

A Review on compulsory education researches in Chinese ethnic regions

— *From the view of literature analysis*

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Abstract—The study of compulsory education in ethnic areas in China has a low overall attention, which is a research process from “how to realize the popularization” to “how to balance development” , and the research perspective is mainly based on pedagogy. Although these researches adopted speculative study and empirical study, each methodology adopts a relatively simplified method. Therefore, it should lay stress on the participation of ethnology, pay attention to the diversification of research methods, and then further promote the development of compulsory education in the future.

Key words—*compulsory education; ethnic regions; review*

1. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO COMPULSORY EDUCATION RESEARCH IN CHINA ETHNIC REGIONS

Compulsory education is not only the main feedthrough to propel education equity, but also the cornerstone of the national education system. Since the promulgation and implementation of “*Compulsory Education Law*” in 1986, compulsory education research which has achieved fruitful research results becomes the focus of academic research in fundamental education. However, it shows that compulsory education research in ethnic regions with relatively backward economy has not received enough attention through literature searching in China national knowledge infrastructure (CNKI). In the database of China national knowledge infrastructure (CNKI), it is searched in the title by the key words “ethnic” and “Compulsory Education” from January, 1986 to December, 2015. The researching outcome shows that there

are only 174 literatures, and 59 literatures published in central journal which include 40 literatures published in CSSCI journals. Furthermore, there are 8875 articles by searching in the title with the key word “compulsive education” the same period. In another word, the literatures on compulsive education in Chinese ethnic regions are only 1.96% of the literature on compulsory education research journals in total. With the balanced development of compulsory education, there is a great gap in compulsory education development between east and west in China, especially the development of compulsory education in ethnic areas is still in the low equilibrium. The development of compulsory education in ethnic areas is clarified and reflected. The inadequacies of the research during this period are undoubtedly necessary and urgent.

2. THE OVERVIEW ANALYSIS OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION RESEARCH LITERATURES IN CHINESE ETHNIC REGIONS

1. *The age distribution of literatures*

From 1986 to 2005, It has been more than 20 years since “Compulsory Education Law” was promulgated and implemented in 1986, but there were only 36 literatures on compulsive education research in Chinese ethnic areas, accounting for 20.69% of the total, with an average of 1.8 articles every year. Meanwhile, the total number of journal articles published each year was no more than five during this period. Obviously, the study of compulsory education in ethnic areas is on the fringe of compulsory education research.

With the advancement of “unbalanced development strategy for efficiency-oriented regionalization”, the gap in the development of compulsory education between east and west in China has also expanded. In order to promote education equity and propel the development of compulsory education, the central government revised “*Compulsory Education Law*” and incorporated “balanced development of compulsory education” into the track of law in 2006. In the same year, the State Council decided to start implementing a new financial policy to guarantee rural compulsory education funds. In the western rural region in China, students in primary and secondary school were exempted from tuition and fees in the same year. As a result, the development of compulsory education in ethnic areas has gradually attracted researchers’ attention. In 2006, the journal literature on compulsory

2. The topic research contents

From the statistical analysis of contents of literature research, the study of compulsory education in ethnic areas is a research process from “how to realize the popularization of compulsory education” to “how to balance development of compulsory education”. The research topics mainly involve compulsory education popularization, compulsory education finance, balanced development, teacher’ education, curriculum and teaching materials, educational opportunities, education supply, student funding, national cultural identity, school-running model, and education governance. We will summarize the research results of three or more journal articles on the same research topic as follows:

TABLE 1 COMPULSIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH TOPICS IN CHINESE ETHNIC REGIONS

Serial Number	Research Topics	Quantity	proportion
1	compulsory education finance	31	17.81%
2	compulsory education popularization	22	12.64%
3	Compulsory educational problem	18	10.34%
4	Balanced development of compulsory education	17	9.77%
5	curriculum and teaching materials	15	8.62%
6	teacher’ education	13	7.47%
7	educational opportunities	9	5.17%
8	student funding	8	4.59%
9	national cultural identity	6	3.45%
10	Review of the development of compulsory education	3	1.72%

According to the statistical results, the study on compulsory education finance was on the top of the list, accounting for 17.81% of the total literature. Relevant studies have been carried out for compulsory education funds

education research in ethnic areas broke through 10 literatures in a year for the first time. In 2010, the Ministry of Education issued “*Several Opinions on Further Promoting the Balanced Development of Compulsory Education*” in order to advance the balanced development of compulsive education and narrow the gap between east and west, which provides a clear policy direction for the balanced development of compulsory education in academia. The research results of compulsory education in ethnic areas have also grown significantly and reached a climax, with 25 literatures in total in this year, accounting for 14.37% of the total. With the promotion of compulsory education’ balanced development, the study on compulsory education in ethnic areas has gradually caught the eye of academic circles.

investment in national regions, spending, running conditions, safeguard mechanism, transfers, teacher performance salary, financial institutional change in a related research topic content. In addition, compulsory education coverage in ethnic

areas is another topic that researchers pay close attention to. There are 22 literatures in total, accounting for 12.64% of the total literatures. With the popularization of compulsory education in ethnic areas, the emphasis is gradually turned to the balanced development of compulsory education. However, there are still few deep theoretical studies. Although there are 17 literatures, most of them are the obligations of education balanced development documentary achievements, only individual researchers draw lessons from foreign policy of compulsory education balanced development in national

3. *The usage of research methodology*

In the research paradigm, this paper analyzed and counted the existing literature according to the most basic classification of scientific research methods, namely speculative study and empirical study. Based on the experience and data, speculative studies usually use the philosophy method to state their thoughts or theories through an analysis of the logic of things or phenomena, including the theory of philosophical, literature research, historical research and experience summary, comparison research method, etc. Based on positivism philosophy, Empirical studies generally

regions to explore policy of compulsory education balanced development in national regions.

In conclusion, although compulsory education in ethnic areas involves in all aspects of compulsory education, some research subjects that should have attracted attention have not received corresponding attention. Such as the influence of national culture on compulsory education, the construction of teachers' team, boarding school and educational informationization, etc.

use the observation, experiment and investigation method to quantitative analysis of the research object, objectively describe research results and grasp the essence and development laws, such as mathematical statistics, investigation and research, experiment method. According to the basic characteristics and connotation, statistical analysis was carried out according to the main characteristics reflected in 174 literatures. The results are shown in the following table.

TABLE 2 STATISTICS OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ON OBLIGATION IN ETHNIC AREAS

Research paradigm	research method	Quantity	proportion
speculative study	Theoretical Research	89	51.14%
	Historical research	4	2.29%
	experience summary	7	4.03%
	comparative study	2	1.15%
	Literature research	2	1.15%
Empirical study	investigation	63	36.2%
	statistics	5	2.87%
	experimentation	2	1.15%

According to the results, normative study totals to 104 and remains mainstream in the study of compulsory education in ethnic minority areas, accounting to 59.77% of the total literature, of which theoretical research is given priority to 51.14%. However, the commonly used comparative research methods in education are adopted in only 2 papers. Empirical research totaled to 70 papers, accounting for 40.22% of the total literature. The studies are mainly use investigation

research, accounting for 36.2% of the total literature and 90% of the empirical research literature. Some advanced quantitative analysis methods (such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, variance analysis, etc.) rarely appear in the existing literature. In addition, the qualitative research advocated in the study of ethnic education has not been reflected in the existing literature. Part of the literature has the problem of irregular research process, simple data analysis

method in the process of investigation and study, it is difficult to light the deep law of compulsory education in ethnic minority areas and the reasons. Thus, it is seen that although the existing literature usually adopts two basic research paradigms, speculative and empirical, their respective paradigms have obvious uniqueness in the choice of specific research methods.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPULSORY EDUCATION RESEARCH IN CHINESE ETHNIC REGIONS

1. *Attaching importance to participation of ethnology*

The development of compulsory education in ethnic areas must not only follow the general rules of educational practice, but also be deeply influenced by national culture. China has a vast territory, and different ecological environments constitute different living spaces for all ethnic groups. In the long history, ethnic minorities have gradually formed distinctive national cultures in the process of adapting and transforming their living environment. These long-standing national cultures influence the promotion and development of compulsory education in ethnic areas to varying degrees. The conflict between the development of national religious belief and compulsory education, the contradiction between the development of ethnic customs and compulsory education, and the development of national language is not adapted to compulsory education. Such national cultural phenomena all influence the advancement of compulsory education in ethnic areas. Therefore, it is necessary to lay stress on the participation of ethnology. Ethnology is a discipline in which includes national culture, national language, ethnic policy, and national theory. The experience of ethnology's origins and its unique research perspective have infiltrated into the study of compulsory education in ethnic areas, which is undoubtedly more conducive to exploring the law and essence of the development of compulsory education in ethnic areas, and exploring the reasons for lower development of compulsory education in ethnic areas, and then to find effective ways to promote the development of compulsory education in ethnic areas.

2. *Laying stress on pluralistic research methods*

Research method is a bridge from known to unknown.

Max weber have emphasized that "the social studies should stick to the unification of value neutrality and value correlation", the connotation of this sentence also points to that we should insist on the unified application of natural science research methods and humanistic and social science research methods in the study of sociology. However, it is difficult for any single research method to reveal the deep rules and motivations as to the multi-disciplinary integration of education research subject in ethnic regions. Therefore, the study of education in ethnic areas should pay more attention to the diversity of research methods rather than be confined to a single research method. First of all, qualitative research and quantitative research should be combined organically. As a practical activity of education, education in ethnic areas is not only related to values, but also related to facts. Guided by the goal of "solving practical problems" and guided by two paradigms of speculative research and empirical research, this requires researchers to apply specific research methods scientifically and effectively, making "qualitative" to provide a more clear direction for "quantitative", "quantitative" to "qualitative" more scientific. Secondly, in view of the complexity of compulsory education in ethnic areas, the scientific and effective application of specific research methods such as comparative research, experimental method, field investigation method and mathematical statistics should be emphasized. With the promotion of the balanced development strategy of education, both central and local governments have given financial and policy preference to the development of education in ethnic areas. Some education experience with good effect and promotion value in foreign ethnic areas or eastern China can also be effectively tested in ethnic areas. Only in this way can we substantially promote the rapid development of education in ethnic regions with complex economy and culture.

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