

Asian Educational Policy and the Impact of Globalization on It

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ABSTRACT

Most of the research theories on education policy are mainly from European and American countries, but there are few studies on the education policy theory of Asian countries. Especially under the influence of globalization, Asian countries have to adopt educational policies and practices that conform to The Times to provide better teaching quality. This paper begins by discussing the concept of globalization and its impact on educational policy and practice. Then, it introduces in detail the opportunities and challenges faced by Asian countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and Malaysia in dealing with globalization in education policies and practices due to their different cultural and historical backgrounds. This paper will illustrate the educational policies and practices of Asian countries under different historical backgrounds through comparative demonstrations and case studies. Finally, the thesis evaluates and expounds on the educational policies and practices of Asian countries in response to the trend of globalization. This paper argues that under the trend of globalization, Asian countries should make educational policies and practices in accordance with their national conditions based on the cultural and political background to ensure their effectiveness.

Keywords: Globalization, education policy, education practice, Asian countries, neoliberalis

1. INTRODUCTION

In their book *Globalization of Education Policy*, Fazal Rizvi and Bob Lingard claim that neoliberal ideology may be the driving force behind the globalization process. It generates and replicates social imaginings that limit the transformative potential of education. This social imagination shapes regional, national and global ideologies and plays an important role in shaping policies to address problems. The government will employ strategies to match policy discourse with dominant social phenomena to ensure consensus and legitimize policies[1]. As neoliberal political agendas have become increasingly dominant, these ideas have been extended and applied to the complex politics of global-national policy formation, dissemination and formulation[2]. Some scholars argue that not all countries experience globalization in the same way. Because the degree of autonomy and participation of different countries in the global economy and culture depends largely on their geopolitical terrain. The region's more conservative social systems mean it is hard to get in touch with western neoliberalism. The trend of globalization affects the politics and economy of Asian countries[3]. This paper mainly discusses the role of educational policy in Asian

practice in the context of globalization. Rifzi and Ringerto argue that many of the old theories and methodological approaches of policy research are not enough, and that new tools and ways of thinking must be adopted to understand the process of educational policy and practice through a range of transnational forces and linkages. This paper will provide theoretical evidence for Asia to make correct decisions in the context of globalization. In other words, the implementation of new policies should be based on the local cultural and social context, rather than blindly adopting western knowledge structures.

2. THE GLOBAL EDUCATION POLICY IN ASIA

The policy has been hotly debated and fought over because dissentients in different cultural, social and political contexts understand and formulate policies in ways that have implicit knowledge and deep assumptions about the social world[4]. As noted earlier, many of these insights come from studies conducted in European and American countries[5]. Thus, the growing interest in educational policy research underlines the changing state form under the pressure of neoliberal reforms[6]. In this

case, liberal countries have stronger political discourse and popular legitimacy. Many Asian countries traditionally characterized by strength or development cannot well accept the understanding of European and American countries, especially in a society where normative order is often deeply rooted[7]. In addition, some Asian countries face ideological, cultural, historical and political tensions as they enact policies that initially embody global, transnational aspirations. In the smaller "peripheral" countries of Asia, much of the education policy discourse is actually borrowed from the more dominant European and American countries. Some scholars believe that considering the significant differences between the knowledge structure of European and American countries and the existing regulatory order in Asia, it is necessary to study the global education policy in Asia.

Most of the studies on education policy in Asia are based on east Asian countries and southeast Asian countries, such as China, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Singapore. However, some scholars believe that Asian countries are not a homogeneous group[8]. Different Asian countries are influenced by their unique colonial histories, ethnic tensions, and cultural politics, which leads to a very different history of education policies in these countries. For example, authoritarianism and elitism in South Korea prevent citizens from participating in the educational administration and policy-making process. As a result, Education policies in South Korea can often be easily modified by policymakers regardless of the actual teaching situation. According to McGinn, the Education Law has been amended at least 15 times since it was enacted in 1949[9]. In addition, in the past 40 years, secondary school entrance examination policies have been reformed eight times and institutions of higher education seven times. In this case, South Korea's education policy is largely out of step with actual educational practice. In other words, educational policy is very ambiguous. Singapore, a former British colony, appears in a completely different discourse from South Korea. As memories of the civil war and anti-colonial struggle remain in the national consciousness, nationalism remains the country's basic political mood[8]. As an emerging country, Singapore usually presents a highly standardized national curriculum, various "values" education programs and educational policies that show a tendency to embrace its citizens closely. In other words, the education policies implemented in Singapore incorporate the country into a limited space and engrave in them a collective "national" identity. In this context, Singapore's educational policy discourse is highly consistent. Because this dimension underpins the country's education and other social policies, it profoundly influences how they are understood and received.

3. THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON EDUCATION POLICIES IN ASIAN COUNTRIES

The concept of globalization is often associated with increasing mobility, not only of the capital, of information, but also of people. In this context, the recognition of the changing nature of the global economy and the global Labour market has created a growing demand for international education in the Asian region, particularly in terms of higher education policy[10]. In recent years, students and scholars have been traveling internationally in search of advanced knowledge. In some developing countries, only talented students can go abroad for higher education. On the other hand, developed countries offer scholarships to help students from poorer countries complete their studies. This phenomenon is part of their overseas aid programs and their perceived responsibility to help build projects in developing countries in Asia [10]. An example of a project is the Colombo Plan, developed in the 1950s. Designed primarily as a foreign aid project, it highlights the commitment of developed countries within the Commonwealth to alleviate Asia's economic woes and help develop the local elite needed for social, administrative and economic development. Thus, the growing demand for international education is the cause of globalization. It is designed to meet demand from developing countries for industries at the forefront of the economy, such as finance, science and engineering, where demand for mobile global Labor is growing rapidly. In this context, a global education market has emerged. Therefore, those developed countries with a tradition of higher education are the main beneficiaries of this development. In countries like Australia, for example, universities have become an important source of tax revenue for the government. This evidence is also corroborated by the OECD report on trade in higher education, where some developed countries have identified international education as a major source of income. In other words, governments in developed countries are now highly dependent on income from international students and have developed sophisticated marketing techniques to maintain this source of income. Under such circumstances, some Asian countries are beginning to follow Australia's example and develop some lucrative education policies to attract overseas students. Japan and Singapore have become major providers of international education respectively. On the one hand, governments in these countries have introduced lower access policies to improve the competitiveness of their international education. On the other hand, India and China are emerging as the main source countries for students going abroad for higher education. Because it is believed that those with good English and international experience have a better chance of getting a well-paid job, especially in multinational companies. In this context, governments in the region

have developed policies to regulate student visits abroad and programs to encourage international ties and cooperation. And in so-called exporting countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, the main policy objective has been to maintain the flow of income from international student fees not only through targeted marketing but also through the development of national quality assurance systems.

3.1. The Concept of Globalization

Globalization is a process that includes the causes, processes and consequences of transnational and cross-cultural integration of human and non-human activities. In this case, globalization drives the world to become more integrated. But it is clear that some countries benefit more than others. Globalization, for example, is not only historically associated with a series of colonial practices, but also socially associated with the technological revolution and the emergence of the United States as the world's sole superpower. In this case, the scope of globalization is very extensive [11]. These developments significantly altered the nature of the economic activity, productivity and consumption patterns. In terms of culture, globalization has driven tremendous growth in the flow of people and ideas, leading to a mix of cultural practices. As a result, a growing number of scholars and economists are beginning to see globalization as an ideology serving specific economic and political interests, rather than an inexorable historical process. It has been interpreted as a deliberate, ideological project of economic liberalization, subjecting states and individuals to stronger market forces. How an interpretation of globalization based on neoliberal ideas has come to dominate the world. As we mentioned earlier, most countries in the Asia-Pacific region are being influenced by neoliberalism to change their education systems. But the premise of implementing these policies is that at least some neoliberalism drives and sustains this ideological process [12]. In the next section, we will discuss some of these processes and explore how globalization has steered global education in the direction of a neoliberal agenda, although in very different ways in the Asian region.

3.2. The Impact of Globalization on Global Education Policy

In recent years, globalization has been associated with significant changes in the political authority of nation-states[1]. Globalization has largely eroded national autonomy as governance has become more multilateral. In addition, neoliberalism plays a more important role in guiding nation-states towards their stated policy preferences. Globalization creates conditions for new cultural politics, with global pressures on cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity[10]. These changes have led to an increased level of cultural interaction and a

profound education among the people, which must now lead to an awareness of the commonality of the problems facing all the inhabitants of the world[12]. Globalization has changed the discourse environment in which education policy is made and implemented, and the field is increasingly influenced by a set of neoliberal ideas that have changed not only the way education is governed, but also the way people think and debate the basic purpose of education. In the Asian region, many neoliberal education policies are proposed within the political dynamics of a particular nation-state[6]. In other words, education policies can be promoted within a country through local communication systems and political parties. In some countries of the region, systems for setting education policy are sound, while in others they are imperfect and vulnerable to manipulation and coercion by outside forces. In some countries, education policies are designed to adapt to the trend of globalization, while in others they are resisted. Whatever the interpretation of globalization, they have taken place in a political and historical context, so they can be expected to have a specific meaning for the country. The following sections will examine some of the ways in which the policy priorities of countries in the Asian region have been influenced in the context of globalization and their strengths and weaknesses.

3.3. The Impact of Globalization on Education Policy in Asian Countries

With the emphasis in the West on democratic participation and social efficiency, in the Region, there is more focus on how to make education systems more effective and transparent[1]. For example, the transparency of education policy decision-making processes, forms of decentralization, techniques for measuring educational performance, international benchmarks, quality assurance mechanisms, appropriate accountability, sources of education funding, and effective use of public resources. As a result, most countries in the Asia-Pacific region have tried to decentralize their educational management systems, even though the conceptual approach to decentralizing the concept varies greatly[1]. Three different decentralization models are defined as decentralization, functional decentralization and fiscal decentralization. These differences are useful because they show that ideas about governance cannot be divorced from the assumptions they often contain about educational purposes. For example, the idea of decentralization is more in line with the idea of democratic equality, which is to achieve greater social efficiency, than functional and fiscal decentralization. In this context, centralized governments in some Asian countries no longer collect and distribute funds, but allow local institutions to generate their own financial resources. Indonesian education experts believe that decentralization in the form of education management requires local bodies to

make decisions consistent with national goals and standards that are increasingly linked to a broader global framework of education goals. Therefore, the spread of globalization has made some totalitarian countries tend to start to decentralize power in order to enhance the efficiency of society, thus providing better strategies for the development of education in different regions. However, financial allocation is often based on general performance criteria which do not always take into account the special needs of different regions. In this context, the universality of distribution has a negative impact on rural areas, especially low-income areas [9]. In China, for example, due to limited financial resources and inadequate local governance responses, fiscal decentralization may have exacerbated the gap in education levels between rich and poor regions. Therefore, the centralized state should take full account of the actual situation of the local education distribution.

3.4. The Impact of Globalization on Educational Practice in Asia

In addition, the trend of globalization is also affecting changes in educational practices in Asia. As English becomes the world's most universal medium of communication, it provides jobs, as well as facilitates diplomatic discussions and business negotiations. English has also become the main language of the world's economic and cultural exchanges. For example, in 2002 the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization report about curriculum changes in the Asia-Pacific region: "English curriculum should be seen as a response to globalization key policy", the report also said the choice of language in education policy "is largely driven by the international labor market demand, especially in the field of information and communication technologies and science". However, there is little reliable research on educational language policy and practice in most Asian countries. For example, Noonan said, "Despite the widespread perception that English is a global language, it is relatively unsystematic." In most Asian countries the use of indigenous languages at the primary level is far more widespread than official policy suggests in The English curriculum. Therefore, in 2004, APEC issued education policy goals for East Asia and the Pacific (see Table 1).

Table 1 Education policy goals for East Asia and the Pacific

- Officially offering the teaching of English as a foreign language starting from the first to fifth grades.
- Enhancing the training programs for English teachers in elementary schools together with revision of curriculums and teaching materials to be more communicative in approach.
- Enhancing the teaching and learning [of] the four language skills of English through objective and efficient assessment.
- Reducing the elementary school class size to no more than 35 students.
- Connecting all elementary schools to the Internet by providing computers in all classrooms.

In this context, these policy objectives play a key role in promoting English curricula in Asian countries. Some evidence is found in Asian classrooms that the age of English as a compulsory subject is falling predictably (see table 2).

Table 2 Non-English-dominant Economies' Starting Grade for English Instruction.

Economy	Year
China	3
Hong Kong	1
Indonesia	7
Japan	7
Korea	3
Malaysia	1
Singapore	1
Chinese Taipei	5
Thailand	1
Average	4

South Korea lowered the English learning age from 12 to 9 in 1997, and China lowered it from 11 to 9 in 2001. In addition, Table 3 shows the changes in the learning duration of English courses in non-English-dominated Asian countries. The differences between Hong Kong SAR, Malaysia and Singapore in the table and other regions reflect the relationship between the colonial history and educational practices of these countries. Hong Kong, a former British colony, retains a tradition of early-age English classes, while Malaysia leans towards post-colonial nationalist aspirations. In this case, The popularity of English courses in Hong Kong is higher than that in Malaysia.

Table 3 Non-English-dominant economies' hours of English per week and grade level

Economy Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Average
China		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Hong Kong SAR	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Indonesia							4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Japan							3	3	3				3
Korea			1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	2.8
Malaysia	4	4	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.5
Singapore	8.5	8.5	7.5	6.5	7	7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5			6.3
Chinese Taipei					1.5	1.5	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.3
Average	5.8	5.8	4.3	4	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.9	

However, the successful implementation of education policy requires sufficient resources and qualified teachers. The policy of English curriculum promotion in developing countries has faced great resistance. For example, while some countries are trying to implement English curriculum initiatives, they are also questioning teachers' own ability to master English. In this case, teachers' teaching ability is faced with uncertainty because of their language ability. For example, the Korean media said, Only 7.9 percent of 9,768 English teachers in Seoul are competent enough to teach in English. This reflects the poor English proficiency of Elementary school teachers in South Korea, a problem common in all non-English-speaking countries in the region. In general, there is a clear policy trend in most Asian countries towards lowering the age at which English is taught.

4. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the author discusses the discursive terrain that has reconfigured the development, articulation and formulation of education policy in new ways in Asia-Pacific countries in recent years in the context of globalization. The Asia-pacific region includes about 50 countries, which have different cultural and political diversity, and great differences in economic performance and prospects. In this context, Asia-Pacific countries have different interpretations of globalization that require a rethinking of education policies. However, no country can escape the consequences of hegemonic domination of the concept of globalization brought to the world by neoliberalism, which has brought both positive and negative effects to Asian countries. For example, the unfairness of decentralization in totalitarian countries and the resistance to the promotion of the English curriculum. Therefore, Asian countries need to implement education policies in line with the background of globalization according to their own political and cultural backgrounds to improve their educational level and social efficiency.

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