The High Education in Public Schools between the UK and China

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Abstract. The paper compares the high education in public schools between the UK and China. As is well-known to all, a good education is based on the lessons of the past and collective advice. The main purpose of this paper is to conclude the strengths and weaknesses of two different countries in education, set a better example for other public schools and help Chinese public schools to have more significant education. The meanings of the public school in two countries are invoked in this paper to assist people in making a splendid comprehension for the differences or similarities. Meanwhile, the comparisons introduce the policies which are implemented by the governments and they constitute this paper. The method employed in this paper draw on the discipline of comparative education and history, which make it more enlightening. Also, the paper gives some suggestions to help education of both countries develop better, even though they both have different strengths and weaknesses.

Keywords: education, the public school, comparisons.

1. Introduction

In China, the scale of the public schools' establishment is much higher than the private ones, and this also depends on the decisions that Chinese governments has done. On the one hand, the Chinese governments has implemented the educational poverty alleviation policy. Poverty alleviation through education is the fundamental solution to implement "targeted poverty alleviation" and a momentous method to block the transmission of poverty between generations [1]. On the other hand, the governments have also insisted on nine-year compulsory education which provide teenagers with education of their own accord. Before teenagers are graduated from the junior high schools, they can enjoy free books and educational resources. The Hope Project is a distinct example. However, the meaning of public schools in Britain is different from the meaning of China's. According to the development of British schools, research workers can divide it into two different time periods. Before 16th century, the public school meant a free charity school. In the article, it states that the British historian of education Hardy believes that after Christianity of education was introduced into Britain in 6th century, schools were created at the same time as churches were built and schools usually attached to the churches [2]. Christian schools are the earliest sources of public schools in Britain. As time goes by, these schools which were attached to churches became the main or even the only educational institution in Britain. After the 17th century, the meaning of public school had changed into fee-paying and private school. British public schools, with their favorable and national reputation, appealed to a large number of wealthy children to attend in, and gradually became private schools with high fees which were basically equipped with the modern characters. British public schools are also distinctly private: they do not think about not only educational equality, but also entering the public schools nearby, but they chase high-quality sources of students on the basis of fee-paying [2]. It is one of the reasons why teenagers in western countries have a gap year. If teenagers who are about to enter university do not have enough money to pay for tuition, they will use a gap year to make enough money through working, because the tuition of British public schools is too high for them to afford it.

The paper describes the education in the public schools which are based on the comparisons between the UK and China. Meanwhile, the paper focused on the schools established after the

founding of New China and the British schools established after the 17th century. Indeed, to understand the differences between these schools and why they differ between countries, requires the trajectory of their development over the long course of history and the policies which are introduced to maintain the normal operation of schools. Therefore, the paper is concerned with not only the comparisons of schools in two countries, but also the impact of policies introduced on their education.

This paper, first, analyzes the current situations of Chinese and British schools. After that, it shows the comparative analysis to summarize the similarities and differences and gives appropriate suggestions based on summaries. The main purpose of the paper is to hope schools can take the essence from each other and eliminate the dross by comparing the education between the two countries, so as to make education more perfect and significant to provide good references for China's education.

2. The Current Situations of Education in Two Countries

All people have their own rights to be educated. Education is meaningful and valuable in our society. Education can broaden our horizon, because people can see some sceneries we have not met in books. In the long term, the completion of knowledge can cope with some problems. For example, when people meet some emergencies, such as fire or earthquake, they can handle these calmly because teachers have taught them how to deal with it. There is a journal called Ecology and Society claiming that people who were well-educated can have a powerful awareness of earthquake risks and they were more likely to have preparation for disaster [3]. The high risks consciousness linked with education can be helpful to decrease vulnerability behaviors. Education is complex and has an important role in one person's life. In Silov's idea, he thought that education included: educational ideal, educational goal and educational task; educational factor; the subject of education: the organization model of education; types and tools of education, as well as assessment tools to assess the significance and effectiveness of education [4]. It is obvious that everyone holds different opinions about education which is hard to understand. The meaning of education is making people understand as a person needs to human society's responsibilities and obligations.

2.1. China

In the People's Republic of China, most of the people hold a firm belief that education is a shortcut to success, so nearly each student is taught from an early age that the best way out is to study. Jingbo Shao has summed up the simple reason in the abstract of her article: as a developing country, with the rapid development of its economy, China's material civilization and spiritual civilization have also been promoted rapidly, which inevitably puts forward higher requirements for education [5]. Meanwhile, only higher-quality education can meet people's needs. However, in the process of study, students are more and more strict with themselves. Students need to highly concentrate on memorization and the fundamental comprehension of formulas. In the regular examinations, students are not allowed to use calculators, because most of the teachers believe that relying on calculators could lead to laziness to a certain degree. Education has penetrated into every corner of our lives, into every stage of our lives. The article has concluded the Chinese educational status quo: rural children try to change their fate through "learning"; urban children try to participate in more learning classes to face more fierce social competition; parents educated pupils that if they study hard, they will attend excellent universities in the future and the whole society has given unprecedented attention and concern to the two days of the National College Entrance Examination [6].

2.2. Britain

In Britain, in its early year, the public schools were mainly designed to train clerical staff, send students to Oxford and Cambridge universities, and even qualified military personnel for the country [2]. Compare with Chinese education, on the contrary, Britain education pays more attention to creativity and manipulative ability. Before students go to universities, they are in a completely relaxed

atmosphere to study. In that environment, teenagers have space to exert their personal values and explore their personal interests. Students must stay in schools until they are at least 16 years old and they need to take national exams at that time. Under normal condition, students learn curriculums widely at first, and they would be separated in different classes according to their abilities of learning subjects. As time goes by, some students might drop some subjects in which they are not competent. After 16 years old, students have choices to accept vocational education and academic education in preparation for attending universities [7].

3. The Comparisons between the UK and China in Education

Education is a critical component in national development. In the education from childhood to adulthood, people can always be aware of the education importance, not only in textbook content, but also in the real life.

3.1. Similarities

They all pay attention to education, so they introduce many policies to help the educational development. Meanwhile, compared with many countries, the public schools in the UK and China have strong education levels and teaching capacity, because policies have promoted the development of education. In China, the local governments maintain that everyone is equal, so that they carry out targeted poverty alleviation through employment, health and education. Vigorously develop “fair and quality education” is the fundamental focus of solving educational poverty [1]. To ensure that every student has a place in schools, China has implemented nine-year compulsory education in 1986 and adopted the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China. This education has property of compulsory, public welfare and universality. The governments realize that it is a vicious circle that the more backward the area, the lower the education that teenagers can get. At the same time, lack of access to fundamental education can cause the decrease of individual and national capabilities, therefore exacerbating the cycle of poverty [8]. Meanwhile, the Chinese governments have established a labor law which means that the legal minimum age for employment in China is sixteen. If teenagers have an extra year of schooling, they will have more employment opportunities, directions and options. The fact proves that China has made great progress indeed. From the Figure 1 which is from China’s 2005 mini-census data in the research, those people who completed secondary school had a significant increase of monthly income, mobility and employment rates each year from age 15 to 18 [9]. However, in China, the public schools which are poorly built and operated have been still existing since the construction of New China and they were called weak schools. Chinese weak school is a broad concept, usually because of the poor conditions of running a school, weak leadership and low performance of teaching and poor enrollment of students, faced with problems such as poor teaching quality, low social reputation, students unwilling to enroll and parent distrust [1]. On account of poor quality of schools which were caused by educational expansion, the weak schools appeared. The problems of them are furthering seriously, because China at that time was concentrated on constructing the large scale of key schools. However, in 1985, the nation realized that the significance of educational poverty alleviation and the governments took initial improvement measures. They enacted policy decisions and initiated educational reforms, and these have made successful progress. At the end of 2018, 30960 compulsory education schools in China had met the bottle line which were accounting for 99.76 percentage of the total number of compulsory education schools, and they also basically achieved the comprehensive goal called “thinning” [1]. In Britain, aiming to have better education, the governments also implemented some documents. In 2013, the UK governments has published International Education; Global Development and Prosperity. This reform focused on attracting international students, promoting cross-border education, exporting educational technical and equipment, strengthening the partnership with emerging countries and enhancing the image of British brand [10]. They considered that attracting top foreign students can bring some useful source of students, and it could promote the development of education to some

extent. In March 2019, the British Ministry of Education and the Department of International Trade jointly issued the government document called British International Education Strategy: Global Potential Global Growth and they established education export as national strategy which was hoping to promote the systematization, industrialization and tradability of international education. From the beginning of the 2017, British universities have set up 38 overseas branches worldwide which are second only to the US in number and among the more than 8000 English international secondary schools, there are more than 3700 British schools [10].

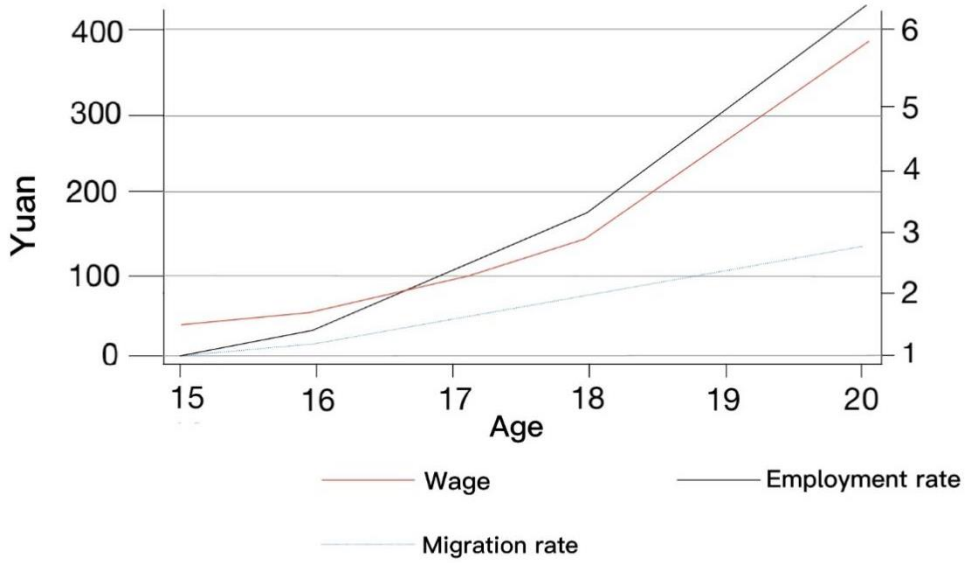


Fig 1. Monthly Wage, Employment Rate and Migration Rate for Middle School Graduates across Age Group. Data source: 2005 Mini Census [9]

3.2. Differences

Because the local governments have different perceiving of education, they have implemented various of subject policies. In China, the governments focus more attention on the all-round development education of students. In the policy, primary and secondary schools have lay more emphasis on developing students' moral, intellectual, physical, beauty and labor. In some areas, the importance of physical education has become more and more evident. For example, the score of physical education in the high schools has been improved and the public schools set up some regulations to increase the time for students to exercise. The significance of music and art is not left behind. In Huaian area, the Ministry of Education has included art and music in the high school entrance examination, and each of them is worth five points. The governments take advantages of creating a good learning atmosphere to promote the all-round development of students. At the same time, compared with the strict and traditional education in the past, the current education mode can encourage students' all-round development, cultivate students' practical ability and exercise students' innovative thinking. All these efforts can enable them to discover their unique talents and skills in different fields, make them realize the importance of learning and enjoy it. In Britain, compared with the education in China, the scientific development plays an important role in British education. Science education experiences scientific thinking methods and scientific inquiry methods which is based on quality education. It also can build up complete views and values of scientific knowledge. In the early days of British education, the status of science education was not stable in educational system. with the profound study of education, the governments realized that they should put science education in the certain position. According to the data, the key status of science education in primary and secondary schools was not legally recognized until the 1988 Education Reform Act officially listed science as the national core curriculum [11]. After that, the status of science education has increasingly promoted and dominated in fundamental education. In addition, the Science Learning Plan refers that the public schools need to cultivate the scientific inquiry capability of all students and

settle down the scientific problems which are found by themselves through scientific and accurate researches to varying degree [11]. At the same time, British primary and secondary schools especially pay attention to the cultivation of five scientific attitudes: curiosity, respect for facts, willingness to change own minds, critical reflection and sensitivity to organics and the environments [12]. All these policies can prove the importance of science education in the British educational system.

4. Suggestions

The public schools should have equal teaching faculty and educational resources. In China, a current situation research states that since the reform and opening up, the gap of the level of economic development in the east, middle and west regions has expanded sharply [6]. The imbalance of economic development level among regions has also caused the great gap between the level of investment in education. Besides, the local governments have different comprehensions of the importance of education. All these reasons lead to the difference of education expenditure expand further. Also, education expenditure has a closely relationship with local governments, because local governments is the absolute subject of financial investment in education [6]. The education gap is leading to the increasing urbanization and the imbalance of educational resources and these only leads to a vicious circle. The direct solution is to average faculty and resources. For example, for some relatively backwards cities, the governments can post some attractive things to appeal some tourists to promote the local economic development, and also invest money into education expenditure. Meanwhile, the governments can use it into hiring senior teachers and improve the teaching environment and infrastructure.

The governments should pay more attention to education. In China, although the fiscal expenditure of education is continually increasing, the researchers could point out that education expenditure as a share of GDP has been hovering at a low level and the level of education investment has slowed the international average [6]. The governments can set up more and more policies to promote the proportion of education.

5. Conclusion

The framework of paper proposed the education in public schools between the UK and China. Although there are many different points of education in China and the UK, they can learn from each other's advantages and try to avoid the happening of disadvantages. These two countries engage in a fierce struggle over education. Fortunately, as expected, they continue to improve and surpass themselves on education. This paper records the phylogeny of the public schools in two countries, the current situations of education, the comparisons between them and the suggestions. However, education in public schools of China and the UK has still a long way to pass. The efforts that the governments can do just to create own educational direction and system according to different national conditions.

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