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THE FOUNDATION OF THE THIRD RENAISSANCE AND THE HUMAN FACTOR IN ABAY'S PHILOSOPHY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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Abstract: The article provides a comparative analysis of the spiritual and philosophical foundations of the idea of the Third Renaissance and the human factor in the philosophy of Abai Qunanbayev. The study examines issues related to human beings, knowledge, morality, and education by comparing Abai's intellectual legacy with the educational and human capital development priorities outlined in the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026. The research is based on academic articles, official documents, and data from international organizations. The findings indicate that in Abai's philosophy, the human being is viewed through the unity of knowledge, labor, and morality, while the Development Strategy identifies the advancement of human capital through education as a priority. The article substantiates that the integration of these two approaches can serve as an important theoretical foundation for planning educational reforms based on spiritual and moral values.

Keywords: Third Renaissance, Abai's philosophy, human factor, Development Strategy, educational reforms, human capital, spiritual and moral education.

INTRODUCTION

The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 identifies the development of education and human capital as its fourth priority area [1]. Within the framework of this strategy, specific targets have been set for increasing preschool education coverage, expanding opportunities for higher education, and improving the quality of education. International cooperation documents emphasize the necessity of linking educational reforms to measurable outcomes to be achieved by 2026 [2].

The success of educational reforms depends not only on material indicators but also on their spiritual and philosophical foundations. Questions regarding the type of individual to be nurtured, the purpose of imparting knowledge, and the ethical criteria upon which education should be based define the substance of these reforms. Consequently, aligning educational policy with national spiritual traditions is a matter of significant importance.

The concept of a "Third Renaissance" is being advanced as the framework for Uzbekistan's national development. In scholarly analysis, this concept is interpreted as the content of the "national idea" at a new stage of development, with particular emphasis placed on its influence on policies concerning education, human resources, and investment [3]. However, the philosophical foundations of this concept—specifically the understanding of the human being—have not yet been sufficiently systematized.

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of the spiritual foundation of the "Third Renaissance" concept in relation to the "human factor" as presented in the philosophy of Abai Kunanbayev, and to substantiate the significance of this comparison for educational reforms. The research aims to address the following objectives: first, to identify the core elements of the concept of the human being within Abai's philosophy; second, to analyze the "human capital" approach within the context of development strategy; third, to demonstrate the points of alignment and divergence between these two approaches; and fourth, to develop recommendations for educational reforms.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

In Abai's philosophy, the human being occupies a central position. Researchers note that in Abai's *Words* (prose poems), the moral, intellectual, and emotional dimensions of the human being are considered in an integrated manner. Analyzing Abai's perspectives—which encompass humanism, morality, and faith—Tursynbayeva and Maldybek observe that he views the human being not merely as a biological entity, but as a spiritual and moral individual [4]. From the perspective of the philosophy of education, Abai's legacy is examined in two dimensions: knowledge and the development of the individual. By comparing Abai's works with those of Western philosophers, his views on education are analyzed within the framework of metaphysical, epistemological, and pedagogical inquiries. This analysis demonstrates that knowledge serves as a means for the cultivation of the individual [5].

The study employs theoretical-analytical methods, a comparative approach, and the substantive interpretation of official documents. The sources selected include scholarly articles, official documents, and international reports published after 2016. Primary sources—Abai's own works—are interpreted in this analysis through the lens of secondary studies, as modern editions and translations of his writings are frequently cited within these works.

In economic theory, the concept of "human capital" is an approach that views human skills, knowledge, and health as the primary source of a society's wealth. This perspective regards investment in education as an endeavor that yields long-term benefits. However, this economic interpretation defines the essence of a human being solely in terms of productivity and income. In contrast, the philosophy of Abai views the human being not within such narrow confines, but as an individual capable of moral and spiritual perfection. Therefore, broadening the concept of human capital—by incorporating spiritual and moral components—is a theoretically sound approach.

This article distinguishes between two dimensions of human capital: technical proficiency and spiritual maturity. Technical proficiency is measured by skills, knowledge, and practical experience, whereas spiritual maturity relates to moral choices, a sense of responsibility, compassion, and an awareness of the interests of society. The philosophy of Abai emphasizes the unity of these two dimensions [4], while development strategies tend to prioritize the former [1]. Integrating the second dimension into such strategies requires a solid theoretical and practical foundation.

To identify the constituent elements of the "Third Renaissance" concept, it is necessary to examine its scholarly interpretations. According to scholarly analysis, this concept represents the content of a new stage of the national idea and implies that it should be directed toward all spheres of development, including education, human resources, and investment policy [3]. In this interpretation, three elements stand out: scientific-technical and educational potential, the spiritual-moral perfection of the individual, and national unity. In this article, each of these elements is compared with corresponding concepts from the philosophy of Abai.

The first element—scientific-technical and educational potential—aligns fully with the primary focus of the development strategy. The second element—spiritual-moral perfection—

occupies a central place in Abai's philosophy. The third element—national unity—is linked in Abai's works to the themes of the unity of the people and an awareness of one's own roots. Thus, the philosophy of Abai provides a theoretical foundation for the second and third elements of the "Third Renaissance" concept.

1. The Individual and Knowledge. In the philosophy of Abai, knowledge is presented as the most significant human value. The view that knowledge is only beneficial when combined with morality necessitates that, within the educational process, spiritual upbringing be given equal weight to the imparting of knowledge. This perspective aids in understanding the balance between the quality of academic knowledge and the quality of moral upbringing within the context of contemporary educational reforms. 2. Ethics and Responsibility. In Abai's philosophy, moral perfection is linked to an individual's awareness of their responsibility toward society. Tursynbayeva and Maldybek place moral values at the center of Abai's works [4]. This approach highlights the necessity of fostering both independent thinking and social responsibility within an individual through education.

3. Education and Personal Development. Shon analyzes education within Abai's legacy as a process intrinsically connected to the development of the individual [5]. Education is viewed not merely as the accumulation of knowledge, but as a means of shaping one's inner world—a perspective that reveals a broader interpretation of the concept of human capital.

4. Human Capital in the Development Strategy. The development strategy identifies human capital as a primary driver of economic growth. Within the education sector, targets have been set to increase preschool enrollment from 67% to 80% and to raise higher education enrollment to 50% [2]. While these goals are based on quantitative indicators, their ethical or spiritual dimension is not explicitly addressed within the strategy.

5. The Concept of the Third Renaissance. The concept of the Third Renaissance is interpreted as a contemporary expression of the national idea. Scientific analysis emphasizes that its key areas—education, human resources, and investment policy—must be aligned with this idea [3]. While this interpretation allows for a connection to Abai's philosophy, such a link has not yet been systematically substantiated.

6. Planning education on a spiritual foundation. When planning educational policy, one should apply not only quantitative goals but also spiritual criteria. These criteria encompass aspects such as a student's moral development, sense of responsibility, and the ability to apply knowledge independently. The philosophy of Abai can provide a theoretical basis for these criteria.

7. The unity of morality and knowledge. One of the central ideas in Abai's philosophy is the inseparability of knowledge and morality. The perspective that an individual who has acquired knowledge but fails to direct it toward moral ends can become a danger to society defines the very essence of the educational process. By linking education to the development of the individual, Abai demonstrates that the value of knowledge is measured by what it contributes to the human being [5]. This approach highlights the risks inherent in modern education when the acquisition of knowledge is decoupled from moral upbringing.

8. Labor and socially useful activity. In the legacy of Abai, labor is interpreted as an essential prerequisite for an individual's spiritual development. The integration of labor-oriented upbringing with the acquisition of knowledge ensures that an individual becomes a useful member of society. Similarly, development strategies emphasize the training of personnel and the strengthening of the connection between education and the labor market [1]. At this point, two approaches converge: an individual who realizes their own worth through labor becomes a true bearer of human capital.

9. Independent thinking. In Abai's philosophy, the idea that education should teach a person to think critically and independently stands out. Tursynbayeva and Maldybek note that, in Abai's works, it is essential for an individual to rely on their own reason and to be capable of making moral choices [4]. In the development strategy, meanwhile, independent thinking skills are viewed as an integral component of educational quality—though this is framed primarily in terms of "competencies."

10. National identity and global competence. The concept of a "Third Renaissance" entails integrating into the modern world while simultaneously preserving national identity [3]. In his own time, Abai also emphasized the necessity of learning from the achievements of other nations. The synthesis of these two aspects underscores the need for educational programs to strike a balance between national values and international knowledge.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A comparative analysis reveals that Abai's philosophy and the development strategy approach the issue of the human being from different perspectives. Abai views human perfection as a synthesis of morality, knowledge, and labor, whereas the strategy links human capital to outcomes measurable through education and economic growth. This distinction suggests that the two approaches can be complementary: one defines the spiritual purpose of education, while the other addresses its practical dimension.

The first point of alignment concerns the value of knowledge. Both approaches recognize knowledge as the foundation of societal development. In the development strategy, expanding access to preschool and higher education serves as an institutional manifestation of this value [2]. Abai's philosophy, however, posits that knowledge is rendered useless if it lacks a moral foundation [4]. Consequently, metrics regarding the provision of knowledge must be considered in conjunction with indicators of moral upbringing.

The second aspect relates to the integrity of the human being. In Abai's analysis, a human being is viewed simultaneously as an intellectual, emotional, and moral entity [4]. While the development strategy strives for a multifaceted understanding of human capital, its spiritual component remains underdeveloped. Abai's legacy can be utilized to bridge this gap. The third aspect concerns the connection between education and life. In Abai's philosophy, the goal of education is defined as the attainment of human perfection [5]. In contrast, contemporary educational reforms often measure outcomes primarily through examination scores and the number of institutions. While these metrics are significant, they fail to fully capture a student's capacity for independent thinking or their sense of social responsibility.

A practical conclusion drawn from this comparative analysis is that educational reforms should employ a dual set of indicators: quantitative metrics—such as coverage, infrastructure, and resources—alongside qualitative indicators, including moral development, a sense of responsibility, and the independent application of knowledge. Such an approach provides a clearer articulation of the "Third Renaissance" concept within educational policy.

A scholarly analysis of the "Third Renaissance" concept reveals that, as a national vision, it is oriented toward policies concerning education, human capital development, and investment [3]. However, the spiritual and philosophical foundations of this concept—specifically its connection to the legacy of Abai—have not yet been sufficiently substantiated from an academic perspective. This article addresses that gap, in part, through the proposed comparative approach.

This topic is also significant from an international perspective. In Kazakhstan, the jubilee of Abai was widely celebrated in 2020, highlighting his pedagogical values and the necessity of achieving a deeper understanding through study [6]. This experience demonstrates that

incorporating regional spiritual heritage into educational curricula can serve to develop both national identity and modern competencies.

A system of quantitative indicators is a strong feature of the educational strategy. The goal set out in the strategy—to increase preschool education coverage from 67 percent to 80 percent—is clear and measurable [5]. However, an increase in coverage does not automatically guarantee an improvement in the quality of education. Since moral and social skills are formed during the preschool years, coverage metrics must be complemented by qualitative criteria. The philosophy of Abai can provide a spiritual dimension for these qualitative criteria: a child should not merely attend school, but also internalize the values of proper conduct and compassion.

Similarly, the goal of increasing higher education coverage to 50 percent presents a twofold challenge. First, an increase in the number of students places greater demands on teaching staff and infrastructure. Secondly, implementing a person-centered approach to upbringing becomes more challenging when working with a large number of students. Therefore, as the system expands, specific mechanisms—such as a mentorship (curator) system and dedicated moral-educational sessions—are essential to preserve the spiritual and ethical dimension within the learning process.

According to documents from the Global Partnership for Education, it is estimated that approximately 1.2 million new places will be required in public schools by 2026 [2]. This figure illustrates the scale of the financial and organizational demands placed on the education system. Under these circumstances, the moral substance of educational reform should be realized not merely through the number of classrooms, but through the teacher's pedagogical skill in fostering character and the overall school environment.

One can illustrate a simplified example of applying Abai's ideas within educational practice. For instance, in a primary school lesson, a student's ability to help others is evaluated alongside their academic achievement. At the end of the lesson, the student explains how they applied their knowledge, which highlights the ethical dimension of that knowledge. Such an approach does not negate the results of standardized testing; rather, it links these results to the development of the individual. This example is hypothetical and does not refer to any specific school. The risk of a merely formal approach must also be taken into account. If moral and ethical education is included in official documentation but not implemented within the actual teaching process, Abai's ideas will remain nothing more than slogans. To prevent this, moral criteria should be integrated into professional development programs for teachers, criteria for lesson observation, and school reporting procedures.

The regional context is a crucial element of the analysis. In both Kazakhstan and other Central Asian nations, Abai's legacy is regarded as an integral part of the history of education and enlightenment. This shared heritage provides an opportunity for the peoples of the region to foster mutual understanding within the realm of educational philosophy. The concept of a "Third Renaissance" entails both the strengthening of national identity and the promotion of regional cooperation; this makes it highly appropriate to study Abai's legacy within the regional context of educational curricula [6].

From the perspective of historical continuity, the concept of a "Third Renaissance" must be linked to earlier traditions of enlightenment. In the late 19th century, Abai put forward the idea of renewing society through knowledge and enlightenment. Contemporary development strategies, within the digital and economic landscape of the 21st century, pursue a similar objective. While this parallel suggests a functional connection between the two eras, the conditions under which they exist differ significantly. Therefore, when applying Abai's ideas to modern education, it is essential to take the historical context into account.

In the context of digital education, the relevance of Abai's ideas becomes even more pronounced. While the expansion of information flows facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, it may simultaneously diminish one's capacity for ethical and spiritual discernment. Consequently, alongside the development of digital competencies, it is necessary to cultivate skills in evaluating information, selecting sources, and exercising ethical responsibility. Abai's perspective on the unity of knowledge and morality provides a clear guiding principle for this endeavor. Integrating these two dimensions ensures that digital education remains grounded in spiritual substance.

It is also important to consider the educational component within the broader development strategy. While strategic indicators tend to focus on institutions, coverage, and outcomes, the mechanism for measuring spiritual or moral outcomes remains undefined. This highlights the necessity—proposed in this article—of employing both quantitative and qualitative criteria.

A limitation of this article is that the comparative analysis is primarily theoretical and document-based; it lacks empirical data regarding the outcomes of applying Abai's ideas within educational institutions. Furthermore, certain translations and interpretations of Abai's works were examined via secondary sources. Future research would benefit from incorporating data derived from surveys and observations conducted within educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This article arrives at two primary conclusions regarding the search for the spiritual foundation of the "Third Renaissance" concept. First, the unity of the human being, knowledge, and morality—a core tenet of Abai's philosophy—serves as a theoretical resource that complements the "human capital" approach to development strategy. Second, to effectively utilize this resource, educational policy must integrate both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Together, these two conclusions define the substantive direction for educational reforms. The scholarly contribution of this article lies in its examination of Abai's philosophy and the development strategy within a comparative framework. Typically, Abai's legacy is studied separately—within the context of literature or history—while development strategies are viewed as economic or administrative documents. Integrating these two areas opens up new theoretical possibilities in the philosophy of education and enriches political decision-making with a spiritual foundation.

In conclusion, the human factor in Abai's philosophy and the spiritual foundation of the "Third Renaissance" concept are mutually complementary approaches. Abai views human perfection as a synthesis of knowledge, morality, and responsibility, while the development strategy links human capital to goals measurable through education. This alignment enables educational reforms to be planned upon a spiritual foundation. The practical recommendations of the article are as follows:

Implementing these recommendations requires collaboration among educational administrators, teachers, and the broader community. The Ministry of Education establishes the criteria, schools adapt them to their specific contexts, and parents and the local community (neighborhood/mahalla) become active participants in the upbringing and educational process. This tripartite engagement integrates the spiritual essence of educational reform into daily life. Therefore, the approach proposed in this article should be viewed not merely as a set of theoretical suggestions, but as a framework for organizational and practical action.

The findings of this article offer practical implications for educational policy at three levels. The first level is normative: the spiritual-moral component is explicitly incorporated into educational standards. The second level is methodological: criteria for lesson design and assessment are updated for teachers. The third level is social: interaction with families and the

community is strengthened. When these levels function in tandem, the concept of the "Third Renaissance" acquires tangible substance within educational practice.

First, defining criteria for spiritual and moral upbringing in educational curricula, alongside quantitative indicators;

Second, incorporating the legacy of Abai—through a contemporary interpretation—into educational curricula and linking it to the process of teacher training;

Third, employing a combined set of indicators—encompassing knowledge, ethics, and responsibility—when assessing the quality of education;

Fourth, verifying the implementation of the "Third Renaissance" concept within educational policy through clearly defined criteria;

Fifth, systematically monitoring the outcomes of educational reforms via scientific research and surveys.

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