

Interpreting China's Community Education Policies of the Past Decade in the Context of Community Education Principles

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Abstract

Objective: This paper examines the evolution and impact of community education policies in China from 2013 to 2023, analyzing them through the lens of core community education principles. The primary research question is: How have community education policies in China over the past decade aligned with and promoted the principles of community education? **Methods:** The study employs a qualitative analysis of key policy documents, including the Opinions on Promoting Learning Cities (2014), the Regulations on the Promotion of Community Education in Chengdu (2016), and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education (2021), among others. The analysis focuses on identifying policy objectives, implementation strategies, and outcomes, with a particular emphasis on their alignment with community education principles such as lifelong learning, accessibility, community-centered approaches, and participatory engagement. **Results:** The analysis reveals that these policies are to meet the diverse learning needs of community residents, improve living standards, promote community governance, and support regional development. The policies underscore principles such as lifelong learning, accessibility, community-centered approaches, and participatory engagement. Key findings indicate that these policies aim to integrate various educational resources and promote social change, though challenges such as insufficient resources and uneven implementation persist. **Conclusions:** By aligning policy goals with community education principles, the research advocates for a more integrated approach that addresses the needs of all community members and fosters a sustainable and inclusive educational environment. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on community education policy and provide recommendations for future policy development and implementation.

Keywords: China's Community Education Policies, Community Education Principles

Introduction

Community education has long been recognized as a vital component of societal development, emphasizing lifelong learning and social integration (Watson, 2022). Its significance lies in its ability to address the educational needs of diverse populations, fostering personal growth, community cohesion, and social equity (Jarupongputtana et al., 2022; Nutbeam et al., 2018; Varty, 2022). The origins of community education can be traced back to the foundational ideas of prominent educational theorists like John Dewey, whose philosophy posited that education should extend beyond the confines of traditional school settings and integrate deeply with community life (Beckett, 2018; Jenlink, 2009). John Dewey, often referred to as the father of progressive education, introduced the concept that "the school is the foundation of society." His ideas, as articulated in works like "Democracy and Education," highlighted the interdependence between education and democratic society. Dewey believed that education should not only impart academic knowledge but also prepare individuals for active participation in community and civic life. This notion laid the groundwork for what would later be formalized as community education (Alshurman, 2015; "Global Pedagogies," 2010).

Building on Dewey's ideas, Manley and Mott conducted experiments in the early 20th century that further cemented the relationship between schools and their surrounding communities (Khoirunnisa & Rahma, 2023; Sihalohe et al., 2023). Their work demonstrated how schools could serve as hubs for community activities, addressing local needs and fostering a sense of collective responsibility. This approach effectively linked 'community' with 'education,' emphasizing the role of educational institutions in community development and vice versa ("Comparative and Global Pedagogies," 2008; Zajda et al., 2008).

Since the 20th century, community education has developed as a supplementary form of education, undergoing different stages of evolution across various countries, each with unique connotations and characteristics. In Europe, the concept of community education found roots in the folk high schools of Denmark, championed by N.F.S. Grundtvig and his successor, Nikolaj Frederik Severin. These institutions aimed to provide lifelong learning opportunities for adults, focusing on personal and community development rather than formal qualifications (Costa et al., 2017; Nyiraguhirwa, 2016). This model of community education as a form of popular enlightenment resonated in other Nordic countries, promoting the idea that education should be accessible to all, regardless of age or social status.

In the United States, community education was influenced by principles of participatory democracy and social reform (Hains et al., 2021). The settlement house movement, initiated by social reformers like Jane Addams, played a pivotal role in integrating educational activities with community services. Settlement houses provided a range of educational and social services, addressing the needs of immigrants and the urban poor. This holistic approach to education underscored the importance of addressing broader social issues through community engagement and learning.

Meanwhile, in Latin America, the concept of "popular education" emerged as a powerful force for social change (Zanella et al., 2019). Influenced by the pedagogical ideas of Paulo Freire, popular education emphasized critical consciousness and empowerment. Freire's seminal work, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," advocated for an educational process that

engages learners in dialogue and critical reflection, enabling them to understand and transform their social reality (Gonsalves et al., 2021; Underhill, 2021). This approach has had a profound impact on community education practices, particularly in contexts of social and political marginalization.

There are three main ways of understanding community education abroad. Firstly, community education as a form of popular enlightenment is represented by the Nordic countries. For example, the founder of community education in Denmark, Colombo, believed that the purpose of community education was to improve the lives of the people and to compensate for the basic deficiency in the people's lack of education. In this view, community education is a form of enlightenment rather than skills education. Secondly, Japanese scholars see community education as a form of social education. Popular education in Japan is linked to the local community, with a focus on adult education for those who have not received sufficient formal education. The school as an educational institution can become the center of community education, making full use of resources and being open to all individuals in society (Punthumasen & Maki, 2009). In Japan, community education is defined as an organized educational activity for all members of society, emphasizing the education of the people and social development with a strong administrative dimension (Ben-Ari & Singleton, 2000). Thirdly, the United Kingdom and the United States advocate individual development and liberalism, regarding community education as a kind of non-formal education with a focus on community service functions. Community colleges in the United States serve as a multi-functional platform for vocational and technical education, compensatory education, and community education, providing non-formal social education services for people from all walks of life, different races, and various occupations (Hou, 2017).

In contemporary times, community education has become a global movement, adapting to the specific needs and contexts of different societies. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from adult education and vocational training to health education and civic engagement (Carmo Ed, 2014). Community education programs often involve collaborations between schools, local organizations, government agencies, and community members, creating a network of support and resources (Staksrud & Milosevic, 2022).

In China, the concept of community education was introduced in the early 20th century and gained momentum after the country's reform and opening up in the 1980s (Li, 1994). Influenced by both Western models and traditional Chinese educational practices, community education in China has evolved to address the diverse needs of urban and rural populations (Shih et al., 2023). Policies and initiatives have been implemented to promote lifelong learning, improve educational infrastructure, and enhance the quality of life for community members (IV et al., 1977; Lengrand, 1989).

Overall, the importance of community education lies in its ability to promote lifelong learning, social inclusion, and community development. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and active participation, community education helps individuals and communities adapt to changing social and economic conditions, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and cohesive society.

Background of Study

Community education is structured lifelong learning that involves voluntary engagement in group initiatives to thoughtfully address both individual and communal needs (Zhang & Perkins, 2023). To meet the diverse needs and interests of community members, various initiatives and activities such as training, workshops, experience sharing, social engagement, personal enrichment, skill development, and experiential learning are necessary (Le & Billett, 2022). These activities provide accessible and timely educational opportunities through community education programs, facilitated by collaborations among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, and government agencies (Edo et al., 2002).

A significant focus of community education is on parenting and family support. Programs are designed to offer resources and workshops for parents and caregivers, enhancing their parenting skills and promoting healthy family dynamics (Hill & Ziegahn, 2010). These programs provide strategies to encourage children's social and language skills, emotional self-regulation, independence, and problem-solving abilities (Sanders et al., 2020). Community education is, therefore, a form of non-formal education that includes technical, skills-based, and humanistic training, emphasizing both community and individual development, and integrating a strong concept of social service and development (Yao, 2010).

Effective co-creation in community education requires active participation in social networks (Nunes et al., 2017). Key aspects of family involvement include behavioral engagement, home supervision, and home-school connection, while partnership development relies on the capacity to engage parents, respectful and effective leadership regarding families and children, and the establishment of authentic partnerships (Ma et al., 2016). However, there has been limited research on the impact of school-community collaboration on parent-child relationships or parental involvement (Chen et al., 2016). Parental participation in community programs involves active engagement in community-based activities such as parent-teacher associations, volunteering, community centers, and educational programs (Castro et al., 2004). Parental education programs play a crucial role in achieving family reunification by enhancing parenting skills and strengthening parent-child relationships (Balsells Bailón et al., 2022). Parents with higher social and human capital are more likely to be involved in their children's education (Jabar et al., 2023).

In China, the concept of "community education" was introduced in the 1920s and 1930s by Mr. Fei Xiaotong. The development of community education began in earnest in the early 1980s, following the country's reform and opening up. This development built on the experience of combining school education, family education, and social education, drawing from international models of community education, and gradually evolving through pilot projects tailored to different regional contexts in China (Feng, 2009; Li, 1994; Tett, 2010). According to Zhang Zhaowen in his book "A Guide to Building Learning Communities," the development stages of community education in China can be divided into three phases: emergence, formation, and initial development (Wu & Mao, 2002).

Since China's reform and opening up, the evolution of community education policies can be categorized into four stages: the starting stage (1985-1990), the exploratory stage (1991-1999), the development stage (2000-2010), and the perfecting stage (2011-present). These

stages are based on the timing of major policy promulgations and the primary issues addressed by community education policies.

Over the past forty years, the values and connotations of community education in China have evolved significantly (Tian & Wang, 2019; Yan, 2007). Scholars offer various theories regarding community education, including the educational interaction and process theory, the regional education theory, the education system theory, the education model theory, the organizational management category theory, and the community development category theory (Liu Yao, 2010). Three representative views on community education in China are particularly notable:

- ✧ Li Yixian (2000, 2001) views community education as a process of community-based educational activities aimed at improving the quality and quality of life of all community members, ultimately facilitating community development.
- ✧ Ye Zhonghai (1999, 2000) defines community education as activities within the community scope, targeting all community members, closely linked to the community's interests and development needs, and aimed at addressing social problems while enhancing the quality of life and community members' education.
- ✧ Wu Zunmin (2003) describes community education in China as a bottom-up mass education activity spontaneously generated by local residents, aimed at enriching spiritual life, fulfilling lifelong learning demands, and ensuring residents' rights to independent learning.

Methodology

Analyzing policy texts is a crucial method for researching community education policies. The values and implementation strategies embedded in these texts are central to understanding the direction of community education. This methodology provides a comprehensive approach to interpreting China's community education policies, ensuring a thorough understanding of their alignment with community education principles and their impact on educational practice.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a fundamental aspect of policy research. It involves a systematic examination of policy documents to identify explicit mentions and implicit indications of community education principles (Hämäläinen et al., 2016; Martínez-García et al., 2019). This analysis is carried out in two main steps:

- a. Policy Analysis: Using an established analytical framework, systematically analyze the collected policy documents. Identify and code sections that correspond to different community education principles (Dalglish et al., 2020). This coding process will help in organizing the data according to the principles being studied.
- b. Thematic Analysis: After coding, conduct a thematic analysis to uncover patterns and themes in the data. This step involves identifying how each policy reflects or deviates from the established community education principles (Khaire & Muniappa, 2022). The goal is to understand the underlying values and strategies that shape the policies.

Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis involves examining policies over time and across different geographical regions to uncover trends and variations (Fernández-Cruz et al., 2021).

- a. Temporal Comparison: Analyze changes and developments in China's community education policies over the past decade. Compare policies from different years to identify trends, shifts, and developments. This temporal analysis will highlight how policies have evolved and adapted to new challenges and opportunities.
- b. Geographical Comparison: Conduct a geographical comparison to explore how community education policies vary across different regions of China. This analysis aims to understand regional variations and unique approaches, revealing how policies are tailored to local contexts (Burau, 2012). Compare policies from various regions to uncover differences in objectives, subjects, measures, and procedures.

Research Samples and Comparative Aspects

For this study, policy documents related to community education issued by central and local party and government organs, as well as their departments, are selected as research samples. The comparative analysis focuses on four key aspects:

- a. Objectives: Examine the goals and aims of community education policies to identify commonalities and differences.
- b. Subjects: Analyze the target groups addressed by the policies, such as children, families, or community members.
- c. Measures: Assess the strategies and initiatives proposed or implemented in the policies.
- d. Procedures: Evaluate the procedures outlined for implementing community education policies.

By comparing these aspects, the study aims to uncover patterns and explore how community education policies are designed and executed across different contexts. This approach will provide insights into the effectiveness and alignment of policies with community education principles. This methodology outlines a comprehensive approach to interpreting China's community education policies through content and comparative analysis. By examining policy texts, identifying key themes, and comparing policies across time and geography, this study aims to provide a detailed understanding of the alignment between policies and community education principles, as well as their impact on educational practice.

Analysis of Community Education Policies in China (2013-2023)

Since 2010, China has made significant strides in developing and implementing community education policies, reflecting a commitment to enhancing educational practices and outcomes across urban and rural areas (Li, 2001; Shao, 2018). This analysis reviews key policy developments from 2013 to 2023, examining how these policies align with core community education principles and their impact on educational practice.

Policy Development and Key Milestones

In 2010, the *Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)* established the goal of "extensively developing community education in urban and rural areas." This marked the beginning of a focused effort to enhance community education across the country. The same year, the Ministry of Education introduced the *Evaluation Standards for Community Education Demonstration Zones (for Trial Implementation)*, signaling the formation of an evaluation mechanism for community education in China.

By 2012, the Central Rural Work Conference highlighted the role of community education in improving farmers' overall quality, increasing their incomes, and boosting the rural economy. The conference emphasized that community education should be a public platform accessible to all societal sectors, integrating into rural areas and farming households. It also stressed that community education should enhance the spiritual life of residents and foster a joyful atmosphere.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education, along with seven other departments, issued the *Opinions on Promoting the Construction of Learning Cities*. This document advocated for widespread urban and rural community education, the promotion of social governance innovation, and the development of a lifelong education system. It also encouraged schools to open their learning resources to the community and integrate with local needs.

The *Guiding Opinions on Further Promoting the Pilot Work of Rural Community Building*, issued in 2015 by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, positioned rural community education as a crucial element in enhancing public service provision in rural communities. That same year, the Ministry of Education incorporated family education guidance services into the community education system, as outlined in the *Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Work of Family Education*.

In 2016, the Ministry of Education and nine other departments issued the *Opinions on Further Promoting the Development of Community Education*. This document set forth the overall requirements, main tasks, and safeguards for advancing community education in China, and emphasized the goal of forming a development model of community education with Chinese characteristics by 2020.

In 2017, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council included "actively developing community education and promoting the construction of learning communities" in their *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Urban and Rural Community Governance*. This marked community education as a critical component of urban and rural governance.

The same year, Chengdu Municipality enacted China's first local legislation on community education, highlighting its importance within the national education system. This regulation detailed aspects such as functional positioning, departmental responsibilities, resource integration, facility construction, financial guarantees, staffing, and rewards for community education.

As of September 2018, 23 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions across China had issued implementation opinions to align with the Ministry of Education's documents, reflecting a period of intensified policy introduction and development.

The analysis of community education policies from 2013 to 2023 shows a significant evolution in China's approach to community education. The policies have increasingly integrated community education principles, promoting a more inclusive and effective educational environment. The development of a comprehensive policy framework reflects a balanced approach that addresses diverse community needs and supports the construction of a lifelong education system (Wu, 2003; Xiao et al., 2019).

The current stage of policy development demonstrates a blend of goal-orientation and problem-orientation, fostering an organic connection between top-level design and grassroots practice. This evolving policy system effectively balances the interests of various stakeholders and supports the comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable development of community education (Wu, 2011; Xiao, 2012). As China continues to enhance its community education policies, it is laying a strong foundation for the future of lifelong learning and the construction of a learning society.

Interpretation in the Context of Community Education Principles

In terms of the history of the development of community education policy, the value orientation of community education has experienced from the initial stage of supplementing moral education outside primary and secondary schools to the commitment to build a lifelong education system and then to break through the scope of education and move towards comprehensive social governance (Seay, 1974). Wang Le has divided the development of China's social education policy into four stages: the initial stage with ideological and political education and literacy education as the two wings, the exploratory stage with science and technology education as the focus, the deepening stage with community education as the main line, and the prosperous stage with "Internet + education" as the opportunity (Li, 1994). The development of community education has a certain logical expression and rational science, and scholars have concluded that the development of community education and policy changes are characterized by a shift in the main body of responsibility from "government" to "society", a shift in the purpose of education from "reality-oriented" to "development-oriented", a transformation of the content of education from "single" to "multiple", and a shift in the path of education from "closed" to "open" (Feng & Sumettikoon, 2023; Kahar et al., 2021; Okide et al., 2020).

The government's strong support has been instrumental in the development of community education in China (Xiao Tian et al., 2019). Community education centers are typically equipped with a wide array of learning resources and facilities, including libraries, multimedia classrooms, and laboratories, to offer diverse learning opportunities (Qiao & Xu, 2014; Zhou Yuerong, 2012). Furthermore, these centers provide courses covering various subject areas such as basic education, vocational training, culture, arts, and sports, catering to the learning needs of community residents across different age groups and interests (Yuan & Chen, 2018). With China's aging population, community education centers are increasingly prioritizing the development of learning programs tailored for the elderly. These programs encompass health and wellness activities, intellectual training, hobbies, and interests to enhance physical and mental well-being and foster social interaction among older adults (Qiu Zhuoying et al., 2014). Additionally, community education relies heavily on the participation and support of volunteers. These volunteers, acting as teachers, tutors, or administrators, offer learning guidance and support to community residents, thereby promoting community education initiatives (Shen Jinbin, 2014).

Despite significant progress, challenges persist within China's community education landscape. Some centers encounter issues such as insufficient staffing, inadequate facilities, and limited funding, highlighting the need for further improvements and strengthening of the sector.

Form 2.1 Significant policies on community education released by Chinese government in the past ten years

Time	Name of policy	Content and purpose Impact and significance (key words)	Principles of community education
2014	Opinions on Promoting Learning Cities	urban and rural community education ; social governance; a lifelong education system; all types of education; learning resources to the community and integrating them with the community.	<p>Extensive Implementation: Urban and rural community education should be carried out widely, indicating a comprehensive approach to ensure all areas benefit from educational initiatives.</p> <p>Promotion of Innovation in Social Governance: to foster innovation in how societies are managed and governed, suggesting that educational initiatives can drive social change and improvement.</p>
2015	Guidance on further promoting the pilot work of building rural communities; The Ministry of Education, in its Guidance on Strengthening Family Education Work	Making rural community education an important element in upgrading the level of public service provision in rural communities. Incorporate family education guidance services in neighborhoods and communities into the community education system.	<p>Enhancement of Public Service Provision: By making rural community education a key component, the proposal underscores the importance of education in improving the overall level of public services in rural areas. This principle suggests that education is foundational to community development and well-being.</p> <p>Integration of Family Education Guidance: Incorporating family education guidance services into neighborhoods and communities emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to education that includes support for families, and aims to provide resources and support to enhance family involvement in education.</p> <p>Community-Based Education System: The integration of family education into the community education system indicates a commitment to a comprehensive, community-centered educational framework.</p>
July 2016	Opinions of Nine Departments, including the Ministry of Education, on Further Promoting the Development of Community Education	In order to expedite the achievement of the Education Plan's goal of fundamentally forming a learning society and to meet the strategic requirement of constructing a moderately prosperous society in all respects	<p>Lifelong Learning: Community education recognizes that learning is a continuous process that occurs throughout one's life. It promotes the idea that individuals of all ages should have opportunities to acquire new knowledge, skills, and competencies.</p>

August 2016	Regulations on the Promotion of Community Education in Chengdu	"General Provisions," "Organisation ,Implementation," "Cooperation and Participation," "Protection and Promotion," "Legal Liability," and "By-laws," closing the gap between urban and rural areas and regions; local regulation specifically devoted to community education.	<p>Social Change: Community education is often driven by a desire for positive social change. It aims to address social inequalities, promote social justice, and create a sense of solidarity among community members.</p> <p>Reflective Practice: Practitioners of community education engage in ongoing reflection and assessment of their programs. This helps them understand what works well, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments.</p>
2017	Opinions on Strengthening Community Education	the objectives and measures for the government's support and promotion of community education; financial investment, improving community education facilities, upgrading the level of teachers, promoting diversified subject offerings, and facilitating resource sharing and cooperation.	<p>Collaboration and Networking: Collaboration is essential in community education. It involves building partnerships with local organizations, schools, government agencies, and other stakeholders to leverage resources and expertise.</p>
2018	Outline of the Urban Community Education Development Plan (2018-2022)	urban community education; upgrading the level of infrastructure construction, improving community education regulations and policies, strengthening the construction of community education teachers, and promoting the in-depth integration of community education with employment and entrepreneurship, health and elderly care and other social services.	<p>Empowerment: A key principle of community education is to empower individuals and communities to have control over their own learning and development. This empowerment involves building confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to make informed decisions.</p> <p>Accessible and Affordable: Community education strives to make learning accessible and affordable to all community members. It recognizes that barriers to education, such as financial constraints, should be minimized.</p>
2018	Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Strengthening and Improving Parental Responsibilities in the New Era	the importance of strengthening parental responsibilities; responsibility of nurturing the healthy growth of their children; family education, parent-child communication and the development of children's self-care skills.	<p>Reflective Parenting: Encourage parents to reflect on their parenting approaches and adapt them based on their learnings from community education. Regular introspection helps parents refine their strategies and create a positive family environment.</p>

2018	Guidance on Strengthening and Improving Parent-Child Education in the New Era	parent-child education; the harmonious development of parent-child relationships, strengthening parent-child communication and emotional exchange, and enhancing parents' educational abilities.	Action-Oriented Parenting: Encourage parents to apply what they learn from community education programs directly to their parenting practices. For example, if a workshop focuses on conflict resolution, parents can use those techniques in resolving conflicts at home.
2018	Revitalisation Plan for Rural Community Education (2018-2022)	the development of rural community education and enhance the lifelong learning ability and quality of rural residents; professional teaching force and promote the application of information technology.	Flexible and Responsive: Community education is adaptable and responsive to changing community needs and dynamics. Programs are designed to evolve based on feedback and emerging priorities.
2019	Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Vocational Education and Training	measures aimed at strengthening vocational education and training.	Holistic Learning: Community education takes a holistic approach to learning, recognizing that people have diverse learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. It seeks to address the intellectual, social, emotional, and practical aspects of individuals' lives.
2020	Opinions on Strengthening Community Education in Rural Areas	rural community education, improving the conditions of education facilities.	Participatory Approach: This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among participants.
2020	The "Medium and Long Term Plan for the Development of National Education" (2010-2020)	objectives and measures for strengthening family education and family education services; providing guidance and advice on family education.	Family-Community Integration: Bridge the gap between family education and community education by involving families in community initiatives. This could include joint community projects, volunteering, or participation in community improvement efforts. When families work together for the betterment of the community, children learn valuable lessons about social responsibility.
on October 23, 2021	Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education	the fine tradition of the Chinese people, who have long placed a high value on family education; improve social harmony and family happiness; offer guidance, assistance, and services for family education; individual parenting, enhancing parent-child relationships, shared participation, the roles of both parents, etc.	Community-Centered: Programs and activities are designed in collaboration with community members, ensuring that they reflect the values, culture, and goals of the community. Participatory Approach: This fosters a sense of ownership and empowers children to take an active role in their own upbringing.

Discussion

i. Objectives of Community Education Policy

Objectives generally appear in the introduction or preface of a policy text, representing the policy direction of the policy maker in promoting community education and specifying the policy goals to be achieved in the future. We have analysed the existing community education policy texts that have been enacted and summarised the policy objectives as follows: first, to meet the learning needs of community residents; second, to improve the overall quality and living standards of community residents; third, to promote community construction and community governance; fourth, to promote regional economic and social development; and fifth, to build a lifelong education system and a learning society (Cheng, 2015; Tang & Chen, 2012).

ii. Main Bodies of Community Education Policy

The main bodies involved in China's community education policy include central party and government departments, local party and government departments, relevant scholars and experts, mass media, social organisations and community residents. From the point of view of the party and government organs and departments, the relevant policy documents, if approved by the State Council of the CPC Central Committee and issued layer by layer, is a process of absolute obedience. In the process of implementation, the local authorities can develop implementation methods according to local conditions, so as to make the higher-level policies more practicable and easy to implement. Social organisations and community residents, as important subjects, mainly provide feedback to the upper levels (party and government departments) on problems encountered in specific activities through the mass media or relevant platforms. Overall, the current scope of policy subjects is relatively broad, but the roles are light and heavy.

iii. Community Education Policy Measures

Policy measures are means and methods to achieve policy goals. It is an important tool for the party and government departments at all levels to implement the right to allocate resources and guide the direction of educational development, as well as a kind of policy orientation. Scientific and effective policy measures are the constituent elements of the community education policy system. At present, the focus of community education policy measures in China is mainly concentrated in the following areas: strengthening organisational leadership, improving institutional mechanisms, establishing a sound network of institutions, carrying out educational and teaching activities, creating learning organisations, integrating and developing educational resources (G. Shen & Chen, 2019; Waluyo et al., 2018), strengthening the team building, providing financial security, strengthening the inspection and supervision, and carrying out publicity and theoretical research.

iv. Community Education Policy Procedures

The formulation of policies generally has a relatively standardised procedure, such as, problem formulation, programme design, comparative assessment, legalisation and other steps. At present, the formulation of community education policy in China also basically follows this procedure. Policy design should follow the principles of democracy, openness, diversity and creativity in order to be able to put forward many different programmes from different perspectives. Comparative assessment of policy options is carried out by

systematically analysing and comparing the feasibility and effectiveness of policy options, and the conclusions may be completely different depending on the assessment methods used.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Analyzing China's community education policies through the lens of community education principles underscores the need for more integrated and cohesive policy frameworks. The following recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness and impact of community education initiatives:

Integrate Policy Frameworks: Ensure that various educational initiatives are part of a cohesive strategy, avoiding fragmented approaches. Establish inter-agency committees and working groups to coordinate policy development and implementation across different sectors.

Enhance Family and Community Involvement: Encourage active participation from families and community members to create a supportive educational environment. Provide training and resources to help parents and community members engage effectively in educational activities. Develop community centers as hubs for family education and community learning.

Focus on Lifelong Learning: Support continuous education and skill development throughout individuals' lives. Develop and support adult education programs, vocational training, and online learning platforms to address diverse learning needs and adapt to economic and technological changes.

Strategic Resource Allocation: Align resources with policies that have the highest impact, especially in underserved regions. Conduct regular evaluations of educational programs to assess their effectiveness and adjust funding priorities as needed.

By addressing these areas, China can strengthen its community education policies and build a more inclusive and effective educational system.

Conclusion

The analysis of China's community education policies over the past decade underscores a significant evolution in the country's approach to fostering lifelong learning and community development. This period has seen the implementation of a range of policies aimed at broadening and deepening community education across diverse geographic and socio-economic contexts. By examining these policies through the framework of core community education principles, several key conclusions emerge.

Firstly, the objectives of recent policies reflect a commitment to addressing the varied educational needs of community residents, enhancing their overall quality of life, and promoting sustainable community development. The emphasis on lifelong learning, accessibility, and community engagement is evident in initiatives designed to integrate educational resources, support family education, and foster community participation.

Secondly, the policies highlight a growing recognition of the importance of collaboration and resource sharing among different stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, social organizations, and community members. This collaborative approach is crucial for ensuring that educational initiatives are effectively tailored to local needs and are able to leverage available resources efficiently.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in the effective implementation and sustainability of community education programs. Issues such as inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, and uneven policy application across regions continue to hinder progress. Addressing these challenges requires a more coherent and coordinated policy framework that aligns national objectives with local realities and fosters greater engagement from all sectors of society.

To enhance the impact of community education, it is essential to focus on integrating family education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities, and ensuring that educational policies are responsive to the evolving needs of communities. Developing comprehensive evaluation mechanisms and fostering a participatory approach can further strengthen the effectiveness of community education initiatives.

In conclusion, China's community education policies of the past decade reflect a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. By continuing to align policies with core community education principles and addressing existing challenges, China can build on these foundations to achieve a more equitable and dynamic learning society.

Implication of Study

Interpreting China's community education policies from the past decade through the lens of community education principles reveals crucial insights and has profound implications for policy development, implementation, and future research. This analysis provides a roadmap for improving educational practices and enhancing community engagement, fostering equitable socio-economic development, and promoting innovation in education.

A comprehensive analysis of China's community education policies against established principles such as lifelong learning, community integration, accessibility, inclusiveness, innovation, and family involvement facilitates evidence-based policymaking. By identifying alignment or gaps within these policies, policymakers can create more targeted and effective strategies. This approach ensures that future policies are coherent, integrated, and capable of addressing the diverse needs of different communities (G. Shen & Chen, 2019).

Furthermore, understanding the historical alignment with community education principles aids in developing a more structured and cohesive policy framework. This framework can guide the formulation of policies that not only promote educational equity but also enhance the overall socio-economic development of various regions.

Author Contribution

Dr. YU is interested in China's community education policies. YU conceptualized the proposed idea and developed the theory and suggested some modifications, and Dr. Ye validated the analytical methodology. Dr. Hanina Halimatusaadiah Hamsan and Prof. Sarjit Singh Darshan Singh gave the proofread and modified the research work, improved the research level. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no self-interest in the study conducted.

Declaration Statement

The lead author LIYA YU affirms that this manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study being reported; that no important aspects of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned (and, if relevant, registered) have been explained.

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