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# **A research and analysis of the reasons of the education reform in China from different perspectives**

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**Abstract:** This thesis will attempt to introduce the research and analysis of the reasons for the education reform in China. The studies of matters relevant to education are not evitable for the studies of East Asia and China is a major country in East Asia known for its complicated education system and the history of the development of the education. The current education reform policy under implementation, which is known as “double reduction” has caught a lot of public attention (*Tan, Charlene, and Vicente Reyes, 2016*).

In this thesis, I will first introduce the phenomena and general contents of the education reform and demonstrate the research results of the education reform in different schools of different regions in China and explain what the education reform means and provide a throughout introduction to the education reform for years in China, and how the current situation of education reform came into being after so many years of education reform.

Second, I will dig further in the meaning and importance of education in China and people’s attitudes towards education, aiming at explaining how since the education is important in the eyes of the Chinese people and to the Chinese government over the dynasties, it became the tradition and a useful mean for selecting talents.

Third, I will first research what a good education mechanism is for a country, and what requirements and are the standards for a good education mechanism. Further, in consideration of the standards of a good education mechanism, I will explain the reasons for the problems and the disadvantages the current education mechanism has, and will further research the reasons comprehensively for education reform from the perspectives of the education itself, politics, economy, development of society, etc. and the opinion of the author why the reform this time is different with any of those in the history arguing that the core reason for the education reform is that the development of the country’s economy requires more innovation and creativity. For the research of the information, different approaches have been utilized, for examples, questionnaire surveys and interviews of the opinions of Chinese peers.

Fourth, I will conduct some research and discuss the situation of education and some changes similar to the education reform made to the education mechanism in the other countries, such as Asian countries as Japan and Korea, and also conduct the research on the U.S which is known for its innovation and creativity in their technology.

Fifth, I will further analyze the lack of the innovation in the development of technologies which is related to the methods of school education in China. And how the education method and its uneven development in different districts in China causes that the quality of education is hard to manage. I will also make comparisons of the school education in the Asian

countries such as Japan and Korea, and the representative country, the U.S. Sixth, I will introduce the current effect and situation of the education reform and its obstacles. I will further provide opinions on the predictions and suggestions of improvements for the future development of the education of China.

**Key words:** Chinese education, Chinese education reform.

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# 1 The history and phenomena of the education reform in China

At the beginning of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the new people's government confirmed the direction of education, which was that the education was to serve the industries and agriculture. The generation of the quality-oriented education in China is not only just caused by the influence of the international tendency, but also the internal unique cultural continuity (Xiong, W., Yang, J., & Shen, W., 2022). Firstly, the evaluation standards of the education reform are based on the improvement of the situation of the education. Even if there are imaginations in the theories and ideologies, they cannot be deemed as education reforms without causing the improvements to the actual education situation. Secondly, the improvement needs to be meaningful. That is to say, the education reforms have to have the obvious effect and results, which means that there is an expressed difference between the preliminary situation and the subsequent status. Third, the education reform is a neutral idea, sometimes it indicates the changes and transformations of the current situation of the education, and it does not necessarily mean an upgrade or improvement. In other words, the results of the reform of education can be negative.

Any education reform must be based on China's national conditions and cannot be expected to be implemented in a one move (Morgan, W. J., & Wu, B., 2011). China's national conditions are different from those of western developed countries, so it is impossible for China to completely copy their educational systems, teaching methods, and management system. Only through practice can an educational system suitable for China's national conditions be worked out, and it is still in the process of exploration. At present, the state is also in the process of formulating a medium - and long-term plan for education development, which will be promulgated in the future. It will take time to solve the problems encountered in education reform. The reason why the substantial promotion of education reform is so difficult is that whether the overwhelming majority of people support the reform or not depends on the balance of national interests. The reason why reform can't be pushed through easily is that it offends the vested interests that preceded it, as well as a significant number of people who don't think it will benefit them in the near future. For educational test organizers, allocating more resources requires investing more money. For school administrators, it is hard to predict the risks and turbulence brought by the elective exams. For teachers, the way they manage their classes and students must be adjusted, and they will face the risk of being selected by voting by their feet.

## 1.1 History of Education Reforms

Taking a longer perspective look back in the history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, education has always been important in China (Mingyuan, G., 2006). With the occurrence of different historical events, also education was affected and therefore different changes were made to education which can be regarded as education reforms. Under the long-lasting influence of the traditional Ke-tsu system, China's education reform is divided into educational system reform and teaching approach reforms. At the end of the 19th century, He Ziyuan and Qiu Fengjia, the founders of modern education in China and the elders of the Revolution of 1911, took the lead and successfully introduced western learning and promoted new schools. Under the pressure of the situation, the Qing government carried out a series of reforms to education. In

1901, Liu Kunyi and Zhang Zhidong jointly put forward the idea of "fostering education", changing the school system, changing the imperial examinations, and establishing modern schools, imitating the Japanese school system. On August 15, 1902, Zhang Baixi, the minister of management of the Qing Court, presided over the formulation of the "Imperial School Charter", which was called the Nonyin school system. The school system was not implemented due to its hasty formulation and much criticism after its announcement. (Guo, L., Huang, J., & Zhang, Y., 2019).

On January 13, 1904, the Qing Court issued the "Constitution of the School", known as the Guimao School system, which was the first legal modern school system promulgated by the central government and implemented nationwide, marking the establishment of the modern education system. On September 2, 1905, the Qing Court decreed that the imperial examination system would be abolished from the following year. And to promote new schools throughout the country. After the local imperial examinations were stopped in 1909, Western learning gradually became the main form of school education. It was also this fundamental change in education mode that cultivated a large number of valuable talents with progressive and innovative thoughts for the surging Revolution of 1911 and national construction. Since then, new - style education developed rapidly in all parts of China. (Guo, L., Huang, J., & Zhang, Y., 2019).

The education reform in China to be discussed in this thesis focuses on the actions after the establishment of the national college entrance examination in 1978 because there is practical sense in the studies of the current education reform and making improvements of the same kind. This was a huge milestone in China and laid the foundation of the methods of selections of talents for the state civil service, and the subsequent education reform methods after this. Fairness and justice are the first factors to be considered in the college entrance examination and enrollment system. In China's current social background, only the national unified examination and enrollment system can guarantee the fairness and justice of college entrance examination and enrollment (Haifeng, L. 2012).

However, the evaluation criteria of this unified examination system are relatively narrow, and the selection range is small, which is not conducive to the development of students' personality and specialty, nor can it meet the needs of different universities for different professional talents. With the development of modern society, the social division of labor is becoming more and more detailed, social norms are becoming more and more complex, and interpersonal communication is becoming more and more frequent, which requires more senior professionals with a certain comprehensive quality (Haifeng, L. 2012).

In order to meet the needs of talent training and avoid the above drawbacks, the college entrance examinations should be divided into two steps. The first step is to investigate the comprehensive quality of students, and the second step is to investigate the professional quality of students. The examination is divided into comprehensive quality examination and professional quality examination. Despite the above achievements, the education system still has many drawbacks, which cannot meet the needs of deepening reform and economic transformation. The existence of these problems leads to one of the most direct problems, which is that the education and market demand is out of sync, and after spending more than ten years to train themselves, students will appear difficult to find a job.

The central government in China has conducted continuously education reform from the perspective of the policies and the different districts in China have followed its guidance. It has been a long and complicated process. In 1985, the central government published the document of the decision of the reform of the education system, expressly raising the topic that the ultimate goal of the reform was to improve the quality of the people and the quantity of the talents. The government also apportioned funds and implemented nine-year compulsory basic education and decided that the district governments shall be responsible for the primary education and its management in different levels. Correspondingly, prior to this reform, the jobs of the students were arranged by the government whereby the government dispatched them to different job positions after graduation. After the reform, the government was no longer entirely responsible for the jobs of all the graduates. Instead, government made plans and schedules for the jobs of then students (Sun, M., 2010). In my view, this phenomenon happened because the national college entrance examination had communized the education to a certain extent, the positions were not enough for providing each graduate a job, and therefore the government needed to plan ahead.

The next major move in education reforms happened in 1993, when the central government and the state council issued the development outline for the education reform in China (Chengcheng, Z., Zigang, X., Shiyang, G., & Fei, W., 2011). This document confirmed the targets and tasks of the development of education in China by the year 2000, and required the schools to speed up the school management system reform. Prior to this, the different sorts of schools were managed by the governments, the new policy changed this and involved different kinds of resources in the society and released the power of running schools to the society. At the same time, a series of laws and regulations relevant to the education, vocational education, and high education were in the process of making. In 2002, the State Council published the notice of the consummation of the management mechanism of the rural compulsory education system (Stephens Jr, M., & Yang, D. Y., 2014), requiring that each district build a security mechanism to ensure the investment on the rural compulsory education and the payments of the salaries of the teachers in the schools in rural districts. The policy in this period indicates that the government paid attention to the less developed districts in China, and it had the intention to improve the overall education quality and deepen the degree of the commonization of education in China.

In 2005 the central government published the notice about the deepening the reform of the funding security of the rural compulsory education, gradually including the rural compulsory education into the scope of public finances (Curran Ph D, T. D., 2005). This measure reduced entirely the miscellaneous fees and tuition fees of the students and provided free textbooks and accommodation and enhanced the quality of the school buildings during the period of preliminary education. In the year of 2010, the development of education speeded up. The policy paper issued that year, the Schedule Outline for the Revolution and Development of the Middle and Long-Term Education Reform of the State (2010 – 2020), made an outlook that the goal was to realize the modernization of education by 2020. (Hui, M., 2013).





## 2 The definition of the education reform in China

To understand the education reform, it is essential to know what can be regarded as education reform and what contents it can include generally from the perspective of theories. Generally, education reform is a systematic mechanism, and it includes the education of various levels and categories, such as the early education for infants and toddlers, fundamental education and vocational education, middle school education and high school education (Ball, S., 1994). Each category has its own features and different stages have different requirements towards education. An education reform can be deemed as any “meaning transformation for the then current situation of the education” (Ball, S., 1994).

Reforming education in China is not something generated just in the contemporary times of China (Ball, S., 1994). For centuries, the authorities of different dynasties conducted improvements and upgrades to their education systems. As discussed above, from the beginning of the last century, some advanced founding members of the modern education introduced the western education to China and set up new-style schools. The Qing Dynasty government conducted series of reforms and ended the imperial examination system, also known as the Ke-tsu system.

For the definition of the studies of education reforms, many names are used for it, such as education change, education innovation, education improvement, education revolution, etc. From these definitions, first, the standard of the judgment of education reforms is whether the then situation of education has been changed or not. No matter what imaginations in the theories and thoughts we have, if those cannot direct the changes of the actual education situation, those cannot be regarded as education reform; second, education reform is a neutral definition which reflects the changes and amendments to the current education, which are not necessarily upgrades and improvements. In other words, the results of education reforms can be positive as the education can be improved and it can also be negative as the education regresses. Because the key to the development of education is the reform. The target of the education reforms is the happiness and harmony of the students. The bottle neck of the education reform is the diploma. If the urgent need of the diploma disappears, the education can be improved at great extent. The monopoly of the school education in Chinese is the extortion of the students by the schools. Besides the school education, there should be space and time for self-education, social education and family education.

The goal of school education is to cultivate citizens, and secondly, to cultivate talents and elites. The education reform should be related to the reform of teachers, textbooks and the exams. The root of the education is first-class textbooks, teachers, and the exam questions.

The school education not only emphasizes practicality but also emphasizes on the theories and moralities. To educate for the cultivation of natural individuals or to educate for the cultivation of social individuals mainly depends on whether or not the educating individuals have their own thoughts, ideals, like to study or not, therefore, to educate with differences.

The differences are not about the formats but also in the process of education methods and process. The school education should emphasize on the quality-oriented education, therefore, there should not be subject-oriented and should be treated equally without discriminations.

The school education should pay attention on the fundamental subjects. Therefore, students

in school can learn systematic knowledge, thinking methods and mainstream ideologies, and there are other supplemental ways to the school education for the fragmented knowledge, common senses and social experiences. The government should speed up the economic construction and guide the adjustment of the industrial structures to facilitate the requirements to the middle and high leveled talents at the same time of increase in the investment in the education reform, making the knowledges acquired in school education become useful in order to avoid the risks of outflow of talents. The technologies can be innovated with effective technology development and the centralization of talents. The military technology should be the leading power of the technology of the state, and combination of production, studies and the development should be firstly applied to the development of the military technology therefore, the state can speed up the development of the military technology and transforms the military technologies into the civil technologies (Li, T. 2006).

Hence it can also bring about certain degree of economic profits and social benefits while decreasing the unnecessary investment of the country. The education reform should be emphasized on the cultivation of social values and morality and the physical qualities, psychological qualities, professional qualities, and the education of families, schools, societies and selves, and the qualities of emotions, intelligences and the resilience. The goal of the school education is to cultivate talents, and the goal of the exams is to select the talents fairly. The enterprises emphasize on the practicality so that the experiences and the diploma are of same importance. In the developing countries, the efficiencies of direct studies are lower than that of the indirect studies and the opportunity costs of direct studies are higher than those of indirect studies therefore the efficiency of the developing countries are lower than that of developed countries can also be indicated on the basis of the internalization of knowledge including on the economy. Therefore, from the perspective of studies of the theories of education, education does not only mean the education of school, and the ultimate goal of it is not just about exams. In my opinion, going back to the original meaning of education is the fundamental logic of conducting education reform (Kaufman, D. M., 2003).

## **2.1 The meaning and importance of education in China**

Education is an important, far-reaching and deep- going matter in East Asia. In most Asian countries, education has not merely been a matter of academic development, but also has been associated with the other social aspects, including the political, economic, and literature, etc. China is a typical example of those countries, who are known for the strict social attitudes and phenomenon of education, i.e., the social values, like Korea and Japan, too. Education plays an important role in the priorities of the conduct of the Chinese people mainly because of the influence of Confucianism, which is an important part of the Chinese traditional culture and emphasizes the importance of education and academic skills (Dello-Iacovo, B., 2009).

Confucianism also emphasizes that the main effect of the education is cultivating morality and knowledge, contributing to the development and stability of the society, therefore, education has been playing an important role in the Chinese culture. The second main reason why Chinese people think education is important is the highly competitive social environment, because the population is huge in China and there is a huge competition for resources of jobs correspondingly (Byron, R. P., & Manaloto, E. Q., 1990). In the social environment like this, education is regarded as the key to the achievement of success. Therefore, the Chinese people think that through education, more opportunities and competitive advantages can be gotten in order to realize the value of the life.

The third reason is also related to the social ideology, which is the heritage of the value of families. The Chinese traditional culture emphasizes the importance of family education. Therefore, many Chinese families emphasize education of their children, thinking that education is a method of heritage of the values of families, therefore, generally Chinese parents pay close attention to the education of their children. From the perspective of society, the Chinese government and the society also pay high attention to education and invest large amounts of resources in the support and development of education. Education can be regarded as the future investment of the country and the society so that it attracts broad attention and support. Hence education in China is not only related to the growth and development of individuals but also the foundation of the development of the country and society, and the Chinese people think education is a very important matter in their life (Bush, T., & Haiyan, Q., 2000).

Therefore, from the analysis above, it can be inferred that the reason that Chinese parents take education of their children very seriously is deeply rooted in the history of China, which also reflects the development of education.

## **2.2 The history of the development of education and the contents of education reform in different stages**

For a long history, the Chinese people have cared about education and academic achievement (Rong, X. L., & Shi, T., 2001). The historical development of education in China varies in different times. The contents and forms of education to students in different times have varied during different times because of different reasons. Education has been playing an important role in the Chinese society for long. Nowadays in China, the reform, and the tendency of more reform for education has been conducted for decades because the present forms of education have been long criticized for being not as effective a way of acquiring knowledge and inventing innovative technologies (Purcell, V., 2017). The content of the recent education reforms therefore include an emphasis on the quality of education and the development of hobbies out of curriculum, reduction in the tutoring outside of school, etc., which has caused different social reflections over years.

Education not only plays an important role in China but owns a reputation of long history (Epstein, I., 2017). This could explain why the education itself in China slowly owns its position in the minds of Chinese people and education also works as an important tool for the development of the society, the management of a country, and for running an authority. Because China has a long history, there is a long history of education and education reforms can be difficult because of the historical burden over generations. According to historical records, the origin of Chinese education can be traced back to three millennias ago. In the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, Chinese education had already developed considerably, and

knowledge had a general scale, which created conditions for the prosperous development of school education. In the Western Zhou Dynasty, an educational system of "six arts" was gradually formed, with "rites, music, archery, imperial writing and number" as the main body. By the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, the fruits of Chinese civilization had matured, and Chinese education had entered the "classical" era. There were private schools and teachers specializing in education, and a large number of educators who had a profound influence on later generations. Not only the Analects of Confucius, Mozi, Mencius, Xunzi, Li Ji, Guan Zi, Lu Shi's Spring and Autumn Annals and other classics recorded a large number of educational materials, but also appeared such as the "University", "Xueji", "Exhorting Learning", "Disciple Duties" and other educational monographs. As early as the time of Yao, Shun and Yu, there was the bud of education, the Xia Dynasty called "Xu" school. When the Chinese character entered a mature stage in the Shang Dynasty, there was official schools (called the age, school, Order, learning, University, and everyone is held to be innocent, etc.), and everyone held to be educated to be identical to today. Schools in the Shang Dynasty were divided into universities (right) and primary schools (left), and different education was practiced according to different ages. The Western Zhou Dynasty was the heyday of the slavery society. On the basis of "learning from the government" of commerce, the cultural education of the Western Zhou Dynasty was further developed and perfected. The official learning of the Western Zhou Dynasty consisted of two systems: Guoxue and township learning. Education in the Western Zhou Dynasty emphasizes both ideology and morality and practical skills. Attaching importance to both cultural knowledge and military training; Not only pay attention to etiquette, but also pay attention to inner emotional cultivation. Therefore, the education of the Western Zhou Dynasty had a profound influence on the educational history of ancient China (Lee, T. H., 2000).

During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States period, the newly born feudal production relations gradually matured in a system of slavery. The society was convulsed rapidly, and the system of the Zhou Dynasty "rites collapsed and music collapsed". At this time, the royal power declined, various dynasties clashed, and a large number of cultural officials were scattered everywhere. Books and books previously hidden in the court were scattered among the people and became common reading materials, which resulted in the so-called "cultural downward movement". "Cultural downward movement" promoted the development of private schools (Lee, T. H., 2000).

The private school in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States period was an epoch-making revolution in the history of ancient Chinese education. The private school emancipated the school from the government and initiated the process of education independence. Private schools expanded the educational objects and promoted the spread and development of ancient Chinese culture. Private schools promoted the emergence and development of educational theories and the formation of a 'hundred schools of thought'. Therefore, a large number of educators and educational monographs appeared in the Spring and Autumn Period. For example, Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi were all the masters of private learning at that time. Confucianism represented by them believed that the core of education was moral education, aiming to realize "benevolent governance" or "rule of etiquette". They emphasized the role of education in social development and personality formation, which is still worth our reflection and reference (Lee, T. H., 2000).

During the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period, a 'hundred schools of thought contended', and culture and education were lively. After Qin Shi Huang destroyed the six States and 'unified the world', to strengthen China's centralized autocratic rule, he strengthened ideological controls. In terms of culture and education, he banned books and

private schools, and even "burned books and buried scholars", while "law was the teaching" and "officials were the teachers". This cultural despotic policy of Majesty Qin Shi Huang caused a great regression in ancient Chinese education (Lee, T. H., 2000).

The rulers of the Han Dynasty earnestly summed up the historical lessons of the collapse of Majesty Qin the second and established the "exclusive respect for Confucianism", that is, Confucianism as authentic, supplemented by legalism and Taoism ideological and cultural pattern. Under the guidance of this ideology, the Han Dynasty implemented cultural and educational policies completely different from the Qin Dynasty, which provided a relaxed environment for the development of education. The Han Dynasty provided a loose environment for the development of education, and made the education of the Han Dynasty appear unprecedented prosperity. In terms of educational thought, Confucian educational thought dominated the Han Dynasty, and its representative figure was Dong Zhongshu, "Confucius of Han Dynasty" (Lee, Y. T., 2012).

Schools in the Han Dynasty were also divided into official schools (including central government schools and local government schools) and private schools. The highest institution of official learning was the Imperial Academy, located in the capital Chang 'an. Its professors were selected to be scholars of high virtue and erudite classics, who became doctors and students became doctoral students. The knowledge imparted by the Imperial School was the Confucian classics, and its educational methods were characterized by the emphasis on teaching and family law. After passing the examination, a student was appointed as a government official, which was called "the scholar who is excellent in learning becomes an official". There were two kinds of private schools: library and library. Private schools in the Han Dynasty undertook most of the basic education work and were also the source of academies in later generations. Education in the Han Dynasty revealed the basic framework of education in ancient Chinese feudal society, which established the unique position of Confucianism with Confucius and Mencius as the authentic in Chinese feudal society education, and also laid a solid foundation for the whole feudal society in various aspects such as education system, facilities, content and form (Lee, Y. T., 2012).

The Chinese ancient education since the foundation of Qin and Han dynasties, Wei, Jin, Southern and northern dynasties, Tang and Song dynasties developed towards full prosperity. Confucianism lost its dominant position in Wei and Jin dynasties and was on the decline for a time. The rulers of Sui and Tang Dynasties realized the role of Confucianism in consolidating their rule and once again actively advocated the cultivation of Confucian rites and music (Lee, T. H., 2000).

The Tang Dynasty was prosperous, relatively open in politics, and developed in various cultural undertakings, which laid a solid foundation for the Tang education. The rulers of the Tang Dynasty carried out the cultural policy of tolerance and openness, and ideologically pursued the policy of Confucianism, Buddhism (Buddhism) and Taoism in parallel. The three schools of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism not only formed their own system in teaching, but also absorbed ideas from each other, so that the educational thoughts at that time presented the characteristics of inclusiveness (Lee, T. H., 2000).

The most important event of education and official system in Sui and Tang dynasties was the implementation of Ke-tsu policy Aiming at the disadvantages of the "nine rank system", which was mainly manifested as the disconnection between the cultivation of talents and the selection of talents, the imperial civil examination system closely combined the two. The imperial examination system had an extremely important impact on the education and culture

of ancient China. In the Sui, Tang and Song Dynasties, the imperial examination system played a positive role, but later in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the imperial examination system was more important than education, which led to education becoming a subsidiary of the imperial examination, forming a dogmatism and formalism. The negative impact of the Ke-tsu policy was increasingly obvious, and finally led to the extinction of the imperial examination system (Lee, T. H., 2000).

The Song Dynasty was always in the turmoil of ethnic conflicts, but the Song Dynasty culture reached the peak of the feudal society in China. The brilliance of science and technology and the rise of Neo-Confucianism marked that people's scientific research and philosophical thinking on nature and life had reached an unprecedented height. After the establishment of the Song Dynasty, the state policy of "revitalizing literature and education and suppressing military affairs" was established. Scholars were valued and talents were selected through the imperial examinations. Schools were also widely set up in the Song Dynasty to cultivate talents, and there were three famous school-building movements, namely "Qingli School-running", "Xining School-running" and "Chongning School-running" (Lee, T. H., 2000).

In terms of ideology, the Song Dynasty adopted the same policy as the Tang Dynasty, and gave birth to the Confucianism as the main body, which was formed by blending Buddhism and Taoism. The education system of the Song Dynasty basically followed that of the Tang Dynasty, but academies were the most important feature of education in the Song Dynasty. In the Song Dynasty, 173 academies were built successively. The academies in the Song Dynasty were further developed on the basis of the Tang Dynasty model, and became an institution integrating education, teaching and academic research. At that time, when the school had become a vassal of the imperial examination, the academy, a new form of education, brought a breath of fresh air to the ancient education.

The academy also advocated that students should study by themselves, and teachers should answer questions as a supplement. The academy focused on cultivating students' self-study ability and independent research ability. The Song Dynasty also attached great importance to private schooling (early childhood education) to cultivate students' good living and learning habits, so as to benefit them for life. These have a great influence on the education of later generations (Li, J., & Hayhoe, R., 2012).

The Ming Dynasty education was an important stage of ancient Chinese education. On the one hand, the Ming Dynasty implemented the cultural and educational policy of "running a country with education as the first and education as the foundation", which enabled the development of the central official schools, local official schools, and social studies in a spatial scale. On the other hand, the Ming Dynasty implemented unprecedented cultural autocratic management in school education, which prohibited students to discuss politics and greatly promoted literary and literary controls. This dynasty ", which is also called "Wen zi yu", namely, literature inquisition (Mingyuan, G., 2006).

In the imperial examination system, the selection of scholars through eight strands was carried out, which made the vigorous content of the imperial examination gradually disappear. The academy in Ming Dynasty reflected the development of unofficial education, reflecting the intellectuals' resistance to the cultural despotism of the rulers. It was a relatively lively place in Ming Dynasty education. Gu Xiancheng, the founder of Donglin Academy, wrote a famous

couplet: "The sound of wind, rain and reading can be heard in one's ears. I am concerned about family affairs, state affairs and world affairs." It describes the strong desire of Chinese intellectuals to strive for ideological and political freedom under the authoritarian system (Mingyuan, G., 2006).

The rulers of the Ming Dynasty attached importance to the theoretical knowledge and despotism constitutes the basic characteristics of the education of the Ming Dynasty. After the middle of the Ming Dynasty, Wang Shouren (Wang Yangming) established the educational theory of "mind learning", which appeared in the attitude of anti-traditional education, and made the educational thought of the Ming Dynasty appear the tendency of diversified development. Wang Tingxiang, who was famous for "emphasizing reality", criticized Neo-Confucianism education as being out of practice, empty and useless, and became the pioneer of the trend of practical education in the late Ming Dynasty and the early Qing Dynasty (Lee, T. H., 2000).

The Qing Dynasty was the last stage of China's imperial society. The contradictions between the Manchus and the Han and the germination of China's capitalist production relations, as well as the confrontation and communication between China and the West constituted the social basis of Qing education. After the Qing Dynasty entered the customs, it established the policy of "revitalizing literature and education, worshiping scriptures, and opening peace". The emperor of the Qing Dynasty awarded Confucius the title of "Master of the Greatest Sage of Wen Xuan" and "master for generations" (Lee, T. H., 2000).

However, as in the Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty implemented strict ideological control and restricted education with the rigid and lifeless imperial examination system, which led to the prosperity of the imperial examination, the abolition of schools and the decline of talents. The most brilliant thoughts of the Ming and Qing Dynasties were carried out in the criticism of the imperial examination system and the drawbacks of education. For example, Gu Yanwu criticized in his book *Rizhilu* in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties: "The harm of eight branches is equal to burning books. And the corrupt man is worse than the pit on the outskirts of Xianyang." (Lee, T. H., 2000)

After the Opium Wars, China's feudal society was riddled with problems and crises. Enlightened intellectuals represented by Gong Zizhen and Wei Yuan called for social reform, "Western learning", and reforming the old traditional education. The invasion of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Western powers had a great impact on the feudal ideology, culture and education system, and a reformist trend of thought gradually formed in the Chinese ideological circle. After the Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895, the class reform movement reform finally developed into a huge asset for national salvation (Lee, T. H., 2000).

Although the "Hundred Days Reform" in 1898 was short, it had a great impact on feudal culture and promoted the development of bourgeois education in modern China. In 1906, the Qing government ordered the abolition of the imperial examination system, which had been in practice for more than 1,300 years. China's education has entered a new stage of development (Kwong, L. S., 2000).

Several features can be summarized from the history of the Chinese education. The ancient Chinese attached great importance to the social function of education. For example,

Confucius believed that in order to govern a country, in addition to increasing the population and enriching the people, one should also strengthen the education of the people. Only in this way can a country become truly powerful and prosperous. Mencius also emphasized the role of education in social politics and clearly put forward the educational view that "good governance" is inferior to "good teaching". From the standpoint of "universal love", Mozi put forward the three major policy programs of "helping others with illness, encouraging others with wealth, and advising others with teaching", taking education as one of the important measures to make the society move towards stability (Lee, T. H., 2000).

The second feature is that the ancient Chinese thought that ancient Chinese educators realized very early that education is not only important, but also necessary. For example, Xunzi opposed Mencius' theory of good nature and advocated the theory of evil, but his emphasis on the necessity of education was the same as that of Mencius. The combination of moral education and intellectual education is an important feature of ancient Chinese education. For example, the main content of education in the Zhou Dynasty was "Six Arts". After the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, under the influence of Confucianism, people seemed to emphasize the importance of moral education more, but at the same time, people did not relax their emphasis on knowledge education. They opposed bigotry and advocated equal emphasis on moral education and intellectual education (Bush, T., & Haiyan, Q., 2000).

The ultimate purpose of education is to seek a better position. But the ancient position was not like now, before the Qin Dynasty, the official position was adopted by the system which emphasizes the family status", and then gradually introduced the military meritorious service system. It was not until the Han Dynasty that civil talents began to be promoted and the common people began to have the right to choose their posts. At that time, the investigation system was adopted, and the recruitment system was adopted. The former was to recommend talents with both virtue and ability by local levels, and those selected by prefectures were called Xiukai, while those selected by prefectures were called Xiaoyan. In the reign of Emperor Wen of Wei, Chen Qun established the "Nine-pin" Zhongzheng system, in which special officials assessed and recruited civilian talents according to their background and moral character. This system was used in the Jin and Six Dynasties. However, in the Wei and Jin dynasties, the power of the gentry was strong, which often affected the assessment of talents by the central officials. Later, the criterion was even limited to the family background. As a result, the phenomenon of "high quality without poor family, low quality without intellectuals". It not only blocked the use of materials from the people, but also allowed the intellectuals to control the use of materials in the court. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the imperial examination system as we know it now began to be perfected, with students from poor families gaining official positions through the examination. The Imperial Civil examination system improved the employment system, enabling talented scholars to have the opportunity to serve in governments at all levels. In other words, it changed people's fate.

### **2.3 What can be deemed as a good education.**

This topic is the core question for the studies of education. The reason why this question is the core question, is not only because education has entered into the high-quality development period, and it becomes meaningful to cultivate high-qualified talents, but this also indicates that the Chinese people have urgent desires for good quality education. In addition, there is also the general anxiety for the increased burden on the students with the competition becoming fiercer and fiercer.



Good education must be one that allows children to thrive, and the place for that education should be a place called a school. Students will love, memorize, even obsess over this place. There, they read books to explore, sing songs, and organize societies. Their potential is explored, their personality is developed, and their personality is moulded. There, instead of constantly being vigilant and competing with and winning your partners, you build a relationship of common development and growth together through close communication.

Good education must be one with national feelings and human mission. This kind of education can present educational goals and curriculum plans that reflect the national will into vivid educational scenes on campus. In such a scene, there should be young ambition, responsibility, have problems to solve, not just for the scores of the exam, in order to study hard (Hostetler, K., 2005).

Good education must be recognized by parents and society. The ideal atmosphere of education should be presented in front of parents and society, so that people can feel it; The real pressure of education should also be presented in front of parents and the society, so as to build consensus in communication. An educational system that isled by the power of utility, cannot do good education; Be denied by parents and society generally, also cannot do a good education.

If Chineseducation can cultivate lifelong learners, responsibility bearers, problem solvers and people who live gracefully, it will definitely promote the growth of students' sound personality. then they will certainly be able to cultivate the next generation who will win personal happiness and take on family responsibilities, making parents feel warm, at ease and at ease. Such education must be good education. Good education must be one that constantly improves and changes in the process of becoming better and better, and reform is the inevitable choice for "good education". In today's time and space conditions, to achieve good education and promote education reform, China needs to grasp a balance -- this balance is not only a working method, but also an educational principle.

Any educational reform is the result of opposing forces coming to terms with each other to achieve some kind of balance (Tan, Charlene, and Salleh Hairon, 2016). Nell Noddings also tried to break through the either-or mode of thinking, advocating that both traditional education and progressive education supporters can find the central purpose of education in "learning to care" (Noddings, N., 2003). Therefore, balance is not an expedient measure to obscure the position, nor a means to please all parties, but a procedural and structural principle to be grasped in the reform and development of education.

In the face of problems that have been building up for a long time and cause and effect each other, reform cannot be accomplished overnight or solved easily. One can't expect a single campaign to be successful, or a single document to be cured. One should have enough concentration, patience, wisdom, strategy, overall design, little breakthroughs, steady progress, and lasting success.

With this understanding above in mind, there are basic principles the author believes in for good education and promoting change. First, face the right front. This is the guiding principle one must adhere to in all educational reforms. Education must promote the overall growth of human spirit and the sound of personality. Overdraw today's health and harmony, in exchange for tomorrow's happiness. If education is not yet as good as we want it to be in reality, we must move firmly in this direction. We must not go with the flow of others, still less contribute to the trend and lead education to such an extreme state. We must never resort to

the perverse pursuit of educating others or abandon our mission of "educating people for the Party and the country". Antieducational or even barbaric educational behavior that deviates from the basic humanistic spirit. Education in China needs to come out from the extreme and barbaric "points" struggle to "death", and move towards the human, healthy, harmonious and comprehensive development of the front, step by step is a step, even if only a step should be encouraged, because after all, at the beginning to the right way.

Second, set the goals within reach. This is the phased principle that the educational reform must grasp. Any reform should coordinate the direction and reality, grasp the intensity of the reform and the degree of endurance, and the core of the coordination and grasp is to set limited goals, to make the ideal step by step. Educational reform can never be divorced from the social reality, only in the laboratory of their own ideal, beyond the scope of the reality of subversive reform, not only difficult to achieve the goal based on beautiful imagination, but also may leave a negative sample of disillusionment, so that those who are unwilling to change, often to prove their adherence to the "score" education wise and correct. However, if they are not eager, patient, and take small and steady steps, they can certainly follow the "limited goals" broken down from the ideal step by step, and finally reach the ideal, thus leading basic education on the road of transformation.

Third, keep exploring professional paths. This is the scientific principle that educational reform must follow. Over the past 30 years, the state has been promoting basic education toward the direction of "developing quality education and implementing moral education to cultivate people". Round after round of curriculum reforms, one concept term after another has been put forward to make the grassroots line refreshing, from "three-dimensional goal" to "core literacy", to "big concept, big unit" and "task situation". These concepts, which have definite connotations and clear boundaries among curriculum experts, are variously and sometimes completely different in elementary schools. The key one is the lack of professional exploration based on the real situation, and the formation of an accurate grasp of the spirit of the operation mode and implementation path.

Forth, believe in the power of time. This is the long-term principle that educational reform must recognize. Ten years of trees, a hundred years of people, cultivation and edification, spring breeze rain, education should be slow, it can not be rushed. Educational change should be expected, waited for, not immediate. It is true that there are still visible shadows in Chinese schools that cannot be removed, and there are still many constraints in Chinese education that cannot be earned. Ideal education is still far ahead, but as long as changes are made in the right direction, even if these changes are insignificant and not so vigorous, they will surely show their due value in history in the future. Although not only eager to seize the day and night, as long as the accumulation of time, for a long time, in the near future, looking back on the road, will also sigh our growth and change.

"Suitable education" is student-centered education. "Suitable education" is the concrete practice of the people-centered development thought in the field of education, and also a vivid embodiment of the concept of "people-oriented" and "teaching students according to their aptitude". "Suitable education" is suitable for students, so that every student can receive fair and quality, suitable for their own education. "Suitable education" should be the education which is suitable for the students' knowledge, ability, quality, and social role. To make

education suitable for students, we need to find and respect differences and guide students to find suitable paths for their growth and development. We will continue to promote student-centered education and teaching reform, and strive to cultivate students' innovation, practical ability, and sense of social responsibility.

"Suitable education" is education that meets the needs of the economy and society. The development of education must firmly grasp the historical changes in which the main contradictions of society and the development of education have been transformed and promote the balanced and full development of education. "Suitable education" must meet the needs of regional economic and social development, meet the requirements of the "four modernizations" of education, take social needs as the standard for measuring the quality of education, and overcome the phenomenon and practice of simply evaluating the quality of education based on enrollment rates and test scores. The focus of education reform should return to "combining education with productive labor and social practice", so that each student's strengths and interests can be developed and brought into play.

Suitable education is one in which the whole society participates. Education is a systematic project, we should actively build the linkage pattern of government, school, society and family. The government should implement the strategy of giving priority to education development, further optimize the distribution of education, provide rich and diverse educational resources, and promote the balanced and full development of education at all levels and of all types. Schools should actively explore the way of running schools with characteristics and in line with laws, establish a new student-oriented teaching relationship, pay more attention to diversified development, and continue to promote quality education and characteristic education through scientific and personalized curriculum system and diversified and systematic evaluation methods. The whole society should actively participate in and support "suitable education", not only for grades, not only for famous universities, not only for academic qualifications, to provide students with an environment and atmosphere where everyone can be successful, and everyone has a platform. Parents should overcome the "paternalism" style, build a warm partnership with their children, guide and respect their children's choices based on their interests and talents, and create a good family environment.

Balanced and fully developed education is "suitable education"; "The right education" is the best education. Only "appropriate education" can arouse the inner intelligence of each unique individual, including interest, enthusiasm, faith and persistence, kindness, responsibility, ambition, common heart and shame, and then develop and temper it, and then blossom and bear fruit and grow into talent. In "suitable education", students will create a wonderful life, education will usher in a better future, and people's needs for better education can be better met.

## **2.4 Analysis of current situation and existing problems of our educational reform**

With the advent of China's great power era as its economic development strides forward, as one of the core elements of economic development, "talent" influence is more and more significant, and talent training has to mention the concept of education (Purcell, V., 2017).

Nowadays, there exist such problems as education quality deviation, education structural contradiction and inequality in education. This chapter focuses on the current situation of the problems existing in the stage of education reform, analyzes the causes and impacts, and finally briefly analyzes feasible countermeasures to ensure the healthy, comprehensive and sustainable operation and development of Chinese talent training system.

The definition of "education" can vary from person to person. But generally speaking, we can define it in terms of broad sense, narrow sense and basic elements: In a broad sense, the meaning is expounded from the social and individual aspects: at the social level, any activity that improves people's knowledge and skills and influences people's ideological and moral character is education (Kaufman, D. M., 2003). "Education" is regarded as a subsystem of the whole social system, which allocates and assumes certain social functions. The most essential understanding of education is that the society instills knowledge into people's thoughts and guides their behavior. The object of education is people, and the content must be benign and meaningful (Kaufman, D. M., 2003). The cognition and ideas acquired by people through education transform society in turn.

Individual level refers to the spiritual sublimation of the individual (Civitarese, G., 2016). This definition emphasizes the influence of social factors on individual development (Kaufman, D. M., 2003). To define "education" from the perspective of an individual is often to equate "education" with the learning or development process of an individual. In the narrow sense, it generally refers to school education, which refers to the activities that educators exert physical and mental influence on learners in a purposefully planned and organized way according to the requirements of a certain society or class, so as to cultivate them into people needed by a certain society or class.

Education is a practice that promotes individual socialization and social individuation under certain social background. If it is defined around the basic elements of educational activities, education can be defined as the social activities that people consciously transmit information to others through several methods, media and other forms, hoping to influence the spiritual world or psychological state of others, and help or hinder others to obtain certain concepts, qualities and abilities (Hostetler, K., 2005). Those in the former role are called educators, and those in the latter role are called educational objects. This definition conforms to all human educational activities and can be used as the basic definition of education.

After a tense period in the past few years, the current situation of education in China has gradually eased. But the discussion about the deep reform of education has not stopped. As discussed above, education in China has a long history and ideas about ideal education are deeply rooted. China's education is bearing the burden of the times, but also there is a certain gap with the development of the times. Since it has such a long history, this current mode is certainly suitable for Chinese cultural system, but also suitable for future. It is an objective fact that there is a gap. There is no system or system that can closely follow the development of the whole era, but what we really need to do is to acknowledge the gap, understand the deficiency, confirm the impact, analyze the reasons, propose a plan, and finally move towards continuous improvement. There are many problems in today's education, such as the lack of ideological education, quality of education is low, exam-oriented education destroys innovative thinking, cultural and educational desertification and many other problems, such as the educational quality tilt, educational structural problems, and educational equity issues selected in this thesis to briefly discuss the problems of education, the impact and possible effective countermeasures.

The problems of quality, structure and equity exist in Chinese education. There are many graduates in the market every year (Shi, L., & Xing, C., 2010), however, the quality of the talents is not high. Since the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, Chinese education system has made remarkable development achievements. Free compulsory education has been implemented across the board, high school education has been popularized at a faster pace, preschool education and vocational education have developed rapidly, and higher education has entered a stage of mass development (Sun, M., 2010). In 2012, the gross enrollment rate of higher education reached 30%, and the admission rate of college entrance examination exceeded 75%. This shows that the problem of "hard to go to school" has been fundamentally alleviated, but at the same time, the problem of skewed education quality has become increasingly prominent.

Chinese education is leaning toward "impetuous and utilitarian education". From "exam-oriented education" in primary, middle and high schools to "employment education" in universities, China has trained a large number of "talented people" in an extremely efficient way. The "talented person" here refers to the young people who are armed with classroom knowledge after "professional" utilitarian education. They generally master a lot of classroom knowledge, but are in a passive state in the whole learning behavior, lacking the ability of independent learning and the ability of innovative thinking. This kind of person stepped into the society, in the daily life and work as a robot. As for talents, it is not important whether they master very rich knowledge. What is important is that they have the ability of independent learning and can constantly enrich themselves through learning according to the needs of the environment, so as to supplement their ability to solve problems. Not only should they have the ability to learn, but also the ability to innovate. If the teaching environment that students live in is conducive to the cultivation of various innovative qualities, their original creative traits and potentials such as innovative spirit, innovative thinking and innovative personality will be unconsciously encouraged and explored, and eventually become their internal innovative qualities and external creative abilities. With the ability to learn and innovate, they also need a strong sense of ambition and responsibility, but more important is to know the truth of life. Chinese college students are generally able to achieve impressive results, even ahead of the internationally recognized level, but they are very weak in the path of reform and innovation. This is the obvious exam-oriented education failure to do a good job in the overall development of education.

There is further a structural contradiction between education and employment. What is a structural contradiction? China has a structural imbalance in the training of talents, which is reflected in the fact that the market economy needs 100 technicians, 10 engineers and 1 scientist when China educates 10 scientists, 1 engineer and several technicians (Purcell, V., 2017). This is a structural mismatch. Since the early 2000s, there has been a serious shortage of operators in the eastern coastal areas during the Spring Festival, which was limited to a certain range and time (Purcell, V., 2017), and in recent years, the problem of operator shortage is becoming more and more serious. At the same time, college students are facing increasingly serious employment difficulties. According to the survey data of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2022, the unemployment rate of Chinese college students was 9.1% in 2008, 12% in 2010, 17.5% in 2011, and 19.2% in 2012, and is still gradually increasing. In addition, since 2001, the ratio of job vacancies of operators with junior college education to the number of job seekers has been rising, and the market demand is insufficient. However, the ratio of job vacancies with college education and above to the number of job seekers has been lower than 1, indicating that the market demand is insufficient.

Education in China develops unevenly in different districts because of the gap between the poor and the wealthy. Chinese law stipulates that citizens have equal right to receive education, but the reality is something to contemplate. In the remote mountainous areas, where the teaching environment is very simple and crude, teaching facilities are scarce, the shortage of teachers is acute. In the city's suburbs, the children of migrant workers study in schools that are old and shabby, with teachers change frequently and schools may close at any moment. In cities, schools are divided into national key schools, local key schools, and ordinary schools. In good schools, students are divided into competitive classes, experimental classes, key classes, and ordinary classes according to their academic performance. Tuition fees are often paid according to this, while those students with poor academic performance pay expensive tuition fees and enjoy the lowest level of inferior education (Purcell, V., 2017). Looking at the regional differences, the fate of children who grow up in Beijing and Shanghai differs greatly from that of children in small local counties. The education difference is huge between the children who grow up in the coastal and those who grow up in the hinterland.

### 3 The reasons for the existing problems of the education and their impact

#### 3.1 The reasons for the existing problems of the current education in China for its uneven quality

In China, the competitive rankings among schools pursue higher graduation rate, and the direct means of evaluating both are examinations. At the same time, for a student in his or her learning career the final evaluation after more than ten years of hard reading is also an exam. The core turning point of both sides focuses on the examination. It is inevitable that people will choose exam-oriented education and learning mode in order to cope with this important examination, so as to concentrate high-quality resources as much as possible to get through this level. The system of "one examination determines one's whole life" has obviously become the core problem of education and learning exam oriented. However, more reform methods show that people's eyes are fixed on the two words of "one examination". Since one examination is not good, then what about two examinations or three examinations? Will this really ease test-taking? Obviously not. The addition of an extra examination will not ease the exam - oriented approach but may increase the burden on students and teachers.

#### 3.2 The reasons generated because of the structural conflicts.

In China, the word "college student" in the last century was a very honorable title the number of people who had studied in the university could be counted, and every one of them was a 'talent'. They could rise to the top of society, bring glory to their families, make contributions to the country. However, today college students are everywhere, they can be said to be extensive but not refined.

As discussed above, because of people's desire for higher education in the early years and the active regulation and control of national policies, higher education has developed by leaps and bounds, fully meeting people's demand for higher education. However, such a jump in expansion satisfies only the most basic part of higher education, although the quantitative results are good, the quality is often backward. While everyone is going to university, technical colleges with specialized skills training are scarce, resulting in a conflict between the structure of talent and the needs of society. The adjustment of the industrial structure is the result of the development of productive forces, and the market will guide the adjustment of the industrial structure. However, the educational reform contains more artificial factors and often has a great lag compared with the industrial structure. Therefore, China must have certain foresight in the educational reform.

#### 3.3 The reasons for the generation of the unevenness of the education

The reasons for educational inequity are mainly left over from history. There are three reasons: First, the government investment in education has been insufficient, and the distribution has been unreasonable. In the past 30 years from the founding of China to the reform and opening up, the national fiscal expenditure on education has been about 1% of the total public expenses. The 2020 Outline of China's Education Reform and Development clearly states that by the end of the last century, the proportion of government expenditure on

education in GDP was 4%, but in fact, it did not reach 3.27% until 2004, much lower than the world average of 5.1% (Liu, W., Li, J., & Zhao, R., 2020).

Second, uneven educational resources and arbitrary charges lead to educational injustice. In the case of insufficient state investment in education, there is an uneven distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas, coastal and inland areas, and between the first and second and third lines cities. To deal with the shortage of funds, some local governments have allowed colleges and universities to raise fees. On the other hand, in order to solve the shortage of quality education resources, some schools have to raise the fee standards. Third, education reform lags behind. Some systems, such as the education investment system, the key (model) secondary school system and the college entrance examination and enrollment system, also bear the color of the old planning system.

### 3.4 The current situation of the education in China generates negative impacts.

The low quality of education has led more and more young people to turn into bookworms, with a lot of written knowledge but little practical application. The young generation is the new and core force for China's national development. If they lack practical ability and innovation ability, then the future of China is at stake. In the past few years, China's economy has been on the fast track and developed rapidly. Thanks to China's low labor cost, "Made in China" has spread rapidly in the world and China become a big manufacturer. However, with the development of the economy, cheap labor will gradually become scarce, labor costs will become higher and higher, and the development pace of the productive power will gradually weaken. At this time, China must promote industrial upgrading, change the demand for human resources, and transform from a productive power to a creative power. As argued above, the skewed quality of education leads to a lack of free thinking and innovative thinking among the new generation of workers, so the Chinese government's goal of "created in China" will be far from being possible to achieve.

The structural contradiction between education and employment will lead to serious social problems. That college graduates are unemployed, causes social instability (Li, S., Whalley, J., & Xing, C., 2014). At the same time, there is a phenomenon of light knowledge, education and salary level are seriously "upside down", resulting in a situation similar to "cheap grain hurts farmers", "cheap talents hurt education". At the same time, due to the personnel gap of employing enterprises, it will cause problems to the development of enterprises, while new enterprises can not develop quickly, it will therefore seriously drag China's economic development, and affect China's competitiveness in international markets.

The inequality of education has led to a social polarization in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Today's education system even allows the poor to become rich and change their lives through knowledge, which was not as possible in the old society. Almost every student will face the problem of choosing a school. Whether to go to a key school or an ordinary school, whether to go to a private school or a public school, depends not only on the student's academic performance, but also on the economic strength of a family. In order to get your child into a better school, you have to pay the loan fee, the school donation fee or the unplanned enrollment fee. At the same time, due to the cross-industry impact of educational inequity on the real estate industry, more people with access to economic resources bid up the housing prices near famous schools by referring to the nearby enrollment policy, which makes the housing prices in the school district remain high (Rong, X. L., & Shi, T., 2001). High-



quality teaching resources and poor people almost become two parallel lines that do not interact with each other.

Finally, the inequity of education exists objectively, and brings more and more serious social educational contradictions. The Ministry of Education has recently issued a Notice on the 2016 Urban compulsory education Enrollment Work, which makes clear the current uneven allocation of educational resources, and that the school choice impulse is strong (Stephens Jr, M., & Yang, D. Y., 2014). The Notice calls for localities to actively and steadily adopt a "multi-school zoning" with popular primary and junior high schools dispersed to each district, to ensure a rough balance between districts. However, this is obviously a temporary cooling policy, and cannot really cure the root cause of the issue of the inequality of education.

"Multi-school zoning" must simultaneously promote the balance of compulsory education, specifically to narrow the differences in school quality between school districts, as well as the differences in the conditions and quality of schools within school districts. At the same time, greater efforts should be made to promote the education input in central and western cities, and gradually narrow the gap between coastal and inland education levels, so as to establish a relatively balanced education environment. However, this may take a long time to achieve, it is a long way to go.

### 3.5 The background for the "double reduction" education reform from the perspective of society development

Since the policy of reform and opening up was issued, China has transformed from a low-income country into a middle-income country and become the second largest economy in the world (Paciorek, C. J., Stevens, G. A., Finucane, M. M., & Ezzati, M., 2013). China's next goal is to become a high-income developed country. There is no dispute that "innovation-driven development" is the key to entering this new stage. Innovation has a variety of factors, including technical factors, business model factors, capital factors, market factors and so on. Of course, there are also accidental factors. But in my opinion, the core factor of innovation is creative talents, and the core of creative talents is people's creative thinking. To cultivate people's creative thinking, education is the most important driving force. This is the basic logic that I link economic development, innovation, and education.

A question posed by Qian Xuesen in 2005 is now known as Qian Xuesen's Question. "Why," he asked, "do our schools always fail to produce outstanding people?" (Wang, N., 2011) Although he was talking mainly about scientific research, especially natural science research, I think the question can be generalized to all fields, namely, why do so few creative people come out of our education system? From the consideration of the national conditions, China has the world's largest population and the largest number of students in school. In 2017, 9.4 million people took the national entrance examination, and more than 7 million more was admitted to undergraduate or post-secondary schools. China now have more than 27 million students in colleges and universities, and nearly 37 million students in higher education (including those in the workforce) (Zivin, J. G., Song, Y., Tang, Q., & Zhang, P., 2020). All of these numbers are among the highest in the world. Compared with such a large population and educated group, the problem is: whether it is scientific and technological achievements, humanities and artistic contributions, new products, new brands or new business models, Chinese have not so many innovative talents.

In addition, the improvement of students' comprehensive ability is the basic goal of higher education personnel training all over the world. To cultivate compound talents for the development of society and science and technology should be the primary task of college talents training. Universities should gradually cultivate students' innovative consciousness critical thinking and business adaptability in the teaching aimed at improving students' comprehensive ability.

As discussed above, at the present it is difficult for college graduates to obtain employment. In order to improve the employment rate of college students, it is necessary to strengthen the reform of teaching so as to fundamentally change the mode of personnel training, so that the personnel training of colleges and universities can meet the multiple requirements of the society to keep pace with the times. Therefore, the urgent task of the current reform of higher education is to construct the training mode of compound talents. The level of education in our country is not high enough, from the systemic reasons, that is, the public education in a monopoly position, as well as the planned economy component of education is strong. This situation has led to the education circles to be reactionary, even self-defeating. The education system is not responsible to the students, nor to the market, but to the superiors. In this educational situation, education will inevitably be out of line with market demand, which will lead to the embarrassing situation that graduation is equal to unemployment. Meanwhile, under the premise of not introducing sufficient competition, the so-called industrialization of education is carried out, and the scarce educational resources lead to higher and higher college fees. Many poor children cannot afford high tuition fees and have to give up the idea of continuing to study.

China is making progress, especially in recent years, maybe not even a little progress. China's share of published research papers rose from 13 percent in 2005 to 20 percent in 2015, second only to the United States. There is really a great improvement in quantity (Guo, L., Huang, J., & Zhang, Y., 2019). Although the number of papers has ranked second in the world, the outstanding achievements of scientific research are still not high enough and not enough, which is the consensus of everyone.

The reasons for the education reform are that Chinese education has its own characteristics, which implies the strengths. First, individuals, families, government and society invest a lot in education. This investment is not only money and resources, but also students' and teachers' time. It's quite a lot, depending on our cultural traditions, but also depending on the importance. Second, the emphasis on knowledge is the whole society, teachers teach knowledge points, students grasp knowledge points, not only more, but also early, wide. Therefore, Chinese students' mastery of basic knowledge shows a "high mean", which is compared with that of other countries on a horizontal level. The nearly 40 years of economic growth would have been possible without these strengths of education.

Third, now some countries in the world, including some developed countries, want to learn from China. For example, middle schools in the UK have invited teachers from middle schools in Shanghai to help them improve their students' math skills. Therefore, I think it is more meaningful to reflect on the problems in education on the basis of understanding the strengths of Chinese education. I think there are a lot of problems there, and I think one of the key problems is that China has a systematic bias towards education, from cognition to practice. This bias is that China equates education with knowledge and limit it to knowledge. Teachers teach knowledge as their own job, students learn knowledge as what they should do, the college entrance examination is also to test important knowledge points. So, knowledge becomes almost the whole content of education. "Knowledge is power" this sentence is

deeply rooted in the hearts of the Chinese people. It cannot be said to be wrong, of course, knowledge is very important, the Chinese also say that knowledge is power, knowledge changes fate and so on.

However, education of innovative talents does not depend solely on knowledge accumulation. Knowledge accumulation alone is not enough, and education must go beyond knowledge. This is the core idea for China's education, especially the education of innovative talents, and also an important starting point for the proposals on education reform (Zhu, Yan, 2014). Albert Einstein once said that "the value of a college education is not in memorizing facts, but in training the brain to think." (Hallinger, P., 2010). It was said nearly a hundred years ago. At that time, many facts could be found in books. Today, more facts are available online. In the future, there will be more knowledge and facts that the AI will find for you. So this sentence is more worth pondering in the present and future. On the question that "education is limited to the accumulation of knowledge", I absolutely do not deny the usefulness of knowledge, but argue that staying at the level of knowledge is very insufficient. And the problem is more serious today than ever before.

The quality of education in China is not only affected by the international trends, but also has the inherent unique cultural continuity. China's reforms in the name of "quality education" have actually solved the contradiction between supply and demand. At the preliminary times of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government paid attention to the production of fundamental materials, therefore, the government has confirmed the education policy of "education serves workers and peasants". Because education was opened to the workers and peasants, they expected to go to school. However, in the then situation, the number of the schools was quite limited. In order to solve this problem, the then one of the state leaders, Liu Shaoqi put forward the policy of "two education systems" in 1958 on the basis of research, that is, half-work, half-study and half-farm, half-study. The introduction of this policy not only alleviated to a certain extent the contradiction between demand and supply, but also curb the unhealthy atmosphere of contempt for manual labor (Zhu, Yan, 2014).

As enrollment opportunities increased, the conflict between the demand for higher education and the limited number of secondary schools became apparent again. The government was unable to resolve this secondary conflict at that time, leading to the one-sided pursuit of higher education rates for the sake of higher education. After a few years, the situation was swamped by the "Cultural Revolution" movement. "Going to the countryside to learn from workers and peasants" replaced the one-sided pursuit of college enrollment rate. The restoration of the college entrance examination system after the Cultural Revolution rekindled the desire of numerous students to study.

The state promulgated the "Decision on the Reform of the Educational System" in 1985 (Sun, M., 2010), proposing the policy of "adjusting the structure of secondary education", that is, expanding the secondary education level proportion of education, reducing the amount of general education thus expecting to alleviate the pressure of entering higher education through student diversion. However, since the career for vocational education can only be employment, and the career of general education is higher education, general education and vocational education have evolved into a "dual-track system" of higher education and employment education (Tan, Charlene, and Salleh Hairon, 2016).

Although this policy has achieved some results in practice, and even the ratio of secondary vocational education to general education in some areas is about 60:40, the number of college

students is limited after all. Besides, with the increase of the total number of secondary education students by the popularization of nine-year compulsory education in China, the competition within general education did not ease, but became fiercer. Its important performance is from "film pursuit" to "examination". For a time, "exam-oriented education" became the object of social criticism, and quality-oriented education became the new goal advocated by the educational circles. The lack of higher education supply is the fundamental reason why quality education has difficulties to move forward. After many years of discussion, the Ministry of Education finally made up its mind and made the strategic decision of "expanding college enrollment" in 1999 to solve the bottleneck problem that had plagued China's education development for a long time (Tan, Charlene, and Salleh Hairon, 2016).

Different policies concerning education have been issued over the years from the establishment of the People's Republic of China. It is no denying that the government has paid great attention on the education in both urban and rural areas from generation to generation. However, in recent years, the focus of the reforms have shifted from the allocation of funds to the other sides of the school education. As a tool and knocking stone for a potential career and occupation, many students and their parents have paid large amounts of attention to education, both in money and time. It heavily burdens students and families. As a results, a lot of organizations are generated for taking advantages of education and making money, and studies from primary school, middle school to high school have become a labor work instead of purely a way of acquiring knowledge. Sometimes education becomes very inefficient because of the negative effect of excessive pressure onto the students, and they become tired with the studies. From "two educational systems" to "adjusting the structure of secondary education" to "large expansion of college enrollment", all therefore reflect the influence of the imperial examination tradition on the current Chinese educational reform.

### 3.6 The current education reform policy in China and its effects

The recent "double reduction" policy in China has effectively reduced the excessive burden of homework and the extra curriculum tuition and tuition outside of school (Li, Jia, et al., 2022). On July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Central Government and the State Council issued the "Comments on further reduction of the homework burden and extra curriculum tuition of the students during the period of compulsory education" (Tan, Charlene, and Salleh Hairon, 2016), requiring the government departments in different districts to implement the new rules in accordance with the actual situation. For some times, the private tuition did have positive effect on the development of the quality of education as private tutoring strengthens students' subject comprehension, boosts confidence, and builds essential learning skills. The proliferation of this practice was a growing phenomenon in China (Xu, Z., 2002). The Chinese embraced one-to-one classes, internet-based tuition, and group classes to supplement mainstream schooling. Since, as argued above, China has a very competitive education system, parents embraced the tutoring programs to help their children learn new skills and work through problem subjects. China therefore focused privately on quality education services to improve its human resources.

Nonetheless, the Chinese government did not support private tutoring since the practice overwhelmed many primary and secondary school students. According to Zhang(2018, 20), the Chinese national government issued a notice to the Ministry of Education to reform out-of-school training institutions, alleviating the extracurricular study burden on children. Chinese governmental agencies argued that shadow education systems operated parallel to

public schooling. Although the government agenda was developed to respond to public concerns about the heavy academic and financial burden on students and parents, the shadow education field subverted these efforts (Zhang 26). Educational authorities raised also other informed concerns, such as tutoring policies that shortened official school hours and accelerated the school curriculum, allowing students to learn in advance and beyond the syllabus in the supplementary sector.

The most recent and ongoing education policy is called the “double reduction policy” because it aims at effectively reducing both the burden of homework and off-campus training for students in compulsory education. As noted, this policy was issued by the Chinese Central Government when on July 24, 2021, the General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-campus Training for Students Receiving Compulsory Education. It requires all regions and departments to conscientiously implement it in light of their actual situation. In August of the same year, the Office of the Education Steering Committee of The State Council further issued a special notice, planning to inform each province of the progress of the “double reduction” work every half month. (Luo et al., 2022).

In October 2021, the National People’s Congress stated that the double reduction plan would be incorporated into the law to avoid increasing the burden on students in compulsory education. On November 3, the State Administration for Market Regulation and other eight departments issued a Notice on the Control of Advertisements for Off-campus Training, which put an end to the subway, bus station and other affiliated billboards that published off-campus training advertising (Lu, J., Tuo, P., Pan, J., Zhou, M., Zhang, M., & Hu, S., 2023). In March 2021, the Ministry of Education issued a “sleep order, which was an order on extension of the sleeping times for school students, and in July of the same year, a "double reduction" policy was introduced. The data shows that after the sleep order and the double reduction policy, 60% of primary and middle school students' sleep duration increased to varying degrees, of which 9.41% increased sleep time by more than 2 hours; 21.66% increased by 1 to 2 hours; increased by 0 to 1 hour up to 28.88%(Luo et al., 2022).

The originality of the reduction of the burden of homework is concerning with the overload of homework in schools of different levels. Homework is an important link in school education and teaching management, which is also a necessary supplement to classroom teaching activities. However, the problem is that some school homework quantity is too much, the quality of the homework is not high, it not only cannot reach the effect of reviewing, but also occupy students' normal exercise, rest, entertainment time. For a long time, compulsory education schools, especially primary schools, have the policy of off school at three thirty p.m. The original intention of this policy is therefore to reduce the burden for students, but the expectation is that it will reduce the burden inside the school but increase the burden outside the school. The increased burden outside the school is out of schools’ control and management., hence the reduction on the off-campus education is necessary for the education reform. The double reduction policy changed the learning process in China. Besides transforming how students learn and develop, regulation eases the homework burden. Moreover, the rule enables parents to realize the essence of education in children’s growth and development (Li et al. 2012, 713). It has weakened the relationship between off-campus

tutoring firms and families and strengthened family-school cooperation (Zhang, Wei, 2019). According to Li et al., the double reduction policy ensures that family education receives adequate attention, requiring parents to help their children grow academically (Li et al. 2012, 713). Moreover, the regulations charge learning institutions to return to lead education. It is further argued that the policy supports quality sports, programming, and dance education, thus enabling students to commit their free time to hobbies and training. Including sports in the entrance exams further motivates parents to emphasize children's participation in physical exercises (Li et al. 715).

With the double reduction policy, China focuses on reducing off-campus tutoring institutions and increasing the number of students participating in K-12 extracurricular tutoring. By doing this, the government concentrates on developing a national education system conducive to learners. Since many private tutoring firms lack educational qualifications, China's double reduction policy involves curbing illegal practices, such as indiscriminate fees and false propaganda. Private tutoring affirms education capitalism that contradicts the public interest attribute of education (Bloomberg News, 2021). Therefore, implementing the policy helps the government promote normal education ecology. The double reduction policy improves sports training, enhancing students' academic performance. Therefore, it enables students to improve extracurricular activities. The double reduction policy also supports quality online education and teaching resources to improve academic performance. The regulation supports smart education to achieve data-driven quality enhancement. According to (Luo et al. 2012), the smart industry embraces teaching toolkits, including iPad software and smart Apps, to help teachers obtain students' subject-based knowledge and send feedback. The platforms enable students to complete self-directed learning with teachers' personalized comments. In addition, the policy allows national and local education and teaching resource platforms to establish appropriate school networks, offering learners free and special education courses covering essential grades and subjects to promote the balanced development of education equity and resources. The double reduction regulation ensures that education stakeholders embrace innovative education to avoid private tutoring.

Different provinces in China have implemented the double reduction policy with the measures of issuances of district policies (Yhang, Zhengyun, 2021). Provinces, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Inner-Mongolia, Guangxi, Ningxia, Zhejiang, Huhun, Henan, Yunnan, Tianjin, Shenyang, Anhui, and Jilin have taken effective measures to facilitate the implementation of the double reduction policy. Survey results released in October 2021, indicated that improvement of the quality of education is the consensus of the interviewees. In another survey conducted among the teachers of compulsory education, about 98% were worried that the double reduction would increase the workload of teachers and cause them work overtimes before the double reduction policy was implemented (Stephens Jr, M., & Yang, D. Y., 2014). From the statics reported from the State Education Department, 98.2% of the schools in the database have drafted homework management guidelines, and 92.1% of the schools have established homework publication guidelines, and students in 64.3% of the schools can finish their homework in time. The database further shows that 99.6% of the parents of the students indicate that the teachers have not asked the parents to check the homework of their children (Yhang, Zhengyun, 2021). In addition, in accordance with the statics of the State Education Department, the temperature of the off-campus tuition markets have cooled down, the overwhelming amount of the advertisements have almost disappeared, and capital invested in the education market have been evacuated. Almost half amount of the offline and online tuition organizations has been reduced.

The "double reduction" policy directly limits the scale of off-campus training institutions of disciplines and reduces the duration of extracurricular training, which has a huge impact on off-campus training institutions. However, it is easier to control educational institutions than educational anxiety. As many parents still worry, if students do not enjoy high-quality education in schools and the current imbalance of educational resources is not changed, the "theater effect", which means the people in the front row stand up then the people sitting in the back have to stand higher in order to see in the field of education will not be resolved, and the demand for training is likely to be met through other means. To hold the main position of the school is to hold the bottom line of "double reduction". Only by holding the bottom line can the "double reduction" be implemented to the end. In October 2021, the government proposed to draft the double reduction policy into legislation and to avoid increasing the burden of the students in the compulsory education stage.

The enforcement of the double reduction policy sounds fierce in practice. Since education is comprehensive, and it is a social phenomenon and causes social effects. The overwhelming amount of after-class tuition and the excessive homework has been the by-product of the current form of education. With more and more resources put into education, the competition for good university places has become quite fierce and getting high marks for the national entrance examination has become a matter of heavy pressure, not only for students but also on the families of the students. It is the major exam in China. The double reduction policy reflects the fact that there are serious problems with the current situation of the development of education.

The current national entrance examination has similarities with the traditional education system discussed above. The method and content of teaching lacks innovation and creativity. It emphasizes the education of knowledge but ignores the education of ideology and social values, and students often ignore the process of coming to the results and only learn to know what the results are, but do not know how it comes to the results. Moreover, education has entirely become the tool and method of achieving a good job. Students study for the exams, and teachers teach for the high marks of the exams of the students.

In the past, Chinese education evolved into exam-oriented education, the ideology, and the method of which focuses on the college entrance examination. It is generally recognized that the exam-oriented education easily becomes a utilitarian opportunistic practice (Epstein, I., 2017). At the beginning, some students get high marks because they study extra time at the places of the private tuition, then the other students become aware of this and all take part in the extra tuition after school. In this case, this becomes the well-known theater effect situation. It is similar with the situation that when we go to see a film in a cinema, the people in the front row stand up, in order to see the film, the people sitting in the rows in the back have to stand up as well to avoid being blocked by the people in the front rows. In the end, all the people in the cinema stand up. Therefore, the entire matter become meaningless and results in the waste of resources. The exam-oriented education also results in other negative effect. Some teachers take advantages of the private tuition and leave some important knowledge to the classes of private tuition, then the students have to spend money and extra

time to study for extra hours. It cannot be regulated by the policies or eliminated by the government because of the nature of the utilitarianism of the exam-oriented education.

However, the cultivation of the personality and the values of the younger generations is in the activities besides the private tuition which seems not as important in the eyes of the students and the parents.

Therefore, more and more people realize that the generational rate of excellent talents under the current education system becomes lower over years. Many scholars have become interested in this problem and begun to investigate into the problems why the education reform is necessary and urgent in the current education system. The lack in the quantity and quality of the innovative talents is severe. From the perspective of the current national background, this is related to the economic revolution of China for more than 40 years. After the commencement of reform and opening-up policy, the new situation poses new requirements for the quality of the talents. China has transformed from a low-income country to a middle-income country and become the second largest economy in the world. The next step in development is to become a high income developed country. It is commonly recognized that a higher development degree of economy relies on the development driven by innovations. They may be related to different factors, including technologies, business models, capital, and the market, etc. Sometimes it can be accidental factors. However, the core factor of the innovation is the talents with innovation abilities and the core of the innovative persons are the innovative thinking methods. The cultivation of the innovative thinking methods of the talents is the most important pushing power of the education. Hence it is necessary to connect the economic development and innovation with the education.

Furthermore, innovative thinking methods is not only up to the curiosity and the imagination, but also up the values. When the education of the innovation of the talents is in discussion, it is not just a matter of knowledge and ability, but also the matter of values. When we are faced with the matter of utilitarianism, it is harmful to the innovative thinking method. When the focus of the students is on increase of the number of studies, some schools just recognize and praise those who get high marks in exams and look down upon those who have not got good marks yet. The values promoted by those school make the students realize that the life can be meaningful only if the marks on exams in school are high, and their future occupation can only be bright just when they get in the key universities. However, it has been long forgotten that the nature of the education is to facilitate the overall development of a human being. The current education does not realize this goal, instead, in China it goes the way of utilitarianism and the value of the education has been distorted and dissimilated. The educators' main attention is to fulfil the desire of the scholars in the priority. Those are the reasons why China needs to conduct education reform.

Most importantly, education should create an atmosphere which is relaxing and helpful to the development of the personality of the students. In the process of education, the curiosity and the imagination of the students needs to be protected well, and education must guide the students to have higher pursuits in values and avoid short-term utilitarianism. This provides high demands for the education revolution. If the above three points can be realistically implemented in the actual education, the current education models can be improved. However, the effect of the current education reform is not optimistic. More further measures need to be taken in order to improve the current situation.



Another reform seen during this era is the fact that schools have adapted the integrated system that did not solely focus on the subject-centered curriculum. Therefore, education is not just merely a tool to learn passively; instead, it is to be used to solve problems. The system was altered, including the way teachers were trained. In addition, the curriculum became decentralized to cater to local needs. Due to these reforms, China has made many innovations and a lot of progress. The progress is especially prominent in the government and its type of administration. Overall, the country has been highly impacted by educational reforms.

There have been more changes like minimizing profit-making academic institutions (Wu, 2021) This means that the government wants to limit the institutions that treat education only as a source of income. The government-imposed crackdown on off-campus school tutoring, has left many students and their parents concerned. What's more, the government has even set a reward system for anyone that offers information about off-campus tutors. This will help in eliminating people who teach to earn an income. Thus, the education system will focus on providing quality instead of money.

Other reforms made in the Chinese education system include the concept of lifelong learning. This means that people should learn what they want to learn or what they are good at. The current educational system forces all students to know everything that is in the curriculum (China: National Plan for Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development: 2020, Issued in 2010"). These students are then evaluated on various subjects and graded based on the tests. However, this system is ineffective as a student's prowess is evaluated using many issues, including the ones he or she is not interested in pursuing. This leads to low confidence in students who are judged for failing regardless of the fact that they do not like the subjects they learn. Lifelong learning helps students have the autonomy to select the topics they want, and therefore, their prowess is genuinely evaluated. Other than that, students spend more time focusing on a subject they like, which can increase their learning motivation. The new concept also focuses on eliminating outdated aspects of education like homework and the uneven distribution of study resources. The idea also emphasizes innovation and versatility.

As China grows technologically, many parents look to take advantage of that and equip their children with the necessary skills to survive in this advanced country. This desire has led to many parents and teachers overburdening the students. Most teachers offer a lot of homework, while parents have opted to provide their children with off-campus tutoring after they attend classes (Bloomberg News, 2021). While both parties see this as an excellent way to improve the students' performance, it is ineffective since many students feel overwhelmed. The tired students are likely to develop a negative attitude towards education, which will affect their performance in the long run. In this regard, the Chinese government has introduced double reduction policy, where a lot of homework and private tutoring are prohibited. The government hopes that this will give students enough time to relax and prepare for their regular classes the next day. Even so, it is hard to implement this policy since there is no definite quantity of the number of homework students should receive.

### 3.7 The obstacles in the face of the education reform

The current situation of the inequitable development of education is still changing in the near future. At present, there is too much emphasis on key construction in Chinese education, and

a lot of money is invested in certain key schools, but little attention is paid to the general schools. As a result, the poorer regions are spending less on education, while the more economically developed regions are spending more. There are great differences between east and west, between city and country. As a matter of fact, human resources are the most important resource for a country. Most students are excluded from further education. Teenagers in rural areas and economically underdeveloped areas cannot receive good education, which is actually a huge waste of human resources. China country has the largest population in the world, but the population quality is not high and the achievement also does not match the huge population. The principle of giving priority to efficiency and giving priority to fairness has been greatly discounted in the practice of education reform, and social fairness is seriously missing. A few people enjoy special benefits, but the majority of people cannot enjoy the right to receive education fairly. To sum up, there are a lot of problems in Chinese education, and these problems do need to be solved as soon as possible.

However, at the same time, we should also be aware that the solution of these problems does require a process, and by no means overnight. If we want to solve these problems, it will inevitably lead to the redistribution of interests, and its difficulty and resistance are quite great. However, it is believed that these problems in education reform will be solved gradually and effectively with the rapid development of national economic construction and various undertakings.

## **4 Comparisons with the education mechanism of Korea and the U.S and discussions on why the education reform in China requires innovations.**

### **4.1 The Korean Education System**

The history of the development of the Korean education system can be traced back to ancient China. In ancient times, Korean culture and education were greatly influenced by China. Chinese Confucian culture and educational thought were introduced to Koguryeo State Korea, gradually forming an educational system based on Confucian education. At this stage, Korean education was mainly private education for nobles and businessmen (Shin, S., & Koh, M. S., 2005).

With the development of the times, Korean education is gradually developing in the direction of modernization. In the process of modernization, the South Korean government has invested heavily in education and implemented a series of educational reforms. These reforms include popularizing compulsory education, expanding the scale of higher education, improving the educational environment, and improving the quality of teachers. Currently, the Korean education system can be divided into four stages: early childhood education, primary education, junior high school education, and high school education. Among them, elementary school, junior high school, and high school are all compulsory education, provided free of charge by the government. South Korea also has some famous universities and research institutions, including the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, national universities and private universities (Lee, J., & Park, D., 2014).

As an East Asian country, Korea has similar features with the education in China. One of the most prominent features of Korean education is the coexistence of tradition and modernity. In the process of modernization, South Korea's education system has absorbed many modern education concepts and methods, but in many aspects, South Korea's education still maintains the traditional characteristics and educational culture. For example, South Korean education emphasizes students' sense of discipline and moral quality, which are important values in Confucian culture. In addition, the classroom teaching of Korean education also pays more attention to the education of traditional culture, such as Korean calligraphy, music, dance, etc., which has been paid attention to and cultivated in schools (Shin, S., & Koh, M. S., 2005).

Another characteristic of Korean education is that it is highly competitive. South Korea's education system is compulsory for all, but it is also one of the most competitive in the world. South Korea's education system is a manifestation of socialist competition due to the high level of higher education and the increasing pressure to enter schools. During the three-year study in high school, I not only participated in the college entrance examination, but also participated in various discipline competitions and talent competitions. The demographic dividend of South Korean society has gradually faded, and for young people, the proportion of students who get higher education has become the key to struggle. This has led to greater demand and competition from education authorities, students and parents (Lee, Y., & Yi, Y. M., 2000).

The intense learning atmosphere of the Korean education system is also a feature of Korean education. In traditional culture, Korean people put a lot of emphasis on education, and this is

reflected in learning. In South Korea, school schedules are so intense that students are required to complete a lot of written and practical work, so there is little time to have fun or socialize. Every day after school, students also need to participate in various talent clubs or competitions in specific fields, which makes every student have a very busy day.

The effectiveness of education also depends on the level of teacher education. Another characteristic of Korean education is that there are very high quality teachers. Teaching is one of the most respected professions in South Korea's education system. The South Korean government has also made many improvements and invested heavily in education, thus increasing the salaries and benefits of teachers, and attracting more talented and experienced educators to the teaching position. The education level of teachers has also been improved accordingly. They have graduated from many well-known universities in Korea, are active in subject research, and have strict requirements on teaching quality. As teachers' teaching standards are guaranteed and students measure their academic performance objectively, the overall education system improves the quality and competitiveness of education (Lee, Y., & Yi, Y. M., 2000).

South Korea's education system promotes universal qualifications and rewards those with advanced degrees. This makes many young people in South Korea very upset when they are faced with hopeless situations. For example, a large number of graduates in the job market competition will reduce the salary and the attractiveness of quality employment opportunities, which also causes great pressure in the job market in South Korea, and a large number of graduates cannot find jobs in a short time.

#### 4.2 The American Education System

The American education system has attracted worldwide attention, and its unique features have also become the focus of attention (Rhoads, E. J., 2011). This chapter will discuss these features from five perspectives, including history, policy, teaching mode, curriculum setting, and evaluation system, in order to deeply understand the characteristics of the American education system.

The origins of the American education system can be traced back to the colonial period. In the early years, education was mostly provided by religious organizations or private schools. In the late 19th century, direct government intervention began and the public school system was established. In the early 20th century, the American education system entered a period of consolidation and improvement, emphasizing the integration of students of different classes and ethnicities. Today, the American education system still follows the concept of "equal opportunity" and tries to provide every student with quality educational resources and environment (Zhao, Y., 2009).

The American education system includes three levels: federal government, state government and local government. The role of the federal government is to set national education policy, provide financial support, and monitor national education standards. The state government is responsible for the management and oversight of the state education system, the development of education policies, the management of education funding and the implementation of education standards at the state level. Local governments are mainly responsible for the management and operation of the local education system, including the recruitment and management of teachers, the establishment of schools and the setting of local education standards. The three levels of government are interconnected, checks and balances, and together make up the complete American education system (Spring, J., 2017).

The American education system emphasizes students' independent learning and all-round development, and the education mode is characterized by openness, inquiry and interdisciplinary. Innovation and exploration in the field of education are encouraged, and the school encourages students to explore and practice independently in teaching exploration. The American education model focuses on cultivating students' learning interest, inquiry ability and problem-solving ability. In addition, the American education model also reflects the diversity of the curriculum, allowing students to develop their strengths in a wide range of elective courses to realize their personal interests and development (Zhao, Y., 2009).

The American education system attaches great importance to individual qualities and all-round development, so its curriculum is widely recognized. American primary and secondary schools usually set up English, mathematics, science, history, art, sports, sociology and other compulsory courses. At the same time, students can choose various courses according to their own interests and talents, such as music, dance, film production, fashion design and so on. In addition, the American education system also attaches importance to vocational education and actively promotes the popularization of skills training and vocational education. The freedom in class there is not the freedom without rules, but in the classroom to encourage students to speak freely, express their understanding of the course content, views; The relationship between teachers and students is equal, the teacher is not the authority, not always correct, students can put forward their own questions; Moreover, the teacher is also very free in the lecture, most of the way to talk about their interest in the content of the course, that did not talk about the content of the course needs to be read by the students and after class, and do digestion and understanding, but also exercise the students' ability to learn (Zhao, Y., 2009).

American education tells students that learning is their own business, independent study, explore their own interests, students learn actively, flexible, happy. Attach great importance to the cultivation of students' creativity and thinking ability. There is considerable flexibility in class classification and course selection, and the teaching process is full of lively and happy atmosphere. It pays attention to enlightening students' desire for knowledge, cultivating their independent thinking ability, practical ability and innovative spirit. Attention is paid to the development of students' personality, full development of each student's potential, give play to their strengths, and the value of each student has been duly respected (Zhao, Y., 2009).

The evaluation system of the American education system is more flexible, focusing on localization and individuation, giving schools more autonomy and rights. American education departments advocate comprehensive evaluation of students through multiple evaluation methods, such as standardized tests, classroom performance, homework, group reports, experimental courses, community service and so on. In addition, the American education system also pays attention to the establishment of multiple evaluation structures, supports teachers and students to carry out diverse evaluation, and pays attention to the effective application of evaluation results (MacDonald, B., 1974)..

The uniqueness of American education system lies in its characteristics of equality, innovation, diversity and localization. In its 245 years of development, the American education system has always been student-oriented, focused on all-round quality and openness, helping students quickly adapt to society and future challenges.

If we carry out the above reform of college entrance examination, it will be close to the college entrance examination of western developed countries. For example, the entrance examination of British universities has a very wide range of subjects, including about 80 subjects such as business, social science, media, entertainment and information technology

(Farnham, N., 1982). Generally speaking, western developed countries have more subjects for college entrance examination and a wide range of students' choices, which reflects the diversity of talent training and universities' demand for talents. In order to meet the growing demand of diverse talents, the diversity of examination subjects should be increased in the Chinese college entrance examination.

Besides the graduate enrollment expansion, the Ministry of Education does not seriously analyze the real cause of graduate entrance exam craze, it just sees that current students are enthusiastic about postgraduate entrance exams. The enrollments are expanding regardless of themajors. This leads directly to the low quality of research institute training, and inversely falling research strength in our country. In fact, facing the current situation of lack of educational resources in China, it is necessary to vigorously introduce private capital into the field of education and develop private education. The reality is that although there are many private universities now, good teachers and good students are still monopolized by public universities. From a comparison of data, it is very telling that there are 5,000 universities in the United States and less than 3,000 universities in China. The number of college students in China is 40 million, compared with 4 million in the United States (Li, H., 2010). When there are 20,000 universities in China, the quality of education will naturally improve. Thus, China's education development still has a long way to go.

Comparing education in the U.S to education in Korea and China, in the latter two countries due to the long-term use of exam-oriented education, students only pay attention to book knowledge and are tired to deal with one after another continuous exams. In this kind of an educational environment, ignoring the cultivation of innovation ability, scores become the only standard to measure whether a student is excellent. Rigid and rigid education model can only produce people with rigid thinking and knowledge. One result of the current education mode in China is that there is no place for students to express their personality and thoughts. Teenagers are the most active stage of people's thoughts and creativity. However, the minds of current school students are locked down, and their interests and hobbies are not cultivated in the proper direction of development in the early stage of life. There is no school education to explore the potential of a certain aspect and practice to improve the opportunity, children slowly in imperceptibly are grinding without edges and corners.

As we all know, interest is the best teacher, interest can stimulate people's 200% enthusiasm for learning and creation, and students completely in the state of learning for the sake of learning, its learning efficiency and results can be imagined. Teachers do not advocate and encourage students' creative thinking, but blindly pursue correct answers and standard answers, which limits students' imagination space and divergent thinking mode.

## 5 Conclusions and discussion: The author's opinion on the direction of the development of education reform

First of all, C should carry out the all-round development of education, establish the educational thought of inheriting Chinese civilization, absorb the western teaching experiences, and gradually establish new Chinese educational thinking and concepts for the new era. Reading and being a man are inseparable from the unity of the whole, the education of cultural knowledge is one aspect, and the ideological morality is the key.

Therefore, profound reform of educational institutions is to be carried out to formulate a scientific and reasonable education and teaching system in line with China's national conditions, so that the traditional imperial examination education will be gradually transferred to the correct track of quality education for the whole people, rather than for entrance examinations. The role of teachers will no longer be the authority of transferring knowledge, but the active helper and facilitator of students' construction of knowledge. The education reform should advocate "education without class", vary from person to person, attach importance to intellectual education, more emphasis on moral education, at the same time strengthen the education of physical education, beauty, labor.

For teachers, teaching style and ethics should be the first choice, and flexible teaching should become the characteristics of modern teaching, and can go out of the classroom, into the social life, teaching through fun, teaching through life. Education should promote the all-round development of each person, that is, the development of body and mind, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic consciousness, personal responsibility, spiritual value and so on, so that people can learn how to behave and realize the all-round development of individuals.

Secondly, to solve the structural problems of employment difficulties and labor shortages, China needs to start from two aspects: on the one hand, reduce the dependence on low-level labor force through mechanization, automation and intelligence of enterprises, and promote the industry from low-end to high-end, and expand the industrial demand for middle and high-level labor force to alleviate the "employment difficulty" of college students; On the other hand, through educational reform and adjustment, the industry needs to cultivate multi-level, different specifications of talents to meet the different needs of enterprise transformation and upgrading, focusing on the provision of human resources consistent with industrial institutions' labor needs.

According to the current Chinese national conditions, schools need to provide the following three categories of talents for industrial upgrading and transformation: A) academic research talents engaged in basic research, b) a large number of professional and applied talents, and c) hundreds of millions of professional and skilled talents, whose core work is to engage in operational work with high technical content by using their own skills. The demand of a large number of vocational and skilled talents inevitably requires China to strengthen the construction of vocational and technical education, follow the trend of multi-disciplinary vision and diversification, and make it develop healthily, rapidly and sustainably by means of school-enterprise cooperation and combining work with study.

Finally, the inequity of education exists objectively, and brings more and more serious social educational contradictions. The Ministry of Education has recently issued a Notice on the 2016 Urban compulsory education Enrollment Work, which makes it clear that this year to ensure a rough balance between districts. However, this is obviously a temporary cooling

policy, and cannot really cure the root cause. "Multi-school zoning" must simultaneously promote the balance of compulsory education, specifically to narrow the differences in school quality between school districts, as well as the differences in the conditions and quality of schools within school districts. At the same time, greater efforts should be made to promote the education input in central and western cities, and gradually narrow the gap between coastal and inland education levels, so as to establish a relatively balanced education environment. However, this may take a long time to achieve, it is a long way to go.

The pace of education reform has never stopped in China, and what it has to do now is to seriously study the problems existing in the current education reform, deeply understand the causes and effects of these problems, in order to find solutions to the problems. As argued in this thesis, the present educational reform lacks the cultivation of students' independent living and thinking ability in education ideas, contents and methods. The educational model is stiff and inflexible and not lively enough, a large number of curriculum content is obsolete, practice links are not paid attention to, the professional setting is too narrow, it produces different degrees from the needs of the economic and social development, and is lagging behind in the development of contemporary science and culture. In terms of educational structure, basic education is weak, vocational education has not been as developed as it should be, and the internal departments and levels of higher education are out of proportion.

At the same time, there is a serious regional imbalance in the distribution of educational resources, which leads to the imbalance of the talent system and even affects the overall level of social development. China should focus on the above three problems to strengthen the comprehensive development of education, develop vocational and technical education, at the same time increase financial input in education development, strict control, reasonable allocation, comprehensively improve the comprehensive quality of the people, enable the creation of a rational talent structure, to make a strong backing for China's economic development of talent demand.

As a conclusion, there have been many reforms in the Chinese education system in the past decade. Some of the changes aimed to improve the facilities and the physical tools used in education, while others worked on improving the quality of education. Overall, the reforms aim to help students gain knowledge that is useful even in their real life. The major challenge faced in implementing these reforms is financial support and the lack of definite measures of the reforms. Even so, there have been significant improvements in the Chinese labor market, and their level of innovation has increased dramatically. These changes can be attributed to new advancements in the education system.



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