

# Study on Education Policy Transfer of China in the Context of Globalization

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## ABSTRACT

With the development of economic globalization since the 1980s, knowledge started to flow rapidly in the international market competition. In the field of education, all types of forms of educational knowledge also begin to transfer from one country or region to another, mainly reflected in the fact that each country's educational policy is often an isomorphism at a faster pace and more consistent content than before.

“International education policy transfer” refers to the dynamic process of a country's education policies trans-boundary comparison, transplantation or transfer. It involves the complex process by which a country changes and ADAPTS such external educational policies or practices, and then implements and assimilates them. China's recent education reforms reflect a global trend of borrowing education policies from English-speaking countries such as the United States. In essence, China's reform proposition shifts from reproduction and dissemination of knowledge to student-centered knowledge construction. However, there are fundamental cultural differences between China and the West in the nature and dissemination of knowledge, which makes the transfer of China's education policy challenging. Based on the study of China's education policy reform under the current background of globalization, under the guidance of comparative education theory, a more suitable path for China's education policy reform under the background of globalization is explored.

Through literature review, a large number of articles on China's educational policy formulation and cultural differences between China and the West are reviewed in this paper, and it is proposed that China should prudently draw lessons from educational policies and integrate domestic and foreign knowledge resources, teaching resources and learning resources. In the process of educational policy transfer, China should combine Chinese culture and philosophy, and combine the traditional educational model with the western educational system to achieve better results.

**Keywords:** *China, globalization, education policy transfer, policy input, policy output*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of globalization, governments and institutions in most countries in the world have seen the same development trend in the understanding and structure of education, and the goals, contents and implementation of education policies have shifted across national boundaries and become somewhat similar. The transfer of educational policy is considered as an important factor for the international convergence of educational policies. Over the past few decades, China has been borrowing from English-speaking countries the idea of selective education. China's education system today is a blend of Western and local ideas, values and methods. But these policies have strong traditional Chinese values. Through the investigation of the establishment,

implementation, results and acceptance of China's educational policy transfer, it can be seen that China's educational policy transfer is facing some key challenges. The topic of this paper is the transfer of China's education policy in the context of globalization. Questions to explore include the challenges China faces in its education reform process and the reasons for these challenges. At the same time, this paper will combine the theory of education policy transfer to provide some suggestions for improvement of China's education reform.

## 2. THE TRANSFER THEORY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

Educational policy transfer is a core topic in the field of comparative education research. It refers to a

two-way interactive process in which one country imports an educational policy and another country exports an educational policy, and then converts and adjusts an educational policy into an educational strategy of the importing country and puts it into practice. David Phillips, director of the International Comparative Education Research Center of the Department of Education of Oxford University, and Kimberley Oakes of Oxford University proposed four steps, including cross-country attraction, decision-making, implementation and internalization/localization, on how to learn and learn from foreign educational policies and practice educational policies as a reference model[1].

National attraction is the first step in a four-step model of impulsiveness and externalization potential. One country's interest in other country's education policies is the result of multiple dynamics. The drivers include dissatisfaction with the state of education at home, the new world, globalization and the political change. Intrinsic motivation is the premise of educational policy transfer, which urges educational reformers to seek potential educational models from other countries to solve existing, emerging or potential problems in their own countries.

The second step of the four-step model is decision making, which is the key to the choices and the actions that should be taken to promote education reform. Due to the differences of intrinsic motivation and externalization potential, countries will make different decisions about education policies, including theoretical decisions, false decisions, practical or practical decisions and emergency decisions.

After making a decision, it's necessary to consider how to implement the decision, which is the third step -- implementation. In order to enhance the adaptability of education policies, policy makers not only need to adapt foreign models to the domestic situation, but also need to update or change domestic education to create a good environment and implement new policies to speed up the transfer process of education policies.

The last step of the education policy reference process is the internationalization/localization stage, that is, foreign education policies are gradually integrated into the domestic education system and become an integral part of the domestic education system. Based on the concepts of "cultural relativism" and "national characteristics", this step mainly needs to examine the existing education system and the motivation and goals of educational policy makers from the aspects of curriculum, assessment, teaching methods and organization. At the same time, policy makers need to make detailed analysis of background factors to determine the extent to which these foreign educational features can be adopted by the home country.

The British educator Sir Michael Sadler stressed the importance of cultural background to the transfer of educational policies in his article *How Far Can We*

*Learn Anything of Practical Value from the Study of Foreign Systems of Education*. He said that when studying foreign educational systems, we should not only focus on teachers and students, but should look for those invisible and inaccessible spiritual forces, from which we can find the reasons why schools achieve practical results[2]. Therefore, the theory of educational policy transfer emphasizes that importing countries should improve their own culture and philosophy in order to form a more suitable educational system.

### **3. RECENT EDUCATION POLICY REFORM IN CHINA**

China's education policy shifted from the 1950s to those of the Soviet Union and western countries such as the United States in recent decades. Until the 1980s, China has embarked on a series of education reforms to equip its graduates to meet the challenges of globalization. Many of China's education reforms are similar to neoliberal measures implemented in the West, such as an emphasis on critical, creative and innovative thinking. These reforms are based mainly on the philosophy of pragmatism, constructivism and liberalism. China's recent educational reforms can be summarized as the pursuit of "quality-oriented education".

The problems of Chinese students' low innovation ability and weak comprehensive ability have attracted wide attention from people from all walks of life, and "quality education" is a very prominent manifestation of the reference to western culture and policy transfer from the, mainly, English-speaking countries. Many Chinese colleges and universities also absorb and learn from excellent western educational ideas to varying degrees, emphasize personality development, and cultivate students' comprehensive abilities such as innovation ability and scientific research ability.

In pursuit of "quality education", the Chinese government has made major reforms to China's education system. The curriculum reform has been accompanied by greater school autonomy. All schools have about a third of the curriculum to design and implement their own subjects, courses and activities. At the same time, the teacher-centered approach has been replaced by a new form of learning that promotes student-centered learning and the development of individual autonomy and collaboration.

### **4. CHALLENGES FACED BY CHINA IN EDUCATION POLICY TRANSFER**

The current curriculum reform in China advocates student-centered teaching. China's curriculum reform aims to encourage students to actively build their understanding of the world. It is of great significance for constructivism to emphasize western educational

policy. Constructivism emphasizes learner's initiative and holds that learning is a process in which learners produce meaning and construct understanding based on original knowledge and experience. In this mode of education, learning is the active construction of meaning. According to its own experience and background, it actively selects and processes external information to obtain its own meaning. However, unlike western constructivism, Chinese educators have traditionally regarded knowledge as relatively fixed rather than fluid and structured. Traditionally, Chinese education focuses on the learner's objective experience of constructing knowledge and concepts rather than subjective experience.

According to an interview with the vice president of a school in Shanghai, there are many skills and technologies in China, but the master only teaches what it is, instead of requiring learners to ask and think more, learners will gradually develop the habit of letting the master teach them, and never consider the reasons for doing so[3]. The fundamental reason why China encounters these difficulties in the process of educational policy transfer is the ideological difference between China and the West. Western culture emphasizes individualism, while Chinese culture pays more attention to socialism. For thousands of years, China's feudal society was based on totalitarianism, which made people blindly believe in power and authority and dare not question it[4]. This is in sharp contrast to the critical spirit of the West. Chinese students are generally introverted and are not used to exploring questions raised by teachers. They are reluctant to challenge teachers and textbooks as symbols of authority. It is this cultural tradition that prevents Chinese students from forming their own concept of knowledge. Under this background, education reform aiming at "quality education" cannot achieve good results.

In the early 1950s, Chinese curriculum was limited to textbooks defined by knowledge points, and teaching was narrowly defined as the transfer of knowledge. Chinese educators have always believed that knowledge is taught to learners by experts. In school education, "expert" means teacher. Teachers are regarded as the repository and source of knowledge. The exam is teacher-centered and assesses students' mastery of what the teacher has taught them in class. The curriculum reform requires a fundamental change in teacher-student relationship. Teachers are no longer the source of knowledge, but the co-creator of knowledge, is to guide students to learn actively. This means that they give up the authority they can gain as teachers and reduce their identity to that of learners. The position of authority in traditional Chinese culture makes it difficult for teachers to achieve this. At the same time, because these Chinese teachers grow up in a traditional learning environment, their ways of thinking and acting are often fixed. Although it is difficult for education policymakers and regulators to judge whether this new model of education is

effective, coupled with the ingrained culture of traditional teaching methods, Chinese teachers are likely to return to familiar teaching practices.

In addition, while curriculum reform has introduced a diverse curriculum of student-centered teaching and alternative assessment, successful high-risk tests remain the most important in the eyes of students and parents. This shows that test-oriented education is still deeply rooted in Chinese culture because of the pragmatic philosophy of traditional Chinese culture. In the traditional Chinese concept, knowledge is reduced to the tool of action and truth to the success of action. This is because of the imperial examination system which has been practiced in China for more than one thousand years. This system greatly amplifies the usefulness and importance of examinations for the Chinese people, because only by doing well in examinations can one have a high official position and a happy life. This idea was further deepened after the appearance of the college entrance examination system. Test scores were seen as the only way to a better future. As a result, many Chinese parents do not support their children spending too much time on non-test subjects. Parents worry that these activities, which they see as useless, will take up students' study time and prevent them from getting good grades in the exam. "When we wanted to do something creative, our parents told us we couldn't do it, we just needed to do homework," some high school students said in an interview. "Parents will initially allow their children to take part in activities, but because of the exam, they will say they don't do anything but study," said one teacher. As long as there are high-risk exams, the fierce competition between parents for the best schools and universities will continue[5]. Given this general reality in China, it is difficult for educators to promote student-centered learning.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION FOR CHINA'S EDUCATION POLICY TRANSFER**

According to the different degree of educational policy transfer, using comparative political science research to distinguish the degree of policy transfer, educational policy transfer can be further divided into five levels: copying, mixing, synthesis and inspiration. China's education reform has achieved basically two points: measure and emulation, but technique and synthesis need to be improved. To put it simply, it is necessary to reinterpret foreign educational policies in combination with the domestic background, so as to better integrate them into the overall national macro strategy.

For any policy lending to be sustainable, it must find resonance with local beliefs and practices. This paper suggests that China wisely integrates foreign and local sources of knowledge. First of all, the integration of Chinese and foreign resources is not a choice of "useful" Western knowledge, technology and skills,

while ignoring their cultural foundation. Policy makers and educators should analyze and coordinate foreign and local knowledge as well as its substance and functions. At the same time, researchers should provide an alternative to the Chinese-led teacher-centered paradigm in a way more consistent with Chinese tradition and philosophy. For example, Chinese teachers can be transformed from knowledge repositories into co-creators and promoters of knowledge, while maintaining their traditional status in society. Teachers can also reflect, construct and apply their own theories independently when implementing curriculum reform. This approach makes it possible for Chinese students to actively participate and question authoritative sources without being seen as disrespectful. Therefore, a more suitable way of education reform for Chinese culture should be student-centered and teacher-led. As the center of the class, students can build their understanding of specific concepts through group discussions and other forms, while the teacher's task is to guide the teaching and transmit texts. As a result, teachers have been able to combine with varying degrees of success the engaging and innovative curriculum required by educational reform and provide students with a wealth of content knowledge. This teaching method has not broken away from the ancient Chinese educational tradition, so it can be better implemented.

Another suggestion is to improve the educational transfer policy based on the pragmatic philosophy of Chinese traditional culture. Because test scores are seen as the only way for people to have a better future, Chinese people pay more attention to exams because of their pragmatic nature. Therefore, in the process of educational policy transfer, the necessity of examination should be weakened so that students' independent thinking ability is as important as examination. When recruiting new students for schools or companies, they should focus on exploring students' personal characteristics rather than just their test scores. Those who are not so good academically but are more thoughtful have a better chance than those who only have good grades. In this way, promoting quality education is no longer a simple slogan, but a "useful" thing. As a result, students, parents and teachers will be better able to implement this new education policy -- because it will bring them success.

## 6. CONCLUSION

With the expansion of globalization, the global education system and education decision-making are increasingly interdependent, and the policy makers of the education reform in many countries will refer to the experience of other countries when facing similar economic and social problems around the world. Hence, the convergence and convergence of education policies around the world will occur. The transfer and

reference of international educational policy have become an important part of international educational cooperation and competition, promoting the process of educational innovation in various countries. The case study of China's educational policy transfer shows that in this process, the institutional and cultural background of school education is a key factor in the effectiveness of China's curriculum reform[6]. However, education reformers in China have not fully analyzed the social and cultural constraints of China. Therefore, China's education reform has encountered challenges. This paper argues that there are fundamental cultural differences between Chinese and Western views on the nature and dissemination of knowledge. This paper proposes that China should learn from western educational policies more wisely and combine them with Chinese traditional educational models in two ways. The first one is to let Chinese teachers change from the source of knowledge to the co-creator of knowledge together with students and the second one is to reduce the significance of certain exam in order to make people implement the policy of quality education.

At present, the deficiency of this paper is that there is not enough data to support the discussion, and more is the result obtained from literature review. What needs to be done next is to issue questionnaires and collect a large amount of data, so as to use the statistical results to demonstrate more strongly the problems encountered in the process of China's education reform and the reasons for them. Future studies will focus on the exporting country in the theory of educational policy transfer. According to this theory, the exporter does not always pay in the transfer of educational policies, and the importer may provide "counter-reference" to the exporter after internalizing the foreign educational policies. In other words, by transplanting an educational policy into different "soils", the understanding of the educational policy can be further deepened, and the innovative practice of education generated in the transplantation can also help to improve the educational model of the country. By studying the influence of educational policy transfer on policy exporting countries under the globalization environment, it can help to promote the development process of educational internationalization.

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