

Comparison of Migrant Children Education in China and the United States

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Abstract. This study compares the education status of migrant children in China and the United States, with a specific focus on K–12 education. Migrant children, also known as children moving from rural areas to urban areas, and the children of immigrant families face unique challenges in both countries, including regional prejudice brought by Hukou policy in China and racial and social class inequality in the US. Using a comparative approach, this study examines the similarities and differences in the education of migrant children from political, cultural, and economic perspectives. Through this analysis, the study identifies existing problems and proposes solutions to improve the education of migrant children in both countries. Ultimately, this study highlights the importance of addressing the education status of migrant children in promoting social equity and justice.

1. Introduction

Migration is a widespread phenomenon that greatly influences people and society, especially in terms of politics, culture, and economy. Governments must thus properly manage and regulate the migration process, including through the enactment of laws that have an impact on migrants' living circumstances. Education policy is one such important factor that greatly influences the education of migrant children, who face unique challenges in both China and the United States. While both countries have made significant efforts to improve education policies for migrant children, the policies in place still have shortcomings that result in unequal educational opportunities for migrant children compared to their peers in urban areas. Cultural factors are also essential in the education of migrant children. The desire for social mobility often drives people to migrate to urban areas, where they can access better education, employment, and business opportunities.

In both China and the United States, urban areas also offer diverse experiences that can enrich and reward those who are open to them. However, the structure of these developed areas can be significantly different from the origins of migrant children, leading to challenges in integration and inclusion. Discrimination and prejudice towards minority groups can create a significant barrier to the full participation and inclusion of migrant children in urban areas. In addition, economic barriers also pose a significant challenge to migrant children's education, which can impact their academic performance, future career prospects, and overall well-being. Despite the economic opportunities provided to migrant students in

both China and the United States, significant economic challenges and barriers persist. For example, the Hukou system in China restricts access to public services, including education, for migrant residents, making it difficult for them to attend public learning institutions. Similarly, the United States faces economic barriers that hinder access to quality education for migrant students. Therefore, this article aims to examine the education policies and current cultural and economic barriers faced by migrant children in China and the United States to identify the weaknesses of the current policies and propose solutions that can provide more support for the education of migrant children.

2. Literature Review

As the education of migrant children is a common problem all over the world, many scholars have studied the issue from multiple perspectives. Based on the research needs, the literature collection were conducted from three aspects: politics, economy, and culture.

In terms of policy, China and the United States both have a long history of migrant children policies. In previous studies, many have introduced the development of the policy of migrant children in both countries and analyzed them in different views. But more comparison studies are needed. Through reading past research, we have learned the specific contents of the policies, and have been instructively inspired by the descriptions of the existing problems and improvement solutions.

In terms of culture, the previous research indicated that the fear of cultural threat is a significant factor in shaping

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attitudes towards migrant families [1]. It arises from the belief that immigrants may dominate national culture and lead to a kind of negative attitudes towards immigrants, which can in turn lead to discrimination and exclusion. The other causation of discrimination is emotions and stereotypes. Scholars have investigated the role of emotions in determining attitudes toward immigrants. Prejudice toward immigrants/migrant is often based on ambivalent stereotypes, with most immigrant groups being viewed as higher on either warmth or competence, leading to different emotional reactions to different immigrant groups. Emotions such as anxiety, anger, fear, and contempt may also mediate the relation between some threats and prejudice toward immigrants [1].

Considering economics, many research investigations have explored a range of economic difficulties experienced by the disadvantaged migrant community, and this literature has significantly impacted the academic performance of students in China and the US. According to research by Cheng and Wang, the majority of migrant kids enrolled in public schools had worse academic achievement and greater dropout rates than non-migrant students [2]. Besides, an investigation by Liang and Wang indicated that a higher percentage of immigrant children participated in subpar private schools, therefore, performing academically poorly [3]. In addition, research by Flores and Horn revealed that migrant students in the US encountered considerable obstacles in their pursuit of high-quality education, with several of them dropping off owing to difficulties with their finances [4].

3.Theoretical Framework

The paper used three theoretical frameworks for better and more targeted research. In terms of policy, the theoretical framework focuses on exploring the current situation and existing problems of China and the United States in the education policies for migrant children. It discusses the deficiencies and shortcomings of the policies of the two countries - China's registered residence policy lacks social tolerance for migrant children, and the United States lacks educational protection for ethnic immigrants. The theoretical framework suggests deregulate the hukou policy and increasing the protection, supervision and management of migrant children.

In terms of culture, the theoretical framework focuses on discrimination based on identities. Han vs. other minority migrant students in China, and White people vs. other colored immigrants in the United States. The discrimination provides a negative effect on psychological well being, and result in an unequal educational environment inside the classroom, which need to be addressed by seeking help and support from the community.

The theoretical framework's consideration of the economy focuses on the financial challenges that migrant students in China and the United States experience. It investigates the effects of China's Hukou system, which limits migrant residents' access to public resources, especially for schooling. The theoretical basis

recommends doing away with the Hukou system, providing financial assistance to migrant households, and assisting migrant students.

4.Discussion

4.1.Policy Research

In the past decades, both China and American governments have made efforts and reasonable improvements in policies as shown in figure 1 and figure 2. The main characteristics of the development of China's migrant children policy is that it have gradually deregulated in terms of geographical restrictions and more government assistance has been provided [5]. For United States, the main characteristic is that they focus more on improving personalized education and cross-cultural education [6-7].

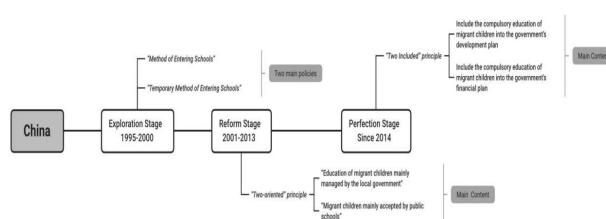


Fig. 1. The Development of Education Policy for Migrant Children in China.

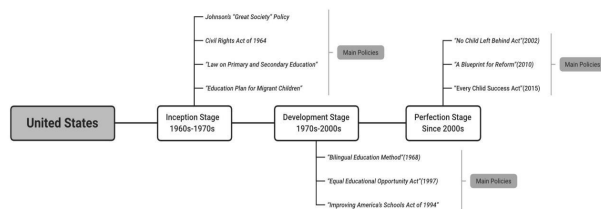


Fig. 2. The Development of Education Policy for Migrant Children in US.

However, despite there were significant improvements in policies, inequality of migrant children education still exists. So in order to better solve the problem based on the current situation, the comparison will be focused on the policies in recent decades which is the third stage in both figures.

In the comparison which shown in Figure 3, it is found that the policies of both countries have deregulated the education system and increased education resources [5-7]. The difference is that China focused on improving the educational environment of migrant children, including social environment and family environment. And the United States focuses on personalized and cross-cultural education. However, research has shown that these policies are not sufficient to fully address the inequality of migrant children's education.

China	United States
<p>1. The reform of the Hukou policy Migrant population can gain residency permit</p> <p>2. More capital and education resources Better reception of migrant populations and better education</p> <p>3. Improve family education Improve the home education environment</p>	<p>1. Increase the federal government's management power over education Better coordination of policies in each states</p> <p>2. More education funds and resources</p> <p>3. Achieve Informatization and personalization of education multilingual education information-based education cross-cultural education</p>

Fig. 3. Specific Contents of the Policy

A study in 2015 surveyed nearly 2000 migrant children in Beijing who have just graduated from junior high school. It indicated that nearly 90% of the children did not stay in Beijing after graduated and only 6% of students continue to study in high school [8]. Also, in a survey conducted abroad in 2019 also indicated that in a society where policies are more friendly to immigrants, children of all ethnic groups have more advantages in academic performance [9]. Through these two researches, we can find that migrant children are still at a disadvantage in education and more friendly policies are needed. Most migrant children in China are still unable to receive high-quality education in the inflow areas in the whole process of their study. And in the United States, educational equality is still subject to racial restrictions. What can be found is that both the issue can be attributed to a same social phenomenon: social exclusion [10-11].

In China, the hukou policy itself is a social exclusion. Although government has reformed the policy, it is still far from enough to realize the education equity of migrant children. It can be found that most of the migrant population are engaged in low-end labor and service industries. It is difficult for them to get residency permit and their children still can't study in urban area or take zhongkao or gaokao. And for the United States, although many laws have already forbids racial discriminate in education. But in recent years, there is no further law or policy that requires racial equality in education more strictly. Racial discrimination is still a very common and serious social problem in the United States.

4.2. Culture Difference

Migrant students face deliberate obstacles as a result of racial prejudice based on culture differences, both in China and the United States. One personal example is my classmate, Jocelyn Espinoza, who is a second-generation Latina whose parents were not born in America and who can only listen to and speak Spanish. Throughout her educational journey, Jocelyn transferred among different high schools in different places because her parents lost their jobs. She had a hard time understanding English and struggling with math content since each school teaches at

a different pace and has different requirements. It wasn't until her senior year of high school that the principal and staff of the school truly cared about her learning. Providing with unending encouragement and assistance, Jocelyn finally graduated from high school and got college admission. It is clear from her story that children from migrant families would easily become the children left behind. The cultural shock experienced by migrant students is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can have profound implications for their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. Migrant college students, in particular, struggle for a while to identify with their new identities and comprehend their responsibilities in their new roles because of their ambiguous identity awareness, which is brought on by the extreme differences between the places these students originally came from and the big cities. On the other side, migrant children must relearn city culture and norms while letting go of their former habits and learning techniques, which is extremely difficult for them due to the closure and failure of role identification.

Moreover, different learning resources, lesson plans, and teaching strategies may be used because academic success is intimately tied to regional culture and values. Migrant students will obtain a poorer quality education and will be at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers if teaching methods and learning materials are not culturally responsive or adjusted to their requirements. Further, migrant students encounter prejudice or discrimination due to their race or ethnicity, which can worsen their already existing feelings of exclusion and marginalization [12]. Stereotypes and misconceptions have detrimental psychological and physiological effects. For example, a lot of migrant students could experience psychological problems including depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Social exclusion and a diminished feeling of self-worth may result from this. More importantly, the inability to cope with the challenges of cultural adaptation may lead some students to drop out of school or even contemplate suicide.

While it's true that Mandarin is the most commonly spoken language in China, many first- and second-generation immigrants may not be proficient in English, which can present unique challenges for them in a new cultural context. This can make it difficult for them to communicate effectively with their peers and teachers, hindering their academic progress and social integration. Moreover, students from rural areas in China may face pressure to conform to Han norms and values when studying in urban areas, where the percentage of minority groups is relatively low [12]. In contrast, the United States is known for its cultural diversity and acceptance of different cultures, which can provide a more welcoming environment for students from diverse backgrounds. This can allow minority groups to adapt to a new culture while still retaining important aspects of their own cultural identity. However, the United States is not immune to the problem of political polarization, which can lead to increased tensions and conflicts in the classroom based on existing racial and ethnic tensions [13]. Political party choices and conflicts have been reflected in students violent verbal and physical behaviors inside classrooms.

4.3. Economic Situation

Both in China and the US, economic obstacles present a serious problem for migrant children, limiting their ability to get high-quality instruction, hindering their educational achievement, and reducing their opportunities for careers. In this paragraph will describe the economic difficulties that immigrant students in both nations experience and offer some viable responses.

The Hukou system in China is frequently noted as a serious impediment to migrant children's academic progress. According to the Hukou system, there are varying levels of access to government services such as schools, depending on whether a person lives in a rural area or an urban area. A large percentage of migrant kids are turned away from metropolitan public education, which is thought to offer higher-quality education. As a consequence, migrant children are either required to attend subpar private education or are compelled to remain in remote locations with poor educational opportunities [3]. Additionally, migrant children experience prejudice from their peers, which has an impact on their emotional, physical, and academic achievement. The high tuition costs are two financial obstacles that migrant children in China must overcome in order to receive a good education.

Children in the US immigrants frequently face financial obstacles to getting an education. These children's access to books, laptops, and online resources is restricted by their low-income households [14]. It is challenging for migrant children to juggle work and school because they must also work to support their households. To pay for education, migrant children frequently seek financial assistance, which causes the debt they bear after completion to rise. There are numerous methods by which migrating children could meet financial obstacles. Hukou, which prohibits migrant children from attending public educational institutions in urban areas, should be removed in China. Governments might assist migrant families with the cost of schooling for their kids [15]. Children from migrant families should be included in inclusive classrooms. These initiatives will help migrant children.

Regulations that offer monetary support to families with low incomes and immigrant children need to be put into place in the US. To lessen the monetary strain of school tuition, scholarships, and grants ought to be provided obtainable [4]. In order to assist migrant kids and foster an enjoyable setting that promotes their academic performance, schools should additionally provide mentoring services.

5. Solution

5.1. Policy

In terms of policies, if the educational equality among migrant children want to be achieved, the government should do their best to eliminate social exclusion. In China, the government should deregulate hukou policy nowadays to allow migrant children to have the qualifications for

entrance examinations in other places. The standard for obtaining residence permits should be further deregulated including lower the level of employment, income and housing. Policies should give migrant children a higher possibility of remain in the in-flow cities which allows them to have more choice and autonomy in education. It can help them receive higher quality, continuous, and suitable education. And for United States, more specific laws for target area are needed. Communities divided by race and ethnic are common in the United States. Children from these communities may be restricted in their choice of school. Therefore, more policies should be implemented to eliminate racial disparities in education and let children of different race, ethnic and regions have the same resources and equal choices in education. Of course, it is very difficult to completely eliminate social exclusion. Government can also provide more funds and educational resources to establish specific schools for migrant children which have equal quality compared with local public schools but only accept migrant children.

5.2. Culture

To address these cultural challenges, first of all, counseling programs should be launched since they can provide migrant students who have experienced discrimination or trauma with the necessary support and guidance to navigate their emotions and move forward in a positive direction. Furthermore, the initiatives taken by the government can help reduce the stigma around mental health and encourage more people to seek help, especially in China, which needs to focus more on mental health accessibility and professions by creating related programs and necessary therapeutic training. On the second issue, it is essential to ensure that all students have equitable access to a high-quality education since it is a key part of a community. Cultural awareness and understanding could be promoted by standardizing education across various locations and including a variety of viewpoints and cultural experiences in the curriculum. By fostering empathy and understanding among various minority groups, this can aid in reducing the prevalence of stereotypes. Additionally, providing additional support and resources to students who may be at a disadvantage due to discrimination can help level the playing field and ensure that they receive the necessary assistance to succeed. Lastly, teachers should be equipped with culture competence, which is an understanding of their own cultural identity and biases as well as an awareness of and respect for the cultural diversity of their students. Encouraging teachers to develop relationships based on mutual respect and understanding can lead to a more inclusive classroom environment where students feel seen and heard. Lastly, as shown in my interview example, supportive teachers can help build the self-esteem of their students by encouraging them and providing positive feedback. When students feel supported by their teacher, they are more likely to believe in themselves and their abilities, leading to improved academic performance.

5.3.Economic

In the two countries of China and the US, migrant students struggle economically in particular ways. These difficulties involve a lack of availability of high-quality education, limitations caused by money, and laws that discriminate. To give migrant students an equal chance for achievement both in school and in life, these issues must be solved. In order to combat the economic problems faced by migrant students in both China and the United States, it is imperative to adopt legislation that supports reasonable equality in excellent schooling. The Hukou system in China must be revised, and government agencies must begin offering financial assistance to migrant worker households. Financial aid and mentoring services should be available to students from immigrant families in the United States, and their companies should be open to accommodate their work schedules. In addition, grants and scholarship opportunities must be made accessible to ease the monetary burden of taking for courses of study.

6.Conclusion

Today's educational policies for migrant children are constrained by social exclusion. Regardless of the geographical differences in China or the racial differences in the United States, the governments of the inflow regions will distinguish the migrant population and the local population, and cannot treat them equally in education. Therefore, in the current issue of education equality for migrant children, the government should first eliminate the differential treatment and social exclusion to the maximum. Rather than implementing more policies to regulate the education of migrant children, it is better to give them more freedom and assistance based on their individual rights to make the choice of education. However, in fact, social exclusion is difficult to eliminate, and the education of migrant children is indeed an occupation of educational resources of the in-flow area. Therefore, there is still a need for further research on how to balance the allocation of educational resources between migrant and local children.

A culturally diverse class environment is crucial to one's critical development and should be maintained as a peace booster. Migrant students, as minority groups in society, indeed have a hard time recognizing their identities and retaining their own culture. In both China and the United States, the resources and opportunities of education are different and not equal for everyone, it's essential for educators, policymakers, and community-engaged organizations to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of education and work to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

The obstacles pose a serious danger to migrant students' academic success, future employment possibilities, and general well-being in both China and the US. Some of the biggest financial obstacles faced by migrating students are the Hukou system in China and families with little income in the US. difficulties with money that international students in the US encounter.

Migrant students may find it challenging to receive school in the US due to the enormous economic restrictions that low-income families must overcome. It can be difficult to manage employment and education for migrant students because many of them also need to support their families. Governments, educational institutions, and businesses must work together to develop regulations that enable fair access to high-quality education and offer migrant students monetary support and assistance in order to remove these obstacles. In the end, it benefits both individuals and society by ensuring that migrant students have an equal opportunity for academic success and future professional opportunities.

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