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Comparative Analysis of some educational issue in Ethiopia and China

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Abstract

In the age of globalization, nations invest in their education systems to ensure that their children are prepared to face the challenges of the day by acquiring and developing the required skills, knowledge, values, and dispositions. Based on education policy, the institutions intended to deliver these services: schools, colleges/universities, play a vital role in facing the issues of current society, particularly in the twenty-first century. The paper investigated how Ethiopian and China education systems are similar and different in terms of historical development, education and training policy, education system structure, teacher quality and teaching environment, and governance and funding in education. In other words, it addressed topics where both countries differ and how they guide students from pre-primary to terminal degree programs, with far-reaching recommendations to increase the value of education.

INTRODUCTION

"The major hope of a nation lies in the right education of its youth," Erasmus once observed (Alao, 2013). Even if great philosophers and thinkers have attempted to explain it, the objective of education has always been the same for everyone—to equip the young with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to cope and develop in an ordered, sequential manner into members of society. This is the goal of education for children in developed and developing countries, whether it takes place in a one-room school in a distant village or in the most advanced, progressive school in a bustling city.

However, the intensity of the purpose has shifted as socioeconomic development has progressed. For example, it was recently altered from developing a literate society to producing a learning society. The purpose of this research is to examine the education systems of two historically, geographically, economically, demographically, and socially diverse countries: Ethiopia and China. Both countries administer their education systems within their own diversity aspects of ethnicity, language, socioeconomic background, and any other variations that are counted.

They are, nonetheless, comparable in that they are both mosaic societies. Furthermore, these countries are among the top rising economies in their respective regions: East Africa and Central Asia (Sc., 2013) (Persis, 2015) (UNECA, 2011). Nonetheless, education has been institutionalized as a tool for change in many eras, despite the fact that all education, in its various forms and methods, is an outgrowth of the requirements of the society in which it exists. This is what prompted us, the authors, to look at their parallels and differences, as well as common elements of important educational difficulties. Even if the parameters for comparative analysis are many, the study is limited to major educational concerns concerning development, education policy, structure, teacher education, and education financing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Taking into consideration the key educational concerns chosen for investigation, the study is intended to:

- Highlight the education system in Ethiopia and China;
- Draw a comparison between the two systems so as to understand the merits and flaws of each;
- Show implications so that the countries would pave the way for future considerations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In terms of advantages, the study's findings may pique the curiosity of other academics, prompting them to dig more into the topic using this study as a springboard. Furthermore, practitioners in educational institutions in both countries will have simple access to an overview of the system's most pressing concerns. It may also assist persons who are in touch with policy developments in determining key elements to be addressed in the text.

METHOD

This study is comparative educational research that focuses on educational issues in various locations. The study used secondary data sources, such as journals, periodicals, and government publications, for the comparative analysis, which followed (Comparative method in education, 1964) paradigm of four steps: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and simultaneous comparison. Establishing the parameters for initial comparability of the chosen units of analysis is a precondition for each comparative investigation (Comparative education research approaches and methods , 2007). As a result, each country's major educational issues, such as brief historical development, education policy, structure of education system, teacher education and learning environment, governance and financing education sector, are taken as units of analysis and addressed separately. Finally, their distinctions and similarities are found and analyzed with care.

ETHIOPIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The paper begins with a brief historical overview of the country's education system and ends with how the education sector is funded in order to provide a better grasp of the core educational concerns. Ethiopian Education History Ethiopia, located in the Horn of Africa, is one of the world's oldest countries. It is regarded as the cradle of humanity and, after Nigeria, is the second most populated country in Sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike most other African countries, Ethiopia did not experience momentous colonization; except for a brief Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941 (States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control., 2000).

The evolution of education in Ethiopia is characterized by two major traditions: "traditional" and "Western/modern" systems. While Western educational ideals have developed from the early twentieth century, indigenous and religious education has been prevalent throughout the history of the ancient nation. Despite the fact that the country has faced numerous obstacles and possibilities throughout its history, we would want to focus our assessments solely on modern schooling.

To make the overview self-reflective, we provide it based on the nation's historical governing bodies (regimes). The first modern school was established in 1908 with the goal of educating the young to ensure peace, rebuilding the country, and allowing Ethiopia to exist as a strong nation (Pankhurst, 1976). It also planned to train administrators, interpreters, and technologists to establish long-term external relations capabilities, particularly with Western countries (G, 1979). Until the Italian occupation (1936), the primary goal of education was to learn several languages (especially Foreign). As a result, the curriculum consisted primarily of language studies in French, Italian, Geez, Arabic, and Amharic. In addition, classes in religion, mathematics, law, and calligraphy were available (Adane, 1996).

During this period, the Ethiopian education system and its curricular components (educational aims, subjects or courses to be taught, school organization and management, and evaluation method) were heavily impacted by the French education system. The selection and organization of curriculum was established by French headmasters and teachers, and French was utilized as the medium of instruction in Ethiopia.

Except for students, all critical resources came from elsewhere. The Italian occupation completely destroyed the creeping education system by persecuting the elites and converting educational facilities into military camps. Furthermore, Catholic mission schools were ordered to promote religion and the Italian language in order to subjugate people to Mussolini's government. In general, the primary purpose of education was to produce individuals who were loyal to Italy. The curriculum emphasized basic skills (limited to grade 4) and semi-vocational skill training, as

well as internalizing fascist beliefs to foster regime fidelity. Furthermore, mother tongue was used as a medium of instruction for significant ethnic groups, even if the objective was not pedagogical (as many agree) (Adane, 1996).

Curriculum and assessment in schools were neither consistent nor standardized at the time. The next phase was the dominance of the United Kingdom from 1942 to 1954, when aid in rescuing Ethiopia from Italian assault was used as a pretext to control the country's education system. During this period, British consultants had a significant impact on the system, not just at the legislative level, but also in schools and classroom settings (Zewudie, 2000)

Similarly, to the French dominance period, everything but the students was from abroad, and the trend once again demonstrates the curriculum's irrelevance throughout all regimes. The needs of society and what was going on in the school did not coincide, and it became simply the aristocracy's and its overseas advisors' political goal. After 1953, reforms were implemented to increase the involvement and participation of educated Ethiopians. Human resource development was prioritized during this time period, resulting in Ethiopians participating in activities ranging from policy formulation to classroom instruction.

Gradually, Britain's role diminished, and the United States began to take over and have significant influence until 1965, when it was replaced by the United States. Later, the government began to recognize the significance of Ethiopian placement and contribution in the system through various capacity building measures, primarily political in nature. During American history, there were two big developments. The school structure was altered to 6+2+4 and Amharic was promoted to primary school medium of instruction (N., 1990)

The Derg, or military regime, took control in 1974, proclaiming socialism as the government's main political theory and motto. The Marxist-Leninist philosophy dominated and ruled the country as a whole. There is no other point in Ethiopian history when education was said to have been used as a significant weapon to sustain political power (N., 1990)

The primary goal of education at all levels was to spread information and then Eastern bloc ideology, ignoring realities on the ground. This viewpoint was defined in a number of key papers, including the National Democratic Revolution in 1976, the General Directives of Ethiopian Education in 1980, and the Working Party of Ethiopia guidelines in 1984. Following the fall of the military regime in 1991, the present administration revised the education policy, resulting in a remarkable increase in enrollment from 2.8 million in primary school (grades 1-8) in 1990/91 to 18 million in 2013/14. (MoE, 2014)

Nonetheless, the path to progress has been difficult for the country, which has faced deep-rooted and complicated multiple issues in many sectors. Despite the optimistic outcomes, there are other issues that call the quality of the education system into doubt right now. Furthermore, globalization and demographic trends have exacerbated the problem, resulting in poor educational standards even in Sub-Saharan Africa. Policy on Education and Training Although modern education was brought to Ethiopia a century ago, the education and training provided at this time had little impact on people's lives or contributed to national progress. The Ethiopian education system has long been plagued by fundamentally limited and inequitable access, a lack of quality and relevance, and a steady reduction in quality and standard (MoE, 2002). To address these difficulties, the present government devised an education and training program aimed at providing citizens with an all-round education capable of taking a conscious and active role in the country's economic, social, and political life at various levels (TGE, 1994).

To attain the goal, it is critical to ensure that the educational system's fundamental faults are gradually resolved. Various techniques and procedures have been devised as part of this endeavor to address the stated issues. Finally, the following goals were identified as the primary goals of the country's education system.

The major objectives are set to:

- Develop individuals' physical and mental potential, as well as their problem-solving capacity, through extending education and, in particular, by giving basic education to all.
- Raise individuals who can care for and use resources sensibly, as well as those who are trained in a variety of skills, by increasing the private and social benefits of education.
- Bring up citizens who respect human rights, advocate for people's well-being, as well as equality, justice, and peace, and are imbued with democratic culture and discipline.
- Bring up citizens who can distinguish between harmful and beneficial behaviors, who seek and stand for truth, appreciate aesthetics, and have a constructive attitude toward the advancement and spread of science and technology in society.

- Cultivate citizens' cognitive, creative, productive, and appreciating potential through linking education to environmental and societal requirements.

Following implementation, there have been questions, doubts, and reservations from various stakeholders regarding the medium of instruction at various levels of education, self-contained class-room management and continuous assessment, particularly at the first cycle primary level, placement of students in higher education, Free education for all, and the comparison of fundamental differences between the current education and training policy and previous policies and strategies.

Structure of Education in Ethiopia

The educational changes implemented in 1994 altered the existing framework of the system, which had been in place since 1962. General education was divided into three levels: pre-primary (for children aged four to six), primary (Grades 1–6), junior secondary (Grades 7–8), and senior secondary (Grades 9–12), with national exams at the end of each level. According to the Ministry of Education's annual abstract of education statistics (2013), the current education system has eight years of primary education divided into two cycles: primary first cycle (Grades 1-4) for basic functional literacy and primary second cycle (Grades 5-8) for preparation for further education. It is followed by upper secondary/preparatory education and general secondary education (Grades 9&10). (Grades 11&12).

The system is designed to assist children in graduating from the formal school system with greater levels of literacy and numeracy, as well as alternatives for pursuing technical and vocational training at various levels of education. The general secondary education (Grades 9 and 10) is designed to help students choose areas of interest for future training and employment. Upper secondary school (Grades 11 and 12) is designed to prepare pupils for furthering their education at higher learning institutions or for pursuing their own occupations. Technical and vocational education and training differs structurally from the standard school system yet operates concurrently with it. There is training available at the academic level exit points (Grades 4, 8 and 10). Even if the disparity is obvious across different levels and years, the following table from the Ministry of Education's annual abstract (2013/14) depicts development in the number of institutions and schools in the country.

Year school	2 00 9 / 10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Average growth rate
Kindergarten	3318	3418	3580	3688	4560	6.6
Primary	26951	28349	29643	30495	32048	3.5
Secondary	1335	1517	1710	1912	2333	11.8
Teacher education	29	32	32	34	34	3.2
TVET	460	505	505	437	1350	24.0
Higher Education	70	74	91	99	124	12.1
Total	32163	33895	35561	3665	40449	4.7

Table 1: School and institutions, growth at different structural levels

Higher education is administered by authorized institutes, colleges, and universities. Colleges and technological institutes accept post-secondary non-university vocational and technical education programs that lead to the issuance of a diploma after passing through various stages. Primary Teacher Training Institutes certify students with one-year courses that prepare them to teach in elementary school. To teach in general education, a diploma from a Teacher Training College is required. Secondary school instructors are supposed to have a bachelor's degree or above. University programs leading to a first degree typically take three to four years to complete (five years in the case of law and pharmacy; six years in the case of medicine and veterinary science).

At the postgraduate level, master's degree programs typically last two years; a specialization program with a diploma often lasts three to four years. Graduating with a terminal degree typically takes three (with variations ranging from four to five) years. The preceding descriptions are

illustrated by the pictorial representation (Figure 1) of each level in the Ministry of Education's Education Statistics Annual Abstract (2013/14).

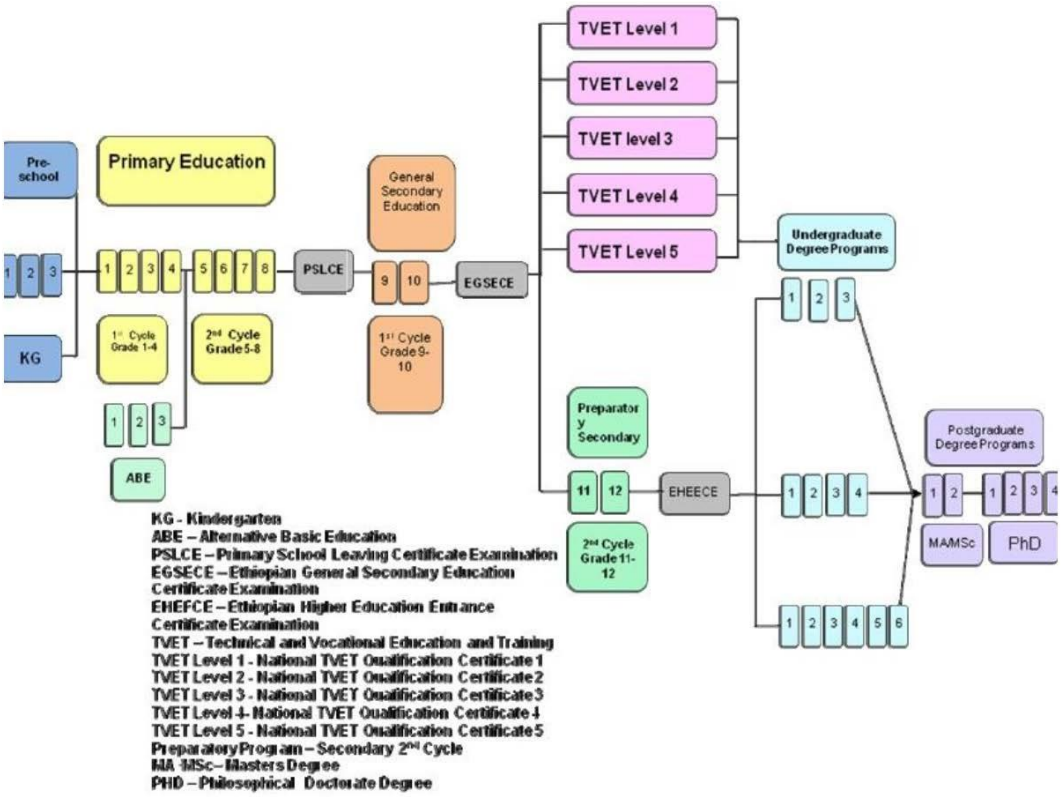


Figure 1: Structure of the Ethiopian Education System

Teacher Quality and Teaching Environment

Teachers' quality and availability, as well as school leaders, school facilities (financial, material, and human), and supervisors, are fundamental tenets of quality education at all levels. It is challenging to assess teacher quality since they are required to exhibit attributes that go beyond measurable criteria. However, obvious characteristics like as qualifications, training, specialty, experience, and so on might be used as superior proxies for quality (Rockoff, 2004). For many years, the Ethiopian education system has faced significant challenges in terms of education quality in general, and teacher training and development programs in particular (workneh A, Tassew W, 2013).

However, since the present government took office, a new education and training program has been developed that will contribute significantly to the country's development and, as a result, to poverty reduction. To achieve the desired effect, the government has committed to training teachers through both pre-service and in-service programs, yet shortages persist due to a mismatch between the number of schools and instructors as new schools are established at the kebele level. Recognizing the importance of teacher training in guaranteeing excellent education, the government views accelerated teacher training and development programs as a means of assuring quality education. The first Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP I) identified a shortage of trained instructors as one of the key motivators for reducing educational quality. According to a MoE (MoE, 1998) report, by the early 1990s, barely 40% of teachers teaching at Grades 9–12 held a first degree, the minimum requirement for teaching at this level.

As a result, ESDP I, later renamed ESDP, was created to carry out the main policy reforms specified in the Education and Training Policy of 1994. In keeping with this, the primary goal of ESDP I was to strengthen teacher education programs. Teacher training difficulties were improved further in ESDP II with the goal of ensuring fair access to education. The next programs, ESDP III and IV, communicate clearly about the standardization of teacher training programs and the use of active learning and student-centered approaches in classroom instruction, respectively.

Ethiopia implemented a new reform, Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO), in 2003/4, with a new curriculum stressing active learning and student-centered approaches. This curriculum was implemented at the majority of the country's teacher training learning institutions (Amare Asgedom et al, 2006). Although the objective was to replace the traditional teacher-centered method with active learning, in which students could interact with teachers and other students (Tension between traditional and modern teaching approaches in Ethiopian primary school, 2006), it was

not as effective as expected at the outset. There are still other variables that impede the availability and quality of teachers, which scholars should explore thoroughly. For example, the government's special focus for scientific and technology disciplines, as opposed to social sciences and humanities, has its own impact in this area, albeit more research is needed.

Governance and Financing Education Sector

The educational system has been structured in line with the Federal Government's State formation. Accordingly, each of the 10 National Regional States and the 2 City Administrations has its decentralized bureaus of education charged with administrating, financing and managing all issues pertaining to education. To come up with strong cumulative effect of the system, the network has been stretched from the smallest educational authority (Wereda education office) to the zonal (district level) education departments guided and supported by regions. It is through this structure that the system works at regional level. Federal government owned educational issues such as policy directives and higher education management are the mandate of the central government's Ministry of Education though states have great contribution in the contextual implementation of the policy and management for the institutions are in their territories. The following figure depicts the distribution of education expenditure between 2005/06 and 2009/10(MoE, 2005)

History Of Education in China

Many Chinese scholars believe that the history of education in China dates back to the 16th century BC. Education was a prerogative of the elites during this historical period. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the curriculum was primarily based on The Four Books and The Five Classics. The Four Books and The Five Classics were the recognized subjects of Confucian culture in ancient China's feudal society. The Four Books are The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, Confucian Analects, and Mencius' Works. The Book of Poetry (also known as The Book of Songs, The Book of Odes), The Book of History, The Book of Rites, The Book of Changes, and The Spring and Autumn Annals are also included in The Five Classics.

Confucianism has most likely had the greatest influence on Chinese education throughout Chinese history. Later in the Han Dynasty, a system of public education was formed. Not only can elites from upper-class families attend school; the common man can also use education to become a better man, known as a gentleman.

A gentleman (Chun Tzu) thinks what is right, whereas a peasant considers what will pay. A gentleman believes in fairness, whereas a peasant believes in favor. When compared to a peasant, a gentleman is generous and fair. A gentleman seeks advice from within, whereas a peasant seeks guidance from others. A gentleman is easy to serve but difficult to please. The peasant is both difficult to serve and easy to satisfy. A gentleman should know what we know and what we don't know.

The common people, on the other hand, must adhere to customs and rules. There was no need for the common people to understand why in ancient Chinese civilization. Studying Confucianism and being a gentleman had been the most efficient way for regular people to advance into the upper class. The first civil service test was established during the Han period. Unsurprisingly, Confucianism was one of the most important disciplines to learn for the civil service exam. Provincial schools were built across the country, and the Confucianism educational heritage extended throughout China. "There is no need to buy good property to enrich your family: books hold a thousand measures of grain."

There is no need to construct a mansion for a comfortable life: Houses of gold can be found in novels. If no one follows you when you go out, don't be upset: There will be a swarm of horses and carriages in the novels. If you want to marry, don't be concerned if you don't have a middleman: There are jade-colored girls in novels. A young man who aspires to be someone will study the Classics. He will read while facing the window." There have been persons who have spent their entire lives studying Confucianism in order to gain respect, not only for themselves, but also for the pride of their family lines.

The Han dynasty's civil service exam system was used until the Qing era. Throughout thousands of years of history, more western influences were introduced into the Chinese education system during the Qing period. Following the humiliating defeat at the hands of the British army in the Opium War (1840-1842), scholars and government officials proposed a major restructure of the educational system, focusing on new areas such as foreign language, science, and technology. The Qing Dynasty was toppled by revolution in 1911, and a republican form of government was formed. The administration had fully abandoned the traditional method of schooling at the time. In China, new educational paradigms from Europe, America, and Japan were implemented.

Basic education started a new period of advancement with the adoption of the reform and opening to the outside world policy in 1978. The Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee adopted the "Decision on the Reform of the Educational Structure" in 1985, establishing the notion that local governments should be responsible for basic education. The new policy provided an incentive to local governments, particularly

those of counties and townships. The National People's Congress passed the "Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China" in 1986, establishing basic education as a legal requirement in the country. China implemented a nine-year obligatory education system.
The CPC Central Committee and the State Council jointly announced the "Guidelines for the Reform and Development of Education in China" in 1993, outlining the orientations and core policies for basic education development till the early years of the twenty-first century. The State Council ratified the Ministry of Education's (MOE) "Action Plan for Educational Vitalization Facing the Twenty-First Century" in early 1999, laying out the implementation of the strategy of "Invigorate China through Science, Technology, and Education" and drawing the blueprint of reform and development for cross-century education based on the "Education Law of the People's Republic of China" and the "Guidelines for the Reform and Development of Edu."

Educational Reform and the Full Promotion of Quality Education" in June 1999, defining the path for the establishment of a vital socialistic education with Chinese characteristics in the twenty-first century. In 2012, China spent more than one trillion RMB on R&D and more than 700 billion RMB on higher education. As a result, research capacity and productivity have increased dramatically. Between 2005 and 2012, the number of Chinese researchers climbed by 38%, while the number of published research publications from Chinese higher education institutions increased by 54%.

Education Policy

In the Chinese environment, the application of decentralization and marketization tactics is quite beneficial. In the face of budgetary constraints, the Chinese government aimed to apply these tactics to improve its financial status and increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which it used its resources. The implementation of these measures showed an attempt to mobilize more educational resources and generate more learning opportunities for its population by using market dynamics and new initiatives from non-state sectors. Nonetheless, the educational changes brought about by decentralization and marketization are profound. These changes have altered the relationship between central and local governments, the state and schools, and the state's role in education.

The growing participation of local governments in educational investment has diminished the influence of central government while strengthening the power of provincial and county governments in educational planning and administration. Fees and the implementation of different funding channels have reduced the central and local governments' responsibilities for educational financing while increasing school autonomy. However, education decentralization and marketization have exacerbated inequalities in educational opportunities and quality.

While decentralization has encouraged local governments and other non-state sectors to participate in education development, regional disparities in education have worsened. Since 2003, the Chinese new generation of leaders has recognized the negative impact of the government's, particularly the central government's, inappropriate participation in educational provision, particularly in the rural education sector. The Chinese government has given significantly more emphasis to educational equality with the development of a people-centered governing philosophy and the new policy motto of "creating a harmonious society."

New policies and methods to improve educational equity between rural and urban areas, as well as between regions, have been implemented. More funds have been allocated to rural schooling. In 2004, the central government declared that students in impoverished areas would get free nine-year compulsory education. In 2005, the government announced plans to provide free nine-year compulsory education to students in rural areas beginning in 2006. Meanwhile, new legislation has been introduced to limit arbitrary charges levied by local governments and educational institutions. City governments have been compelled to open urban public schools for children of migrants from villages in order to provide educational opportunities to these migrant youngsters. Furthermore, provincial governments and institutions have been asked to provide loans and grants to low-income university students.

In China, a new tendency of reintroducing the state into educational supply has evolved to some extent. In 2007, the Chinese government prioritized education spending. The central government announced a 41.7 percent increase in education funding to 85.85 billion yuan at the annual meeting of the National People's Congress, China's legislature, in March. This is a significant boost to attempts to increase education spending to 4% of GDP, a goal set in 1993 and expected to be met in 2000. Meanwhile, total spending on rural primary and secondary schools has been increased by 21% to 223.3 billion yuan.

The central government has committed to waive tuition and other costs for all rural students, relieving financial strains on 150 million rural households. (South China Morning Post, March 6, 2007) It is projected that with more central government financial investment and a stronger role for the state in educational provision, the status of rural educational provision will improve and the rural-urban divide will narrow over the next decade.

Structure of education in China

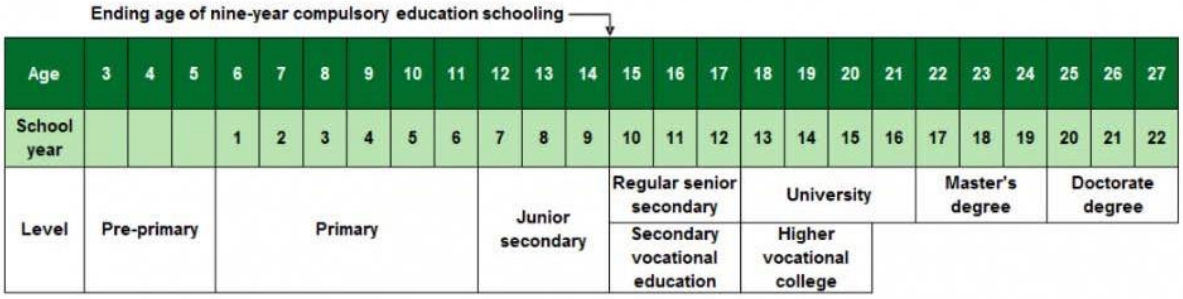
Education in China is geared toward preparing students for global job markets. Chinese students are thought to be intelligent and extraordinarily talented, and the education system plays an essential role in this regard. China understands the significance of education in the process of modernization. Adult and postsecondary vocational education are likewise developing and progressing. Higher education in China is designed to prepare students to thrive in their fields. Decentralization of education, a focus on quality assurance and certification, and the development of diverse types of higher education institutions are all paying dividends. Because of its well-educated and technically strong workforce, China is confidently marching towards the twenty-first century. The education system has played a significant influence in this.

Children aged three to five years old receive pre-school instruction. Following that, children are enrolled in primary schools. In China, education is compulsory for the first nine years of life. Some provinces provide 6 years of primary education, while others provide 5 years. Then comes 3 to 4 years of junior secondary school. Only the most intellectually gifted individuals graduate to higher education institutions. Academic secondary education and specialized/vocational/technical secondary education are the two types of secondary education. The school curriculum in academic secondary education includes core topics, electives, and practical activities. Liberal studies, English, Chinese, and mathematics are among the core courses covered at the secondary level.

Students who have completed their senior secondary school take final exams in nine courses. At the secondary school level, the credit system is utilized in conjunction with tests to help students improve their academic performance. Vocational education is available at three levels: junior secondary, senior secondary, and tertiary. Technical colleges often offer four-year programs to train technical workers. Students who complete junior middle school are also prepared for jobs that need operation and production abilities.
Universities, research institutes, colleges, medical institutes, and military institutions are just a few of the higher education options in China. Junior colleges offer two- to three-year courses at the undergraduate level. These are referred to as "short cycle" colleges. Some colleges also provide four-year programs. University diploma programs are available. Following a diploma, a Bachelor's degree needs 2 to 3 years of extra study.

Each stage of higher education institutions has an entrance examination that students must pass in order to progress to the next level of education. As a result, students with a Bachelor's degree must pass an admission examination in order to pursue postgraduate study. Admission to Ph.D. programs also necessitates passing an admission examination. Master's programs last two to three years, but doctoral programs last three years. Some universities also offer joint master's and doctoral degrees.

Programs for both vocational and academic disciplines are available in higher education institutions. Regular colleges or universities, adult colleges or universities, and private universities are all types of higher education institutions in China. For courses other than medicine, engineering, and other such areas, the length of study for Bachelor's degree programs is four years. While most city colleges offer two-to-three-year diploma programs, some, such as Dalian University and Shenyang University, offer four-year diploma programs. Worker's universities and correspondence colleges are examples of adult universities. The municipal government manages adult colleges and universities.



Teaching And Teachers in China

Shanghai pupils' strong success in academic achievement exams issued by the OECD's Programme of International Student Achievement (PISA) has piqued international interest in Chinese education. Observers' curiosity was naturally drawn to the teachers who nurtured the world's finest test-takers in their hunt for good lessons.

The professionalism of Chinese teachers, as well as the methods by which they are prepared, trained, and developed, have also piqued the interest of international academics. Teacher education development in China provides an infusion of insights into the domains of teacher education and teaching. Efforts by teacher educators to improve 'the theory-practice nexus' in teacher education programs have mostly focused on training thoughtful, reflecting, and caring teachers in order to increase teaching quality. The pursuit of better teachers for effective teaching can benefit from tapping into wisdom from various regions of the world.

China's developmental experience may be useful in this regard. As a rapidly developing country aiming to establish a knowledge economy, China has launched waves of educational and curricular reform in order for its schools and universities to offer the human resources required to support its growth objectives. This initiative has included attempts to improve the quality of the nation's teachers as well as to restructure teacher education to better fulfill their professional needs. As a result, insights into fundamental difficulties in Chinese teacher education and teaching might serve as a mirror for cross-cultural reflection. Meeting the needs of the country's teaching force, on the other hand, is a monumental undertaking for China's teacher education sector.

China's teaching force is made up of 16.7 million people who work at various levels of the education system. In schools and kindergartens, approximately 15 million teachers educate 230 million pupils. Teacher shortages and attrition consistently erode the quality of schools and kindergartens in poor and isolated rural communities. Maintaining and improving teacher quality in the context of regional and urban-rural differences is a significant task for the teacher education sector, which is attempting to discover realistic strategies to meet official and public expectations. The goal of this special issue is to examine the current situation of teacher education and teaching in China. Teacher education, as a field of professional education, must address quality and relevance challenges outlined in state policy directives. The reintroduction of tuition-free pre-service teacher education, the establishment of'master teacher studios' as a form of professional development, and the beginning of overseas study to instill a global perspective in pre-service teachers are all measures to improve the overall quality of the teaching force through teacher education.

Teaching has been altered as a professional field by the introduction of new knowledge and a shift in pedagogical orientation to stress students' "all-round development." There are policies in place to cycle teachers between urban and rural schools in order to address the issue of teaching force quality differences; and the practice of deploying auxiliary teacher educators in schools is intended to ensure teaching quality. Official policies enforced from on high have mostly driven reform of teacher education and instruction. As teachers at all educational levels embark on a new cycle of reforms, a review of policy execution in key areas of teacher education and teaching should assist their future development.

The papers in this special issue were prepared by Chinese researchers who have also taught in higher education institutions in China (including Hong Kong) and North America. They make an effort to address current topics deemed vital to teacher education and teaching in the Chinese setting. They intend to shed light on a complicated field of professional and academic activity that is attempting to accommodate rapid educational changes, in addition to offering fresh information for the existing knowledge base. The findings provided in the papers are supposed to illuminate significant challenges in the design and practice of teacher education and teaching, providing food for thought for educators in other nations.

The papers are grouped under the broad categories of policy development, pre-service teacher preparation, in-service teacher professional development, and teachers and teaching. Related issues are discussed in the contexts of early childhood education, schooling and higher education. Paper 1 of the collection, ‘Reform of teacher education in China: a survey of policies for systemic transformation’ by Ye, Zhu, and Lo, attempts to identify significant themes from reform policies for teacher education and to underline consequential changes in the field. Findings of the paper suggest that state policies have raised the overall qualifications of teachers, established professional standards and formal procedures for teacher certification and registration, and diversified the mode of course delivery.

It is stated that, as a work in progress, further refining of accountability measures and a more balanced allocation of learning opportunities across urban and rural teachers will promote teacher education. Paper 2, 'Pre-service teachers' job-related perceptions of teaching in rural regions: implementation of the Free Teacher Education Programme in Mainland China,' by Qiao and Lai, investigates the results of a national initiative to

strengthen China's teaching force in rural areas. The ten-year-old undergraduate program paid student instructors to serve in rural schools after they graduated.

Financial incentives, institutional prestige of course providers, and promises of guaranteed employment are variables that drew student teachers to the program, according to the paper's findings. However, the institutions have fallen short in cultivating positive impressions of rural education among teacher candidates, who continue to prefer work in metropolitan schools. Paper 3: "Tailored for China: Did It Work?" Wang, Clarke, and Webb's Reflections on an Intensive Study Abroad Programme for Chinese Student Teachers reflects on the learning experiences of a group of Chinese student teachers in a Canadian program meant to promote understanding of teaching and learning from an international viewpoint.

The findings of the study highlight the efficacy of a context-responsive approach to cross-cultural teaching and learning, with an emphasis on modeling and purposeful explanation of teaching practice, experiential learning, and dialogic reflection. The study depicts a learning process in which student instructors gained a better grasp of their own educational foundations by recognizing the many opportunities for teaching and learning in a new cultural setting. Paper 4, 'Teacher participation in school-based professional development in China: does it matter for teacher efficacy and teaching strategies?' by Ke, Yin, and Huang, examines secondary teachers' perspectives on the relationship between school-based professional development activities and their effects on professionalism and teaching.

The findings of the study show the importance of contextual factors, such as school leadership support and individual teacher willingness, in affecting teacher engagement in professional development activities. The article highlights teacher collegiality and collective lesson preparation as the most significant elements that improved teaching effectiveness, rather than frequency of participation. Paper 5, 'Teacher learning as border crossing: a case study of Master Teacher Studios in China,' by Zheng, Zhang, and Wang, analyzes difficulties entrenched in learning opportunities for in-service teachers given through'master teacher studios.' The studios are organized by well-known teachers (often of school topics) with official assistance for prospective in-service teachers who aim for pedagogical excellence.

A study on professional learning is guided by the concept of 'border crossing.' There are four learning methods identified: seeking common ground among differences, maturing through formal and informal coordination, reflecting on one's own boundaries, and modifying behaviors. Furthermore, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional aspects that influence teacher learning as well as boundary crossing are explored. Liao, Liu, Zhao, and Li's paper, 'Understanding how local actors implement teacher rotation policy in a Chinese context: a sensemaking perspective,' gives a case study on the implementation of the Teacher Rotation Policy in a rural county. The Teacher Rotation Programme was created as a major governmental attempt to narrow the teacher quality gap between urban and rural schools by rotating 'high quality' urban teachers to teach in hard-to-staff rural schools for a certain period of time.

The findings of the study demonstrate substantial administrative expenses and some unexpected implications of rotating instructors across schools, as well as the sensemaking processes used by participants while applying the program. Zhang and Yuan's paper 7, 'Uncertain identities of non-higher-education-based EFL teacher educators: a third space theory approach,' addresses the issue of professional identity among teacher educators who are not based in higher education institutions. These teacher educators' identities are viewed via the prism of metaphors, which encapsulate their self-images. According to the research findings, four types of identities exist: willing communicators, dissatisfied jack-of-all-trades and master of none, struggling professional leaders, and concerned supporters.

Paper 8, 'Understanding teachers' motivation for and commitment to teaching: profiles of Chinese early career, early childhood teachers,' by Zhang, Yu, and Liu, investigates the motivation and commitment of early childhood teachers to teach. The research outlines four categories of early childhood instructors in the early stages of their professions, with a focus on early career teachers: dedicated enthusiastic, committed compromiser, unsure, and uncommitted. The four types of early career early childhood teachers demonstrate the diversity of teachers and the complexity of teaching in the context of early childhood education, which necessitates unwavering policy and professional attention to avoid teacher attrition and shortages on the one hand, and attract and retain high-quality teachers on the other. Taken together, the publications above delve into the complexities of teacher education and teaching in China.

Reforms in teacher education and teaching have resulted in structural transformations of the fields as a result of policy-induced efforts, such as system openness, expansion of learning possibilities, reorientation of curriculum and teaching, and other notable developments. The studies' findings imply that, while significant money and efforts have been committed in nationwide projects to attain commendable goals for teacher education and teaching, the effects of such projects remain questionable. However, against the backdrop of regional and urban-rural disparities, China's teaching force and teacher education sector will be tested not only for their ability to supply sufficient competent teachers for schools and kindergartens, but also for their role in maintaining a healthy educational ecology for students.

However, teacher education institutes can assist by insisting on an approach that incorporates curricular and pedagogical insights into teaching practice. Teachers may help by educating in a creative, responsible, and humane manner. The authors of this special issue hope that by presenting a critical discourse on Chinese teacher education and teaching, the fruits of their labor will serve as a useful reference for scholars and educators interested in teachers and teaching in a society that is constantly looking for ways to improve both.

Governance and finance

Higher education institutions are vertically administered and financed by one of three types of administrative authority: (a) the MOE (Ministry of Education, which was renamed the SEC, State Education Commission in 1985, and renamed the MOE in 1998), (b) non-education ministry-level central government departments, and (c) provinces and province-level municipalities. MOE institutions and central ministry-level governments are funded by MOE using budgetary allocations from the Ministry of Finance.

In general, budgetary allocations are based solely on enrollment numbers, plus irregular, special-purpose financing. The provincial institutions are supported by the departments of finance in each province and municipality, as well as irregular "encouraging" funds from the federal government. In 1995, the SEC financed 36 national "keypoint" colleges, with enrollments accounting for 11% of the total (Table 2). The average class size was 6,680 pupils. There were 331 ministry-funded institutions, accounting for 34% of total enrolment. The average class size was around 2,100 people. There were 687 provincial and local institutions, accounting for 55% of total enrolment. The average class size was approximately 1,600 students. The average size was about 1,600 students. In 1997, the average enrollment size of the three types of higher education institution grew to 3,112.

According to American higher education enrollment figures, all of the colleges and universities (with the exception of a few recently amalgamated ones like as Zhejiang University and Sichuan Union University) are comparable to relatively minor U.S. institutions. However, due to diseconomies of scale, excessively high unit costs, ineffective organizational structures, mismanagement, high student subsidies, and limited revenue sources (Hartnett, 1993), Chinese colleges and universities lack the economic efficiency, academic vitality, professional development, affirmative action, and democratic participation found in American colleges and universities.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The two countries' education systems, as portrayed in the carefully chosen issues, have both similarities and differences. The origins of education are as old as the nation's history and could be referred to as ancient education. For example, in Ethiopia, the origin of ancient education is associated with two aspects: indigenous and religion. Even if these two perspectives occasionally overlap, they can be described by highlighting their distinguishing characteristics. Since the beginning of communal life, humans have intended to convey information, skills, and values verbally (in most cases) through specific ways in order to preserve and develop what their forefathers accomplished. Indigenous education is an essential, valued, and inseparable element of indigenous peoples' existence, having helped them survive for millennia. We believe that this works for China as well, where we have enjoyed molding generations with the wisdom of the time. History reveals a great deal about the role indigenous education has played and continues to play in the country's educational system.

Religion is also important in both countries' educational systems. Prior to the entrance of major religions from the Middle East, local beliefs (which lacked inscriptions in most cases) were the lifeblood of citizens in all realms of human endeavor. When alien religions were imported later, they began to have written form, resulting in basic education (how to read and write). They gradually developed a solid foundation for modern/western education. In the case of Ethiopia, for example, imported religions, primarily Christian and Islam, made significant contributions to the country's then-civilization and created the groundwork for modern western education.

Other critical challenges in the education system are national education policy and system structure. As the presentations show, the current education policy is the outcome of prior governments' long-term coordinated efforts. In its current form, it is intended to meet the demands of citizens. It attempts to address every diversity, regardless of gender, religion, socioeconomic background, and so on. It is promoted as a fundamental right of all citizens, particularly at the primary level. The typical issue, however, is one of implementation. There appears to be no significant commitment from all stakeholders, as well as no means to effect every strategy designed in accordance with national policy. This may be determined by the capacity of the regions or states, as they have varying human and material resources. For example, the educational status of China's northern and southern states differs greatly. This is also true in Ethiopia, where the eastern and western peripheries lag behind others.

The educational system is similar, with the exception that Ethiopia's primary level concludes at grade 8, whereas China's primary level ends at grade 6. Primary education is divided into two levels, followed by lower secondary education (grades 9 and 10) and preparation stages (grades 11 and 12) before entering higher learning institutions. The curriculum is also constructed in accordance with the nature of the discipline and the

developmental phases of the learners, ranging from environmental sciences at the primary level to hard sciences at the other end of the spectrum. Learners can also enter the workforce at various levels, particularly through vocational and technical education, based on their interests and merit.

Teachers and teaching are given less attention in both countries, despite the fact that policy documents consider them as the most significant profession for propelling the nation's position forward. The key reasons cited for teaching's poor status are that students with low success levels enter the field, they lack desire, the working conditions are unappealing, and recruiting and training are sometimes politicized. Because of these and other related factors, their professional contribution is insignificant.

In terms of governance and financing, because the two countries' state formations differ, Ethiopia has decentralized power to states or regions, whereas China has a centralized system. As a result, the federal government takes the lead in defining and formulating the whole education system through national education policy, which collects and organizes all major educational concerns from the ground up. The handling of local concerns is the responsibility of the regions. They are supposed to create curricula and choose teaching tactics based on societal priorities. However, there are times when the central government operates as a unitary entity, such as when recruiting and assigning educational experts based not only on merit but also on political commitment. The flow of resources to the target areas has its own constraints. For one reason, it is insufficient to raise educational standards. On the other hand, the allocated resource does not reach the target group due to administrative flaws.

Finally, it should be recognized that a comparative viewpoint cannot supply us with comprehensive action plans unless it is complemented by broad vistas. Thinking just within one's own borders is expensive in the age of globalization. A comparative study of this type allows you to examine things from a different perspective and focus on the flaws while ignoring the strengths. From both countries' perspectives, we must acknowledge that students are at the forefront of fostering innovation and creativity. If we are to have any impact on the global stage, we must take efforts to move forward toward a desired vision. This will necessitate a policy framework that combines increased access, equity, and quality with the appropriate balance of autonomy and regulation in order to achieve far-reaching missions.

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