The Comparative Analysis of Philippine and Chinese Education

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Abstract

In recent years, China and the Philippines have worked together more closely and frequently on education. In this paper, the education of the two countries is mainly compared and analyzed. Firstly, their history of educational development is compared. Secondly, the contents of education and constitutional reform are expounded. Finally, this paper proposes suggestions for Chinese and Philippine education systems such as enacting laws to ensure that educational resources are fairly distributed, increasing educational investment and strengthening the construction of community training centers.

Keywords

Philippine education; Chinese education; Comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

“The Belt and Road” initiative proposed by China in 2013 has received significant attention and positive response from the international community. And Southeast Asia is a key region for implementing such initiative. In such context, Philippines' President Duterte's visit to China in October 2016 brought unprecedented opportunities to both countries. The leaders of China and the Philippines have taken their bilateral relations to a new level. The governments of the two countries have reached a series of important consensuses on cooperation and development by focusing on the engagement in the initiative, cultural exchange and cooperation. Meanwhile, these two countries have also been working together for their educational development. Due to their mutual recognition on education, a lot of Chinese students went to Philippine colleges and universities for better education in recent years, as did Filipino students. This paper makes a comparative analysis of education in China and the Philippines.

2. Development of Education in Both Countries

In China, “K-12” program is implemented from elementary school to high school. Since 2015, the number of students in primary and secondary schools has grown rapidly, reaching 145,358 million in 2017. Chinese government has to invest a lot of funds in education every year because there is a huge population and a large number of students in China. In 2018, there were 2,158,800 schools nationwide, 5,017 more than the previous year.

China has achieved remarkable results in higher education since the 21st century. The penetration rate of higher education in China equals or exceeds that in developed countries, basically meeting people's demand for higher education. In addition, the quality of higher education has been continuously growing, and Chinese universities have been constantly ranking higher worldwide. Hundreds of millions of people have access to higher education in China, and its total number of employees with higher educational background is in the 2nd place globally.

The Philippines is famous for its high educational quality, where a number of institutions of higher education were established after it was colonized by Spain. Ruled by the United States
during the 20th century, the Philippines absorbed American formal educational system, making its enrollment for higher education higher than that in other countries in Southeast Asia [1]. In contrast, education from elementary to middle school is free while that in high school needs to be paid in China. Meanwhile, Chinese parents generally seek the best education for their children. As a result, a lot of low-income families also attach great importance to their children’s access to education, and even sell cars or houses to pay for college tuition. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, college students take a larger proportion in China than that in developed countries. And there will be 200,000 graduate students in Chinese universities in 2020, further increasing the penetration rate of higher education.

3. Curriculum Contents and Changes

3.1. Educational Constitution in China

In China, “K-12” education is divided into elementary, middle and high schools, among which education in elementary and middle schools is compulsory, with six years in the former and three years in the latter. Elementary and middle schools recruit students by region and students can only choose schools close to home. However, some parents and students prefer private schools because most private schools are superior to public ones in educational level, teacher resources and enrollment rate.

High schools in China are divided into ordinary high school, vocational high school and characteristic high school, among which ordinary high school plays a dominant role. The curriculum of high schools in China is uniformly regulated by government, and their teaching materials and syllabuses are also uniformly formulated.

The curriculum contents of high schools in China mainly aim to improve students’ problem solving ability. The exercises in the textbooks are very basic. Therefore, in order to be admitted to a top university, students have to prepare more tutorial books for being better prepared for college entrance exam. “211” and “985” universities (a total of 120 universities) are the best in China according to ranking. For example, in Shandong Province, only the top 4% of students can be admitted to “211” or “985” universities, while remaining students can only be enrolled by other colleges or junior colleges.

To sum up, knowledge in Chinese high schools is relatively narrow but profound, and college entrance exam is quite difficult, so students have to work hard and possess higher learning ability to pass the exam.

3.2. Educational Constitution Reform in the Philippines

The basic education in the Philippines had a lot of shortcomings before 2012. Firstly, its ten-year basic education system led to the fact that high school graduates are generally under the age of 18, who do not have sufficient survival or working ability, nor do they have mature development, both physically and mentally, thus they are not fit for employment [2]. Secondly, the curriculum content before the reform was not uniformly formulated, learning methods were not diversified, and evaluation criteria were not perfect. Thirdly, educational quality was low. According to statistics, the unemployment rate of high school graduates was 30% before 2012, and the unemployed population aged from 15 to 24 accounted for 51.5% [3]. Thus, improving the quality of basic education in the Philippines is of long-term significance for solving the problem of unemployment and talent imbalance in the Philippines.

In 2012, the Philippine government announced that it was embarking on a fundamental reform of the country’s education system under a policy called K-12. Under K-12, the duration of basic education is extended, and two more years are required for existing four-year secondary education, thus extending the duration of basic education to 12 years [4]. Moreover, one-year kindergarten education has been stipulated as part of basic education. The extended secondary
education indicates that students in high schools are generally aged 16 to 17 while those in tertiary education are aged 18. Extending secondary education to 17 would bring the Philippines into line with other countries in Southeast Asia and avoid educational and socio-economic problems. First of all, extended basic education can avoid the issue that high school graduates are too young to be employed. Secondly, curriculum in high schools extended from two years to four years reduces students’ study pressure and helps them to better master knowledge and job skills[5]. Thirdly, the K-12 program also makes seamless education possible from kindergarten to elementary school to high school. Graduates will receive a high school diploma, and they can also obtain a certificate of competency or national certification, indicating that they have acquired a medium level of skills in their major when continuing higher education or looking for a job.

The K-12 reform in the Philippines, on the whole, complies with the trend of economic and educational globalization, eliminates its difference between the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries in basic education, and makes up for the deficiencies of the previous education system while improving workforce quality, creating more employment opportunities and making students more likely to receive higher education [6]. After the reform, the learning hours, curriculum contents and educational systems in Philippines after the reform are more similar and consistent with those in China.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

There are many differences in educational concepts between China and the Philippines. As stipulated in educational policies in the Philippines, knowledge instruction shall be combined with the cultivation of students’ practical ability. Therefore, schools attach more importance to cultivating students’ practical ability during teaching. And teaching design will also give students sufficient time for discussion and independent learning. Additionally, English teaching in the Philippines is almost up to standard. However, there is no uniform standard for China’s education model. In addition, schools and parents make improving students’ performance their primary goal, making students more bored with their studies. Comparatively speaking, Chinese education pays more attention to exams and textbooks, and students need to complete a lot of exercises after class. Therefore, students’ practical ability is weak. Meanwhile, parents and teachers put high pressure on students, which makes their middle school life dull and boring.

China and the Philippines differ significantly in educational background. China has always attached great importance to family education, and most parents have high demands on their children’s education level. However, the Philippine is more pragmatic in family education and pays attention to cultivating children’s interest. If children are not interested in learning, they can attend vocational schools or learn other skills.

China can learn from the Philippines’s educational experience in the following ways:

1. Enact laws to ensure a fair distribution of educational resources. Every turning point in the development and innovation of primary education in the Philippines has been to ensure the smooth implementation of policies through legislation. Only through legislation can we guarantee education reform and realize the equal enjoyment of educational resources and the equality of urban and rural education. Educational inequality in China is serious. From primary to higher education, educational resources and systems in urban areas are much better than those in rural areas. Many schools do not admit rural students. Therefore, only by enacting laws to guide the balanced development of education can we better promote the fair distribution and development of basic education resources.

2. China should increase investment funds in education and actively mobilize the enthusiasm of privately established schools. The government should not only supervise and manage private schools but also provide financial support.
The diversified vocational and technical education and training providers in the Philippines, especially the highly engaged social forces, provide conditions for students to select flexible and diverse learning methods. However, due to the insufficient number of training centers led by the Technical Education and Skills Development Board and resource constraints, community training for poor and vulnerable groups cannot meet demands. Therefore, the vocational and technical education in the community training centers in the Philippines needs to be strengthened to promote the equitable development of education.

To sum up, compared with the western developed countries, the education systems of China and the Philippines are still in their infancy and still have many shortcomings. Therefore, the two countries are advised to strengthen exchange support in education, enhance exchanges between scholars and jointly improving their education systems.

References


