and administrators, spread across 23,000 institutions, including 1,500 high schools. - Educational institutions are present in every municipality across the country, and

every village, even small towns, has its own schools. There is no region in Algeria where children cannot attend school. Education has become compulsory and free for all. (Madi, 2007, p. 33)

Algeria has adopted the principle of democratic education, making it free and compulsory. At the same time, it has worked to Arabize education and Algerianized supervision at various levels. However, the quantitative growth of education has encountered difficulties and imbalances that have affected the quality of the teaching provided and the performance of the education system as a whole, leading to a decline in results and achievements achieved through state efforts. (Muhammad, 2001, p. 101)

However, global trends and economic and cognitive changes, as well as other developments, have necessitated reforms in the cultural and educational sectors to adapt to the latest developments. Achieving education for all in Algeria is no longer enough; greater attention must be paid to the qualitative aspect of education.

The Algerian education system has gone through several stages since independence to the present day, marked by numerous reforms affecting various educational, pedagogical and professional aspects. These perspectives are defined and planned in the light of the reality on the ground and the concerns and challenges of society, thus contributing to the preservation of the national identity and character, while responding to the new realities linked to internal and external transformations. • Strengthen the role of the school as a factor in affirming the Algerian identity and consolidating the unity of the Algerian people. • Ensure the promotion and preservation of values   related to Islam, Arabism, and Amazighness, represented by:

1/ Islam as a religion, culture, and civilization

2/ Arabism as a language, civilization, and culture

3/ Amazigh as a language, culture, and heritage

In the educational field, prospects include:

1/ The widespread use of digitalization in management, in all fields

2/ The widespread use of language laboratories

3/ The widespread use of information and communication technologies

4/ The acquisition by students of a genuine scientific and technological culture

5/ Strengthening the role of foreign language teaching in the Algerian education system, whether through their mastery as modern languages   or through their adoption as languages   of instruction in scientific and technological disciplines, in particular to enable students to access information and knowledge from their sources and at the time of their discovery. 6/ The development of foreign language teaching to enable Algerian students to acquire a true mastery of two foreign languages   by the end of primary education.

7/ The abolition of the double-shift system in all schools across the country.

8/ Significantly improve school exam success rates from 70% to 80%.

9/ Work to harmonize and improve educational standards within the same state and nationally, and reduce the dropout rate. (Muhammad, 2001, p. 108)

* Educational and administrative supervision:

1/ Require a high-level university degree with specialized training for Algerian teachers.

2/ Raise the qualification level of educational staff by making the university degree the benchmark.

These perspectives aim to build a new educational project that will enable Algeria to enter the third millennium and compete with developed countries. This will be achieved by relying extensively on modern and technological means, by raising the level of student success in universities and by improving the conditions and quality of scientific research.

2- Types of Educational Policies in Algeria
A- the Objectives-Based Approach

This period can be defined chronologically, from independence until the beginning of reforms in early 2003. The objectives of the first cycle of basic education were based on the following determinants:

- Precise definition of the objectives of the primary cycle;

- Definition of teaching materials and activities;

- Definition of the timetable for each subject or activity;

- Definition of the specific objectives and functions of each subject. (Boukarma, 2008, p. 56)

Thus, the primary cycle was based on the following objectives:

• To enable children to acquire the means of learning and communication (expression, reading, communication, arithmetic) and to reach a level that allows them to learn in the next cycle and use these skills to communicate with their environment; (Jean François , 2005, p. 37)

• To help them complete the causes of their psychological and motor development and progress towards the maturity necessary for their social integration;

• Develop healthy habits of thought through training in observation, comparison, and simple modification in all educational activities.

• Allow them to memorize a collection of surahs and verses from the Holy Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet, which instills in them a religious spirit, introduces them to Islamic values, and allows them to feel a sense of ownership of their personality and the values   of their society.

• Enable them to acquire good habits and a social and national ethic that fosters a spirit of cooperation, solidarity, respect for others, and the preservation of health, cleanliness, etiquette, and honesty. This ethic allows them to establish healthy relationships with the groups around them and instills in them love of their homeland and loyalty to the nation to which they belong.

• Teach them to enjoy manual work and use it as a means of developing their motor skills through games and activities involving assembly, disassembly, construction, and modeling, primarily aimed at developing mental processes and creativity. (Joycelyne, 1995, p. 148)

• Enable them to appreciate songs, melodies, and drawings and to practice them as a means of expression and communication with aspects of civilization and culture. • Enable them to discover and understand the environment they encounter and to experience its different realities (objects, phenomena, relationships).

B- the first-generation reforms: the competency-based approach and the constructivist vision.

This phase was characterized by a qualitative and radical shift, with the adoption of new curricula and a different approach. It represents the fourth phase of educational development in Algeria. In 2003, the National Committee for Education Reform was established and put into effect. Specialized committees were also appointed to reform the curricula. Accordingly, the curricula were redesigned according to the new approach, known as the competency-based approach. This approach is based on the constructivist approach and relies on the logic of learning centered around the student, their actions, and their reactions to problematic situations.

Through this approach, the student was abandoned from receiving and was given the initiative to actually do so, i.e., search for information, organize, arrange, and analyze situations. These situations are selected from real life experiences that the student encounters repeatedly.

For those who choose this approach, this choice is to make learning activities suitable for acquiring knowledge, good behavior, good adaptation, developing skills and abilities, and enhancing competencies. Adopting a constructivist approach places the learner and teacher as partners in building their knowledge, which is not without influence and impact. Therefore, those who developed this approach pointed to issues related to programs and their handling by:

- Employing various acquired knowledge to solve complex situations that the student will encounter in their school, social, and professional lives.

- Coordinating various types of learning in search of effective methods that allow for organizing and organizing learning and its use within the internal structure of the subject matter and integrating it with other subjects.

- Addressing the needs of the student, taking into account their unique abilities and the distinctiveness of their pedagogical path.

- Activating the formative function of assessment, which allows for the possibility of addressing deficiencies during the learning process and addressing them immediately.

Two dimensions were emphasized in the process of adopting the competency-based approach (Ben Bouzid, 2009, p. 54)

in the first-generation reforms:

The strategic dimension:

- This is a future-oriented approach. In addition to improving the educational system, it also involves a forward-looking approach to envision and establish a renewed school befitting a society undergoing daily transformations.

- An integrated approach that allows for better organization of all elements within the curriculum.

- A gradual approach that gives the curriculum a dynamic, future-oriented quality, with the ability to support and stabilize knowledge and progress at a clear pace.

- A scientific approach that ensures that the curriculum truly reflects the provisions of the Code of Procedure and clearly defined objectives, which rely on the construction of hypotheses and make the programs precise and applicable.

- The methodological dimension:

- The principle of comprehensiveness or holism, which takes into account the desired objectives and aims to achieve all aspects planned for graduation before embarking on the development of a specific curriculum.

- The principle of consistency, coherence, and interconnectedness between the various components of the curriculum, starting with the selection of objectives and ending with the development of the proposed assessment strategies.

- The principle of applicability, meaning taking into account all the elements of the context in which the curriculum is implemented and its feasibility.

- The principle of readability, meaning clarity in the components of the program, making it easy to perceive and understand the programs provided to the teacher and learner.

- The principle of evaluation, which coincides with the learning stages.

- The principle of adaptability, which requires alignment with the established objectives and suitability to the social, economic, and cultural needs and aspirations of society. (Ben Bouzid, 2009, p. 66)

Accompanying this, a set of measures and procedures were taken to effect a break from the first approach. This required the preparation of a set of educational documents to contribute to explaining the new approach and facilitating the reading and understanding of the new programs. Among the mechanisms included in the new reforms is the use of international coding and terminology through bilingual education, with the aim of acquiring scientific and technological information produced in a language other than Arabic.

In primary education, training is now provided on how to write and read mathematical operations from left to right, and the gradual use of familiar symbols and units of measurement, as well as Latin and Greek letters, in geometric descriptions.

The reliance on a competency-based approach at this stage stems from internal factors, such as the emergence of political pluralism and its connection to the concept of democratic pluralism, and the instilling of a spirit of citizenship in students. Not to mention the shifts toward a free economy, the abandonment of a planned economy, and the rapid development of information and communication technology. These factors have motivated those responsible

for education to adopt reform of the educational system.

Since schools interact with their social environment, they must respond to all these political, economic, cultural, and social challenges, with the aim of enabling Algerian schools to meet the challenges of the present and the future and achieve the scientific and cognitive conditions that can provide sustainable development.

C- Second-Generation Reforms: The Competency-Based Approach and Social Structuralism

The second-generation reforms, which began in 2016, addressed the errors and shortcomings that emerged in the implementation of the first-generation reform, on the one hand, and strengthened the competency-based approach, on the other. This approach was theoretically based on structuralism and social structuralism, meaning that knowledge is constructed, not a given that must be presented, while integrating the learner's environment (society) into learning. Some shortcomings were noted in the first-generation reforms, including:

- Program design without a frame of reference.

- The desired results were not achieved after adopting the competency-based approach.

- Lack of coordination between educational phases and stages.

- They were developed in a rushed manner.

- The lack of a curricular dimension.

The second generation curricula seek to achieve comprehensive proficiency for the first primary stage. This involves the learner communicating orally and in writing using correct language and reading simplified texts with an emphasis on the dialogic and directive style, in the range of 40 to 60 fully vocalized words, achieving final competencies in four language domains: listening comprehension, oral expression, reading comprehension, and written expression. Emphasis is placed on spoken texts, meaning that students listen to texts and attempt to reconstruct them in their own style. The textual approach was also maintained as a pedagogical option for teaching the Arabic language, making the text the focus of building competencies. As for mathematics, the focus was also on fields related to arithmetic, geometry, and problem-solving. (EZZINE, 2023, p. 136)

It is noteworthy that the centrality of competence remained unchanged, i.e., the general preservation of content with partial modifications. What changed, however, was the view of competence through the adoption of comprehensive competency profiles, values, attitudes, and transversal competence. Accordingly, the curricula were structured according to the following axes:

1- The Systemic Axis:

The convergence and convergence of curricula within a comprehensive learning unit. The curricula have a comprehensive and top-down vision, and horizontal and vertical coherence of curricula.

2- The Value Axis:

Identity values: belonging to Islam, Arabism, and Amazigh within a geographical and temporal framework limited by social, cultural, and universal values.

3- The Cognitive Axis:

The logical organization of knowledge – the conceptual matrix, a presentation consistent with the specificities of the subject, the structuring concepts of the subject, and the integration and unification of material knowledge.

4- The pedagogical axis:

This includes constructivist and social constructivist theory, the competency-based approach, the learning mandate, the integrative situation, and evaluation within the competency-based approach. (Ben Bouzid, 2009)

3- The Legal Framework for Education Policy in Algeria
A- Decree 76-35

Decree 76-35 is the first comprehensive legislative text regulating the education and training sector in Algeria after independence. It was issued in the context of building the modern Algerian state and its socialist orientations.

Areas of Regulation: The decree addressed various aspects of the education system, including:

Stages of Education: The decree defined the various stages of education, including preparatory education (non-compulsory), basic education (compulsory for 9 years), secondary education (general and technical), and higher education.

Organization of Educational Institutions: The decree addressed the establishment and organization of schools and various educational institutions.

Teacher Training: The decree laid the foundations for teacher training and qualification.

Curricula: The decree aimed to develop unified, national curricula.

Primary Objectives:

Universalization of Education: The decree sought to make education available to all Algerians as a fundamental right.

Unification of the Education System: The decree aimed to establish a unified education system nationwide, following the diversity of the educational system during the colonial period.

Training National Cadres: The Order sought to train the national cadres and expertise necessary for the country's development.

Meeting Development Needs: The Order linked the education system to the needs of economic and social development in Algeria.

Arabization: The Order stipulated the gradual Arabization of education.

Basic Education: The Order emphasized the importance of basic education and made it compulsory for nine years, with the goal of providing all Algerians with a minimum level of education.

Abolishing Private Education: Initially, the Order stipulated that education be the sole responsibility of the state and that private education be abolished. However, this decision was later reversed, and private investment in education was permitted.

Subsequent Reforms: Order 76-35 was amended and supplemented by subsequent laws, such as the National Education Guidance Law No. 08-04 of January 23, 2008. These subsequent laws introduced other reforms to the education system, such as focusing on preparatory education, reforming secondary education, and introducing information and communication technologies into education.

Environmental Dimension: Some studies have addressed the environmental dimension in Algerian educational policy through Order 35/76, which incorporated environmental concepts and principles into school curricula.

1. Political and Social Context:

Post-Independence Period: The order was issued during a crucial period in the history of independent Algeria, as the state sought to build its institutions, unify society, and meet the aspirations of the people after long years of colonialism.

The Socialist Orientation: During this period, Algeria adopted a socialist system, and this orientation had a significant impact on policy formulation in various sectors, including education. The order reflected this orientation through the state's centrality in the management and direction of education.

Building National Identity: Education was viewed as an essential tool for building national identity, promoting unity, and eliminating the effects of cultural and linguistic colonialism.

2. Details about the educational stages as stipulated by the order

Preparatory Education (Préscolaire): Initially, it was not compulsory, but it was recognized as important for early child development and preparing children for primary school.

Basic education (Enseignement Fondamental): This formed the cornerstone of the new education system and was compulsory and free for nine years. It aimed to provide a common knowledge and skill base for all Algerians. It was often divided into two stages:

Primary education (Primaire): lasting six years.

Middle education (Moyen): lasting three years.

Secondary education (Enseignement Secondaire): This education aimed to prepare students for higher education or working life. It included two main tracks:

General secondary education (Secondaire Général): Focused on literary and scientific subjects and prepared students for university.

Technical secondary education (Secondaire Technique): Focused on vocational and technical skills and prepared students for the labor market or higher technical education.

Higher education (Enseignement Supérieur): The Emirate did not address its details in depth, as subsequent laws and decrees were issued to regulate it. However, the Emirate laid the foundation for considering higher education essential for the development of the country's highest competencies.

3. Other important aspects of the Emirate:

Central planning: The Emirate emphasized the state's role in centralized education planning, including determining enrollment numbers, distributing resources, and developing curricula.

Free education: The Emirate clearly stipulated free education at all levels.

Compulsory basic education: The Emirate made basic education compulsory for all school-age children, a significant step toward combating illiteracy and universalizing education.

Continuous education: The Emirate emphasized the importance of continuous education for teachers and education sector personnel.

Relative decentralization: Despite the centralized approach, the Emirate allowed for a degree of decentralization in managing some executive aspects at the local level.

4. Subsequent developments and the impact of the Emirate:

Developments in curricula: The curricula underwent numerous developments and reforms after the Emirate was issued, with the aim of modernizing and adapting them to social and economic changes.

Restructuring of educational levels: Amendments to the structure of educational levels were introduced in subsequent laws.

Return of private education: Private investment in education was permitted under subsequent laws, thus impacting the state monopoly on education initially stipulated by.

Implementation Challenges: The implementation of the order faced numerous challenges on the ground, such as a lack of resources and infrastructure in some areas.

B- The 2008 Education Orientation Law

National Education Orientation Law No. 08-04 of January 23, 2008, is a fundamental law in Algeria. It defines the general principles and objectives of education and governs the educational process. This law, which constitutes the Constitution of National Education, includes seven chapters addressing various aspects of the education system.

General Objectives and Principles of Education, Chapters 1 and 2

To make education a guaranteed and free right for every child up to the age of 16, in accordance with the Constitution.

Education is a responsibility of the state, which devotes a significant portion of its budget to it.

To consolidate the national identity and values of Algerian society, particularly Islam, the Arabic language, and the Amazigh language.

To contribute to the formation of an open-minded citizen equipped with knowledge, skills, and values. Ensure equal opportunities for all students.

Develop national spirit and civic spirit.

Fight against school dropout and ensure completion of studies.

The Educational Community - Chapter Three

The law identifies the various stakeholders in the educational process, including students, teachers, administration, parents, and the local community.

It highlights the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in achieving educational objectives.

Organization of Education - Chapter Four

The law defines the different stages of education:

Preparatory Education: Optional, aimed at preparing children for basic education.

Basic Education: Compulsory for 9 years, including primary and secondary education.

Secondary Education: General, technical, and vocational, aimed at preparing students for higher education or the workforce.

Adult Education: Aims to empower those who were unable to complete their studies or wish to improve their level.

The law defines the principles for organizing study and teaching programs. It emphasizes the importance of academic and career guidance.

Education Sector Employees - Chapter Five

The law addresses the rights and responsibilities of education sector workers, including teachers, administrators, and inspectors.

It emphasizes the importance of teacher training and continuing development.

Educational Support Institutions and Structures (Chapter Six):

The law refers to educational support institutions and structures, such as research and training centers and school libraries.

Final Provisions (Chapter Seven)

Contains general and final provisions relating to the application and implementation of the law.

Significance of the 2008 Education Orientation Law:

Definition of the General Framework: Provides a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for the education sector in Algeria. Educational Policy Direction: Guides short-, medium-, and long-term educational policies and plans.

Definition of Rights and Duties: Defines the rights and duties of the various stakeholders in the educational process.

Reaffirmation of Fundamental Principles: Emphasizes the fundamental principles of education in Algeria, such as free education, compulsory education, and equal opportunity.

Conclusion

Investing in education is a strategic gain, given its critical importance in promoting community development. Therefore, in preparing this project, it was necessary to understand the educational policy in Algeria, its legal foundations, and the most important transformations taking place in the educational system, particularly the current challenges that have become a real obstacle to the development of both the educational and teaching systems.

Given our field experience in dealing with various approaches, whether when we were teaching, teaching, or managing educational institutions, it can be said that reforming the educational system does not bring anything new in terms of fields and topics. Rather, it is merely updating the content in accordance with the law and what is called "Algerianization" of education. We also note the large number of concepts presented by the competency-based approach and the various expressive forms that have placed both teachers and learners in a vortex, especially in primary education, where the burden of the competency-based approach program exceeds the learner's capabilities, even if its form respects the rules of differential pedagogy. Primary education allows children to have their first experience with the world of teaching and learning. Their formation in this space is of paramount importance, and therefore, this content should not be objectified, as much as it should be directed towards serving the learner.

All these contradictions and others, contained in the seven-chapter guiding law for education, continue to operate a school governed by the ideologies that have succeeded in the National Education portfolio. This is in addition to the political changes that have affected the system in one way or another, in addition to the introduction of second-generation reforms, which are gradually being implemented and should have a forward-looking and realistic vision of what the modern Algerian school aspires to. This does not mean erasing the past or improvising, but rather building on the legacy of the Algerian school, opening up to the world, and even presenting a unique Algerian model to emulate.

This is what we are attempting to work towards in this project by establishing a digital school that keeps pace with transformations, which have become a strategic necessity imposed by accelerating global changes, whether at the technological, educational, or administrative levels.

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