

Nine Year Compulsory Education Policy in China: Development of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy

Maojia Sun, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*

ABSTRACT

The education system in China has brought many benefits to Chinese education through decades of continuous reform and development. This is because many of China's education policies have shaped the Chinese education system as it is today. It reflects a global trend in education. Education in China is different from that of other countries. This article will select the Chinese specific education policy - nine-year compulsory education - as the subject of the evaluation analysis, describing the development, policy formulation such as background, objectives and implementation, and the main target groups. The needs, objectives and content of the nine years of compulsory education will be analysed. Using the SWOT analysis of the policy, it will also be necessary to develop some elements of the policy that can be improved as recommendations (expected impact of improvement measures).

KEYWORDS:

Education policy, Education system, Nine year compulsory education, Education planning

1. INTRODUCTION

In China, nine-year compulsory education is a public service that the State must provide for all children and young people of school age. The implementation of nine-year compulsory education includes no tuition fees or miscellaneous fees for the nine years that school-age children and teenagers begin to receive education. The State has established a mechanism to guarantee the funding of compulsory education to ensure the implementation of the compulsory education system. Compulsory education has always been a top priority in China's education reform and development, and at the beginning of the 21st century, China achieved the goal of universal nine-year compulsory education by first addressing the issue of "schooling" for children and adolescents of school age as stipulated by law (China.org.cn, 2021).

1.1 Development of the Nine-Year Compulsory Education Policy

With the development of globalization, governments and relevant educational organizations and institutions around the world have reached a consensus on the objectives, content and methods of

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*Corresponding Author

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education. As a result, the objectives, content and methods of educational policy have also changed. China has been developing its education in the past few years and has gradually become a success story (Cai, 2020). China has been able to learn from the English-speaking countries. Today, China's education system is not only a reference or reference for other countries, but also has Chinese characteristics. The two are combined. But with China's rapid development, the country's population has reached over one billion people. China has developed a huge state-run public education system. Correspondingly, education policy needs to address the issue of access to education for this huge population. It is well known that every child in China must receive at least a basic education (Pang, 2021). Compulsory education is a very successful education policy or system. Compulsory education originated in Germany. In many countries around the world, compulsory education was applied to schools for four or six years in the early years. In Japan, education is compulsory for nine years.

1.2 Background

Compulsory education was first introduced in the Qing Dynasty. During the Qing Dynasty, compulsory education was widely practiced in various countries in Europe and America, as well as in Japan in Asia. When officials of the Qing dynasty learn of this, they used the terms 'compulsory education' and 'forced education' when drafting the relevant documents of the Qing court in the early 20th century. Nine years compulsory education is a historical reason and an inevitable trend in social development (Song, 2021). One of the remarkable educational achievements of the People's Republic of China since its founding is the nine-year compulsory education system. As a result of the nine years of compulsory education, China has one of the highest literacy rates in the world. In 1949, China's primary school enrollment rate was only about 25% (Chu, 2019). Before the nine-year compulsory education system was introduced in 1986, China did not achieve the desired results in terms of universal literacy. China's rapid economic growth has played a large part in the success of the literacy campaign, especially as all levels of government have incorporated the nine-year compulsory education into the job performance of officials (Gao, 2015). While the nine-year compulsory education policy has made great achievements in education, it still faces problems. For example, the nine-year compulsory education policy has led to disparities in educational standards between urban and rural areas in China, even in different schools in the cities, with large numbers of rural students studying in the cities, resulting in over-sized classes in many schools. Compulsory nine-year education needs to become more efficient. School buildings and classrooms have been refurbished in recent years, but poor teaching methods and unqualified teachers continue to make education less attractive to some children. The Chinese government, as well as the education sector, must therefore take steps to improve the quality of education in rural schools. It is important to nurture the creative talent that will help China become an innovative and prosperous economy in the future (Snapshot, 2016).

1.3 Objectives

The objective of the nine-year compulsory education in China is to improve the scientific and cultural quality of the whole nation, which is the fundamental way to achieve environmental protection. Therefore, the fundamental aim of China's nine-year compulsory education is to improve the scientific and cultural quality of the entire nation. Compulsory education is a national education that the state, society and the family must guarantee and that children and young people of school age must receive in accordance with the law. In essence, it is a system of compulsory education for children and young people of school age for a certain number of years in accordance with the provisions of the law (Guo, Huang, & Zhang, 2019). Article 3, Chapter 1 of the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China stipulates that: Compulsory education must implement the State's education policy, implement quality education, improve the quality of education, enable children and adolescents of school age to develop comprehensively in terms of morality, intelligence and physical fitness, and lay the foundation for cultivating ideal, moral, cultured and disciplined builders and successors of socialism (Chakrabarti, 2014). The objective of the nine-year compulsory education policy is to

provide universal, compulsory and free school education for all children and adolescents of school age in accordance with the law, which is the basis for improving the quality of the nation and the starting point for achieving social equity. It is the basic right of citizens to receive compulsory education, the implementation of compulsory education is an important responsibility of the government, and supporting compulsory education is a common task of the whole society. After the nine years of compulsory education became fully universal and free of charge, the State has explicitly made the balanced development of compulsory education an important goal of compulsory education, striving to achieve the goal of making education available to all children and young people of school age. The goal of nine-year compulsory education is also a basic public service for all school-age children and adolescents. It is the legal responsibility of the government to provide basic and balanced compulsory education, and every school-age child and adolescent should enjoy equal opportunities to receive compulsory education of acceptable quality. The attributes of compulsory education dictate that it must be developed in a balanced manner.

1.4 Implementation

In May 1985, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) made a decision on the reform of the education system, further proposing the universalisation of not only primary education but also junior secondary education in China, making the universalisation of nine-year compulsory education a fundamental task of construction. After 1986, the Law of the People's Republic of China on Compulsory Education and the Outline of China's Education Reform and Development were promulgated one after another, providing legal protection for the development of compulsory education and unprecedented opportunities for development (Nanshao & Muju, 2006). The Nine-Year Compulsory Education Act came into force on 1 July 1986 and sets out deadlines and requirements to work towards universal education for all school-age children. The Act requires all children to attend school for a minimum of nine years. Although the Act authorises nine years of compulsory education free of tuition fees, this is still a goal. The government is working to reduce the cost of school fees and supplies and to provide allowances for poor families. On 1 January 2001, the Chinese government announced that China had largely succeeded in implementing nine years of compulsory education from primary to secondary school, thereby eradicating illiteracy in most parts of the country. The Chinese government has shifted the focus of compulsory education to the western and poorer regions of the country. According to the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China, which was amended and adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in June 2006, all school-age children and adolescents with the nationality of the People's Republic of China, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, family property status, religious beliefs, etc., have the right to receive compulsory education on an equal footing and fulfil the obligation to receive compulsory education in accordance with the law. The system came into effect on 1 September 2006. China completed the implementation of the compulsory education system across the country in November 2011. In 2018, the nine-year graduation rate was 94.2%, with 213,800 primary and secondary schools and 149.9 million students nationwide (Wang, Liu, Du & Liu, 2017).

1.5 The Main Group Target

According to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Compulsory Education, which was amended and adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in June 2006, all school-age children and adolescents with the nationality of the People's Republic of China, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, family property status, religious beliefs, etc., have the equal right to receive compulsory education and fulfil the obligation to receive compulsory education in accordance with the law. Nine years of compulsory education, generally defined as six years of primary school and three years of lower secondary school (or five years of primary school and four years of lower secondary school) for a total of nine years of education (Chen, Desmet & De Feyter, 2016).

1.6 Characteristic

1.6.1 Mandatory

China's nine-year compulsory education policy is to make education compulsory for children and teenagers of school age. If anyone violates this obligation, he or she will be regulated by law. For example, if parents do not send their students to school, they will be held responsible; if schools do not accept school-age children and adolescents, they will be held responsible; and if the government does not provide the appropriate conditions or assistance, they will also be regulated by law (Snapshot, 2016).

1.6.2 Universality

In the nine-year compulsory education law, emphasis has been placed on the implementation of uniform compulsory education throughout China. This uniformity includes the establishment of uniform standards for the setting of compulsory education textbooks, teaching standards, funding standards, construction standards, and standards for public funding of students, etc (Snapshot, 2016).

1.6.3 Free Education

It is explicitly stated that "no tuition or miscellaneous fees will be charged". Compulsory education is an education that must be provided to all school-age children and adolescents, and is a public welfare undertaking that must be guaranteed by the State. No tuition or miscellaneous fees are charged for the implementation of compulsory education. The State establishes a mechanism to guarantee the funding of compulsory education to ensure the implementation of the compulsory education system (Snapshot, 2016).

2. ANALYZE THE NEEDS, AIMS AND CONTENTS OF THE POLICY

2.1 The Needs

The need for nine-year compulsory education is to eradicate illiteracy. When China was founded, the quality of its people was generally below world standards. China needed to address the literacy rate and raise the standard of learning. According to statistics, when the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, more than 400 million of the country's 500 million people were illiterate, with an illiteracy rate of around 80%, including over 95% in rural areas. In 1982, compulsory education and literacy were incorporated into the newly revised Constitution of the People's Republic of China (Constitution of 1982), and in 1986, the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China came into force, and since then China has been implementing "nine-year compulsory education". In the sixth national census in 2010, the total population of mainland China was estimated at 1.34 billion, of which about 54 million were illiterate, with an illiteracy rate of 4.08% (Xuepei, Jinshan & Zhang, 2019).

2.2 Aims

The aim of the nine years of compulsory education in China is to improve the scientific and cultural quality of the entire Chinese nation, as this is the fundamental way to achieve environmental protection. Raising the quality level of the nation is also training the best people in all sectors. This will, to a certain extent, contribute to the development of the national economy. The task of promoting balanced development is more arduous and complex than the task of achieving universal access, and will take longer (Kibert, Thiele, Peterson & Monroe, 2012). At present, the contradiction of imbalance between regions, cities and rural areas, and schools is still prominent. Promoting the balanced development of compulsory education within a region will accompany the whole process of narrowing the differences in the level of schooling between schools and improving the quality of

education as a whole; promoting the balanced development of compulsory education in cities and rural areas will accompany the whole process of integrated development of cities and rural areas and gradually narrowing the differences between cities and rural areas; promoting the balanced development of compulsory education between regions will accompany the whole process of The whole process of solving the problem of regional economic and social imbalance and improving the level of education in the central and western regions (Li, & Qiu, 2018).

2.3 Contents

The content of the nine-year compulsory education policy was promulgated in accordance with the amendments to the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Compulsory Education is a law enacted in accordance with the Constitution and the Education Law in order to guarantee the right to compulsory education for children and young people of school age, to ensure the implementation of compulsory education and to improve the quality of the whole nation. It contains sections on general principles, students, schools, teachers, teaching, funding and legal responsibilities. The content of the nine-year compulsory education policy is not only intended to protect students, but also the stakeholders of compulsory education. The law is used to protect the successful implementation of the nine-year compulsory education policy (Montgomery, 2012).

3. SWOT ANALYZE (TABLE 1)

Table 1.SWOT analyze

External Environment Internal Environment	Strengths 1.Maximizing educational resources 2.Human rights are provided 3.Improving the quality of all people	Weaknesses 1. Mandatory Education 2.Rural-urban differences 3.Problems with teaching management
Threats 1.Lack of integrated management 2.Lack of assessment and evaluation policy 3.Lack of management by a unified department	ST strategies 1.Using resources to integrate management and department management 2.Development of policy assessment or analysis based on national quality education	WT strategies 1.Increased communication between the regions and the central authorities 2.It is integrated and includes the management of teachers, schools and education departments
Opportunities 1. Other countries can make references and learn from them 2. Twelve years of compulsory education 3.National government support	SO strategies 1.Build on existing strengths to lay the foundations for future education policies 2.Greater cooperation from national governments, more resources, etc	WO strategies 1.Learning from the experience of other countries to change the current problems 2.State regulation through the enactment of relevant legislation

3.1 Strengths

3.1.1 Maximizing Educational Resources

The first is the integration of curriculum resources, not only can primary and secondary schools achieve the sharing of curriculum resources, can fully use the curriculum resources, reduce expenditure, achieve the best allocation of curriculum resources, rapid upgrading of resources.Second, the integration of teachers. There is greater scope for transfer within schools to make up for the shortage of teachers through a reasonable mix of teachers, thus rationalising the structure of the teaching force and ensuring that the room for teacher growth is expanded.Third, the rational use and co-ordination of education

funding: the school can co-ordinate the entire compulsory education funding programme, so that students' learning can be effectively improved, ensuring that all the school's software facilities, and also solving the contradiction of unbalanced payment and income of teachers in the same area. Fourthly, the greatest advantage of the integration of educational objectives is the integration of educational objectives (Gomendio & OECD, 2017).

3.1.2 Human Rights are Provided

The nine-year compulsory education policy is designed to provide and guarantee the right of all children and young people of school age to receive compulsory education, which is a unified education system implemented by the State and a public good that must be guaranteed by the State. Nine years of compulsory education means that children and young people of school age have the right to nine years of education without tuition or fees. Every student has a fair chance to receive an education. Compulsory, also called obligatory. It is the obligation of schools, parents and society to make education compulsory for children and young people of school age. Whoever violates this obligation is subject to legal regulation. If parents do not send their students to school, parents are liable; if schools do not accept children and adolescents of school age, schools are liable; if employers recruit children and adolescents of school age, employers are liable; and if schools do not provide the appropriate conditions, they are also regulated by law. This is also the use of relevant laws to protect the human rights of students

3.1.3 Improving the Quality of all People

Improving the quality of the nation. It is the implementation of a nine-year compulsory education policy to achieve a high quality of education for the nation. With the introduction of the nine-year compulsory education policy and a national literacy rate of 95%, China has seen a rapid improvement in the quality of education and the quality of its people compared to decades (Marton, 2006).

3.2 Weakness

3.2.1 Mandatory Education

Nine years of compulsory education is mechanically compulsory. It has been observed through the years that the nine years of compulsory education seem to teach people only what their teachers teach them. For example, in the usual view, the consensus when evaluating national languages is that English is the most useful, so English is taught in primary school and even in kindergarten. So if there are people around who have taught themselves other languages, they are ridiculed and mocked (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). For example, "you want to learn French when you can't even learn English". This is a strange way of saying that there is nothing grammatically wrong with it, just logically wrong. These misconceptions have been developed under the influence of compulsory education, and there is no explicit requirement to learn English well in order to learn other languages. The reason why people may think that learning English is most important is because the nine years of compulsory education have taught people to learn only the subjects prescribed by the Education Department. So there is a rejection of other cultural elements.

3.2.2 Rural-Urban Differences

Problems caused by regional disparities between urban and rural areas in the implementation of nine-year compulsory education. Regardless of the country, regional differences can directly or indirectly affect the way in which national education systems address issues of accessibility and equity, urban areas versus rural areas. Education systems are sometimes unable to balance the two, which can lead to imbalances. This imbalance also includes the unequal distribution of educational resources, inputs and time. In economically developed areas, the education system has the capacity to deal with issues of accessibility and equity, but in remote areas, such as rural areas, there are significant problems (Marwan, Sumintono, & Mislan, 2012).

3.2.3 Problems with Teaching Management

The first is the size of the school, compared to independent primary and junior secondary schools, the size of the school has expanded, the school grade span is large, teachers primary and secondary schools are integrated, management difficulties have increased, there are few teachers and administrators who understand both primary and junior secondary education, this is the test of teacher management faced. Secondly, there is the economic treatment. There is a disparity between the salaries of primary and secondary school teachers, how performance is assessed, how bonuses are paid and how treatment is adjusted are all of concern to teachers. The next is the assessment criteria, because junior secondary schools are influenced by the rate of advancement and will be biased towards subject achievement. There is a wide scope for quality education to be promoted in primary schools, so schools cannot measure teachers by a uniform standard in the process of evaluation, but should be judged according to the teaching characteristics of different stages (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

3.3 Threats

3.3.1 Lack of Integrated Management

One of the most difficult aspects of schooling is the effective articulation of curriculum and teaching. There are significant differences between primary and secondary schools in terms of teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods and implementation and evaluation, as well as in terms of the characteristics of students, which require a smooth connection. At present, there are curricula and teaching materials written specifically for independent primary and secondary schools in China, but there is not yet a set of curriculum systems specifically for use in schools under the nine-year compulsory teaching system. Although the education administration encourages schools to develop school-based teaching materials according to the characteristics of their own schools, some schools only make minor adjustments to their curricula, making it difficult to seamlessly align the content of the curriculum. In terms of actual teaching, primary and lower secondary school teachers do not know each others content, let alone the requirements set by the school (Keiler, 2018).

3.3.2 Lack of Assessment and Evaluation Policy

There are currently administrative bodies in China that specifically assess and evaluate independent primary and junior high schools, but there is a lack of assessment criteria for school-specific assessments, and the education authorities still follow the same criteria used to evaluate independent primary and secondary schools when evaluating the quality of education in schools under the nine-year compulsory education system, which appears unfair to the schools. As schools in the nine-year compulsory system have been in a stage of exploration and development in terms of teaching and management, there has been little guidance and support from government departments in this regard, and they have not been given more autonomy (Cui, Lei, & Zhou, 2018).

3.3.3 Lack of Management by a Unified Department

Although the nine-year compulsory education is stipulated through the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China. However, there are differences between many regions in the implementation of the nine-year compulsory education policy. There is no uniformity in the authorities responsible for overseeing the nine-year compulsory education policy in each region, which can lead to confusion. There is no effective communication between schools and local education authorities (Brinkmann, 2016).

3.4 Opportunities

3.4.1 Other Countries Can Make References and Learn from Them

The nine-year compulsory education policy has been an unprecedented success in China. Although compulsory education is practised in many countries or regions, not every country or region has been able to achieve the desired goals. China's nine-year compulsory education has been developed

and implemented in accordance with the world's compulsory education policy. The Chinese nine-year compulsory education also has Chinese characteristics. Many countries or regions can look to China's successful experience in implementing nine years of compulsory education to develop their own compulsory education policies (Snapshot, 2016).

3.4.2 Twelve Years of Compulsory Education

On December 2, 2020, the official website of the Ministry of Education of China published "Response to Proposal No. 4849 of the Third Session of the Thirteenth National People's Congress", responding to the proposal made by the NPC deputies to "amend the nine-year compulsory education system to a twelve-year compulsory education system": The 12-year curriculum for compulsory education and general high school in China has been gradually established after long-term practice and repeated adjustments. The 12-year curriculum for compulsory education and general high school in China has been gradually established after long-term practice and repeated adjustments, and is in line with current international practice. It is basically in line with the current and future social and economic development of the country, and is basically in line with the laws of physical and mental development and understanding of children. However, in the future, I believe that China's nine-year compulsory education will become 12 years.

3.4.3 National Government Support

The Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China, promulgated in 1986, clearly states that "the State shall implement a nine-year compulsory education system", after which localities actively explored ways to match quality education while improving the quality of compulsory education, and began to experiment with a nine-year consistent school system. The Decision on the Reform and Development of Basic Education promulgated in 2001 clearly states, "The State will set up a nine-year compulsory education curriculum as a whole and implement a nine-year consistent system in places with conditions." The 2012 Opinions on Further Promoting Balanced Development of Compulsory Education states, "Support the separation of middle and high schools and promote the construction of nine-year consistent schools." To alleviate the "school choice fever", the 2013 Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Several Major Issues of Comprehensively Deepening Reform proposed that "compulsory education should be free of test and close to school, and the school district system and nine-year consistent enrollment system should be implemented on a trial basis." (Kandumba, 2005).

4. IMPROVEMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

4.1 Stakeholder

Stakeholders have an important role to play in the implementation of the nine-year compulsory education policy. What we need to know is who are the stakeholders included? First and foremost, the students. The group around which nine years of compulsory education revolves is the school-age children. Everything needs to be considered in terms of the interests of the students (Kibert, Thiele, Peterson & Monroe, 2012).

According to the analysis, there are some problems with the content of the nine-year compulsory education policy. Secondly, the teachers. The teachers are responsible for teaching the students in accordance with compulsory education. The school is responsible for the delivery and implementation of compulsory education and is responsible for the management of the teachers and for the students. Parents are also responsible for their students and for ensuring that their rights are exercised (Mulford, 2003). The local authorities act as a medium of communication with the central government, implementing policies, reporting on their work, and managing and monitoring the local schools. These stakeholders are all interlinked. Therefore, the content needs to take into account the stakeholders and the relevant regulations.

4.2 More Human Rights

It is essential that children are given some human rights. In many cases, the nine-year compulsory education policy does not guarantee the rights of children. For example, although the nine-year compulsory education policy is guaranteed by law, many parents of children in rural areas do not want their children to have compulsory education. This can be an obstacle to the implementation of a nine-year compulsory education policy in the country. The government needs to adapt existing laws so as to increase the protection of children and to use the law to better protect human rights and regulate the behaviour of children's parents (Zhang & Minxia, 2006).

4.3 Distribution Issues

There are important questions about the distribution of compulsory education in the different regions to which the State applies it. There is an uneven distribution of resources between urban and rural areas in terms of funding, teachers and so on. There is a disparity between urban and rural areas, which can lead to inequality in education and affect the development of education in rural areas. What the government needs to do is to emphasise in the implementation of the content that compulsory education is distributed equally in different regions and, if necessary, to provide additional assistance to regions that are lagging behind in educational development, so as to promote the rational and coordinated development of compulsory education in different regions (Fu, 2005).

4.4 Local-Government Relations

Although compulsory education is practised in different parts of China, there are some differences in the implementation of the nine years of compulsory education in different regions. Many regions do not fully comply with the compulsory education regulations issued by the national government, which has led to confusion in the implementation process and a lack of timely communication between the authorities and the government in many regions. This is why the content needs to reiterate regional relations.

5. SUGGESTION

In my opinion, the nine years of compulsory education in China has many strengths, but there are some areas where it falls short. Using swot analysis, I propose elements to improve compulsory education policy. Stakeholders' influence on expectations will contribute to the successful implementation of the improved policy. Each stakeholder is aware of their position and role and will provide feedback for policy improvement. Promoting more human rights can help rural children to assert their rights, regulate the behaviour of their parents and promote equity in policy. A reasonable distribution of education can reduce the gap between urban and urban areas, provide more assistance to children in rural areas, and realise the principle of equity and fairness in education. Most importantly, compulsory education can be made more consistent and efficient. The solution to the current problems is that there is a high turnover of teachers in many areas, resulting in students changing teachers frequently, which affects the teaching and learning of compulsory education, and many areas have become experimental areas for compulsory education, which is a violation of compulsory education policy. I believe that these measures will go some way to solving the current problems with the nine-year compulsory education policy. It will also prepare the ground for the twelve years of compulsory education.

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