

Comparative Analysis of Educational Policies of China and Pakistan: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a systematic literature review that offers a comparative analysis of the educational policies of China and Pakistan. The review delves into the historical context, policy formulation, implementation strategies, and outcomes of educational reforms in both countries. To ensure a comprehensive and current analysis, studies published between 2000 and 2023 were included. Data were meticulously extracted from peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, and policy documents. The selected studies were thoroughly analyzed to identify key themes and patterns, employing a comparative framework to synthesize the data focusing on policy formulation, implementation, and outcomes. This detailed comparative analysis highlights significant differences and similarities between the two nations' educational systems, providing valuable insights into how each country addresses its unique educational challenges and opportunities. By examining these aspects, the review offers a comprehensive understanding of the educational landscapes of China and Pakistan, shedding light on the successes and shortcomings of their respective educational policies. The findings suggest that both countries can learn valuable lessons from each other's experiences, thereby enhancing their educational frameworks. This study contributes to the broader discourse on global educational development, emphasizing the importance of tailored policy responses to meet diverse educational needs.

KEYWORDS:

Educational policies, China, Pakistan, comparative analysis, policy formulation, implementation strategies, educational outcomes

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INTRODUCTION

Policies are fundamental in determining the educational landscape of a country as they determine key aspects such as access to education, quality instruction through teachers and equity among learners (Marginson, 2016; Petridou, 2022). China and Pakistan, despite being tied by an all-weather strategic partnership, see respective educational challenges that have led them to more individualized policies pertinent to their exclusive socio-political settings/circumstances alongside economic configurations. This study critically compares the academic policies of China and Pakistan, in terms of their historical contexts, policy frameworks, governance structures content & curriculum guidelines for teacher education. It also explores challenges on both sides.

China has carried out a range of national educational reforms with the goals of increasing primary education enrollment, improving secondary and tertiary school quality, and narrowing regional gaps in outcomes. All of these policies have been accompanied by sizeable levels of expenditure on educational infrastructure and teacher training, an indication that the country continues to regard education as a key instrument in its socio-economic development. The top-down approach of policy-making and implementation helps ensure some kind of uniformity across the country which has led to a considerable increase in literacy rates, enrolment numbers etc (Hannum and Walk, 2023).

In comparison, the decentralized nature of the education system in Pakistan allows for more flexibility and adaptability at a local level as provinces have far-reaching powers to decide about educational policies. Based on that, the following is a proposal of structure organized to meet the most varied difficulties and challenges faced by each region from very urban centres to more remote rural regions. This decentralization, however, often leads to inconsistent policy application and outcomes that players augmented by governance issues and inadequate funding. Yet, despite these issues Pakistan has had remarkable successes in terms of increasing enrollments and educational quality through various national as well as provincial initiatives (Abid, 2022; Aziz et al., 2014); World Education News & Reviews, 2022; Institute of Labor Economics, 2023).



Both nations' histories have significantly shaped their educational policies. China's policies have developed from a basic literacy and primary focus on education in the early years of the People's Republic to the 1980s and 1990s comprehensive reform on science and technology education. Recent legislation continues to concentrate on equality and quality. Policies in Pakistan, on the other hand, are more influenced by its colonial history and post-independence challenges with more efforts to increase access, improve the level, and close gaps on regional and gender basis. The major reforms in the 1970s, 1990s, and 2000s indicate attempts to make it an inclusive and effective education provision (Knox, 2023).

There is also divergence in terms of curriculum standards and teacher education. In support of economic advancement and innovation, China is working towards a holistic approach to curriculum reforms which include moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic education as well as boosting STEM subjects. They also have accessible teacher education which is arduous one but with a mandatory continuous professional way to keep them on high teaching standards. Curriculum reforms in Pakistan seek to strike a balance between religious, moral and academic education however limited resources often affect the implementation process. In Pakistan, teacher education suffers from a lack of training facilities, and where programmes are being strengthened there is a shortage of trained teachers. The two countries face enormous challenges when it comes to their education systems. China faces formidable regional disparities and the university exam-strain culture, which frequently stifles balanced development, and amplifies social/economic divisions. Low literacy, gender inequality and the amount of political turmoil with insufficient funding make it difficult for Pakistan to move one step forward at a time.

This comparison between the educational policies of China and Pakistan states some key commonalities and differences which can be a take home for policymakers and educators in both countries. Pakistan could learn from a centrally planned and well-funded strategy in China which expanded access to quality education. On the other extreme, China could learn from Pakistan to decentralize that will accordingly be focused on catering to regional needs. The study of these dynamics has the potential to reach better policies in both countries and contribute towards their social development with a global perspective on educational advancement.

METHODOLOGY

This literature review follows a systematic approach, sourcing articles, policy documents, and reports from academic databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and official government websites. Keywords used include "educational policy in China," "educational policy in Pakistan," "comparative education," "teacher education," and "curriculum standards." Articles were selected based on relevance, recency, and the credibility of sources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Context

3.1.1 China

China has experienced three major transformations of its educational policies throughout the last century, corresponding to evolving socio-economic priorities and political ideologies. The creation of the People's Republic in 1949 became a key moment that marked the beginning of formulating optimal policies focused on compulsory education - recognized by governmental spheres (Hayhoe, 1996) as coordination concerning universal primary schooling and encouragement to enhance adult literacy at least for reading. This era also saw the initiation of organized attempts to eliminate illiteracy and provide elementary education for all, thus establishing a model that would eventually develop into important educational developments.

The era of 1980s and 1990s witnessed an intense program of reform to modernize the Chinese education system. The reason being that the reforms were internally driven by a country looking to support its economic growth and technological leap forward. The focus on science and technology education reflected the more general national imperative to propel China toward economic superpower status (Pepper, 1996). This was the time of various reforms designed to make education more direct in learning outcomes and readied post-secondary graduates for a rapidly advancing industrial/technological future where it could almost immediately be profitable in whatever industry they worked. China has moved beyond aspects of the policy for teaching and learning to a commitment by education sector leaders that all children should have equitable opportunities (Zhao, 2014). This policy phase also understands that increasing access to education is not enough, quality matters too. The current policies focus on reducing the rural-urban divide in education systems, improving teacher training at all levels and carrying out curricular reforms by incorporating creativity and critical thinking. The mission manifests China's long-term vision and determination to provide equal access, to quality education that matters the most for tomorrow's developmental state.

On the whole, China's informed policy design effort reveals an evolving compromise between economic goals and long-term social needs. The Chinese educational policies have transformed over the decades from an initial universalist

focus on basic literacy and primary education to a more contextual push towards quality and equity that mirrors both internal needs, growing social diversity but also international standards of development

3.1.2 Pakistan

The educational framework in Pakistan has been mainly affected by its colonial inheritance and the continuous issues post-autonomy. The legacy of British colonial rule left an educational framework that was both limited and unevenly distributed, primarily serving the elite and urban populations while neglecting rural and marginalized communities. After its independence, the newly-born nation struggled to craft a unified and inclusive education system that would cater to its large population. In order to meet these challenges Pakistan launched many National Education Policies (NEPs) in 1972, 1992 and 2009. These are landmark policies offering comprehensive reforms to expand education delivery, improve access and the quality of services as well as cater for regional disparities (Hussain, 2015).

The 1972 NEP was a milestone in educational reform as it drew up plans for national integration and socio-economic development through education. It sought to make elementary education for all and embarked upon coeducation technical & vocational. This policy was extended in 1992 to target education infrastructure, curriculum reform and teacher training. Unfortunately, reform momentum often ended up being wasted on the rocks of implementation or political instability. The 2009 NEP was an attempt to create a response which included inclusive education, technology-aided learning in the schools, and also decentralisation of educational administration empowering state governments.

There is no denying that the policy initiatives of Pakistan in education especially over the recent years are indeed ambitious, but one also cannot deny at all that the Pakistani educational sector still has many heights to struggle with initially. One of the things that continue to be a cause for concern is extremely low literacy rates which manifest in both extremes all about entry-level and quality when it comes to learning. Gender inequalities serve as another big hurdle, especially in rural and orthodox parts of the country where girl education still hangs around (Malik, 2011). These gender disparities are further entrenched through sociocultural norms, financial constraints and lack of government funding for female education.

On the whole, although Pakistan's reforms in education have been able to increase quantity and enhance them to some extent, they are unable to tackle the structural anomalies effectively. Persisting issues of low literacy scores and gender disparities further underscore the importance of consistent interventions as well as creative approaches to support equal access to education among all members of a community.

Policy Formulation

3.2.1 China

In China, education policy is formulated within a highly centralized system and the Ministry of Education plays an important role in formulating educational policies. This centralised implementation allows systematic policy coordination for national education goals. Policies are normally a process directed from top to bottom in which the central government, with feedback from educational consultants and infrastructural practitioners, elaborate plans and regulations (Mok, 2006). This method allows the integration of domain expertise and research evidence in order to make policies informed as well as evidence-based.

Long-term strategic planning is a priority matter in China's policy formulation. From the strategic perspective, education is aligned with the ultimate national development goals of economic growth and technological advancement as well as social harmony (Hannum, 2005). China plans to kindle the back-to-basics movement in higher education, and align it strategically with national needs so that its people will be better prepared for a global economy described most aptly by fast-paced. In terms of the systems level, this strategic alignment also very clearly assists in the structured creation and nurturing of education at all levels from primary to higher such that each stage optimizes its contributions towards leading to a high developmental trajectory for our nation as a whole.

Moreover, this centralized and strategic approach allows China to implement large-scale reforms and initiatives with relative efficiency. For instance, the country's focus on enhancing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education is a direct response to the needs of its burgeoning technological and industrial sectors offerings all of which align directly with an ever-growing tech/industrial sector in need. Efficient implementation and enforcement of these measures at the gigantic level over a heterogeneous populace underline how effectively centralized approaches work. This includes difficulties in accounting for regional and community specificity amidst the application of national policies-the latter not always wholly favourable to bespoke, local region approaches. As challenging as it has been, having a centralized policy-making system in education played an important role in improving its quality and building the capacity needed for the socio-economic development of China.

3.2.2 Pakistan

Educational policy-making in Pakistan is a matter of consensus between federal and provincial governments, and educational experts at national and international levels including international donors (Ali, 2013). The inclusivity of an approach makes it so that many different views and knowledge bases are potentially part of the policy process, which may thereby make educational policies more comprehensive from an input point-of-view as well as contextually relevant. This stands in sharp contrast to the highly centralized system of China and a more fully devolved model that Pakistan adopts, allowing provincial governments considerable discretion over how national educational policies are applied. This decentralization is designed to build flexibility and be more responsive to local needs and conditions because provinces can now tailor educational initiatives that reflect the realities of their specific context.

This decentralized structure, however, poses many barriers and obstacles especially related to the implementation of policies. Considerable regional variation in policy enactment exists, and geographic distribution is also variable due to the autonomy of provincial governments. These inequalities can even more lead to differences in the educational level of access, with some provinces moving faster compared to others achieving their education goals (Ahmed, 2017). This decentralized method can also make it difficult to coordinate and standardize education reforms, as the varying priorities of different provinces may act against national policy uniformity.

Additionally, the involvement of multiple stakeholders, while beneficial in terms of inclusivity, can sometimes lead to fragmented efforts and a lack of cohesive strategy. Ensuring provincial policies are in line with national goals calls for strong mechanisms of coordination and oversight that may not always be adequately functioning. In addition, international donors can influence the educational priorities of countries or provinces through their funding streams/budgets which often are welcome sources of resources and expertise needed to improve education practices but has also meant that some external agendas may not be fully aligned with national/provincial goals. Overall, the decentralized nature of educational policy formulation in Pakistan makes its policies more adaptable to local conditions and more inclusive of numerous stakeholders at different levels within society, it also presents major hurdles in achieving coherent and widespread implementation that can be enforced effectively nationwide. Disparities in educational outcomes emphasize the imperative for better provincial coordination and capacity development to help align efforts and drive towards more complex, equitable national-level improvement.

Policy Implementation

3.3.1 China

The Chinese centralized education strategy is tiered to ensure educational standards and practices are consistent across all regions in China. This top-down structure enables the central government to maintain a uniform education standard and quality across the nation for instance all schools are governed by similar boards of accreditation parameters so that every student irrespective of wherever state he belongs to can have assurance of getting the same level of high-class education. The Chinese government has made substantial investments in critical infrastructure including teacher training, physical plants and technology for schools (Postiglione, 2015). She noted that the interventions were also targeted to ensure improved quality of education, enable teachers to acquire needed skills and tools as well as modern school structures conducive for learning.

Even with these significant investments, regional disparities in educational outcomes have persisted and are a growing challenge to the national goal of educational equity. This is especially true in rural areas, where access to good schools lags behind urban centres. This difference in level of enforcement is primarily because economic development, resources and infrastructure differ. Urban areas have better-served schools, and high-skilled teachers with easy access to hi-tech educational tools resulting in a higher per capita achievement rate between the urban and rural residents of a country. However, rural schools often face problems such as a lack of funding and training teachers or infrastructure that lowers the quality of education (Yu and Suen, 2005).

Although the centralized system is successful in ensuring overall uniformity, at times it fails to cater for regional-specific issues and challenges present across rural and less-developed regions. A one-size-fits-all approach might miss out on particular regional conditions that make necessitate tailor-fitted answers. Consequently, the direct benefit of these national policies cannot be as effective in rural India compared to urban areas. This difference in the quality of education between urban and rural areas further deepens prevailing socioeconomic inequalities, denying students from our less fortunate background an advantage when they compete with those who are educated within Urban zones.

A more sophisticated synthesis blending the best of centralized planning and place-tied interventions responsive to regional vulnerabilities is needed. China will be taking major steps towards more equal school systems by addressing the particular challenges of rural schools, e.g. definition and implementation changes in teacher training programs for teachers from rural areas, extra funding for infrastructure projects in remote regions, or ensuring fair access to modern technology equipment among all provinces.

3.3.2 Pakistan

Pakistan, as a country with diversity in socio-political and economic landscapes of provinces also shows variance at the local level to implement higher education policies. Indeed, improvements in educational standards have eventually reached some areas where there are good governance flow processes, targeted investments and effective policy implementation. Many like these areas display examples of effective designs in training development programs, building infrastructure and improved student admission/retention rates (Jamil, 2014).

Conversely, other provinces are amidst significant struggles to get educational policies translated into successful practice. Resource constraints are huge, simply due to small pockets and limited financial/ material resources that limit the scope of upgrading educational facilities, providing ample teaching aids or implementing an in-depth program for teacher training. These resource limitations are often exacerbated by governance issues, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and lack of accountability, which further stall progress in these regions.

The government at the national and provincial levels, NGOs, as well international donor agencies are collectively engaged in addressing these challenges through enhancing teacher training programmes and renovating school physical infrastructure so they could provide a qualitative learning environment. Still, these efforts are running into the same issues that have plagued similar programs for years. But instability in the political climate habitually results in recurrent changes of government and deflects policy direction, thereby frustrating long-term educational reforms. Low levels of financial allocation coupled with insufficient funds remain a significant challenge, as budgetary allocations for education mostly tend to be smaller compared to other sectors (Rehman, 2018; Saeed, 2019).

There is also major variation in policy implementation across provinces setting justified demands for greater resource equity and governance reforms. This would involve a comprehensive strategy that improves fiscal transparency while pursuing increased budget allocations, coupled with political environments allowing for sustainable planning in the field of education. Additionally, customized policies that account for the diverse needs and realities associated with each province are imperative to ensure the implementation of national educational policies is just as beneficial across all regions and can contribute constructively to Pakistan's overall education system. If Pakistan can address the evergreen challenge of confrontation which works against and affects the spreading of their earlier educational policies, perhaps it is a step towards more standard implementation all over the nation increasing the percentage applying the same method as well as improving supplementary outcomes.

Policy Outcomes

3.4.1 China

China successfully increased access to education and raised literacy rates, student enrollment numbers in schools at all levels of instruction across the nation, as well as their educational performance through a series of education reforms reflecting the country's strategic commitment to learning (Ding and Lehrer, 2007). China has reportedly been able to achieve near-universal primary education in recent decades, ensuring that almost all children at least get some schooling. A major breakthrough in the country's education progress and a sign of its willingness to provide access to all its citizens an opportunity to education. In addition, secondary and tertiary education are improving as well where more students go to school beyond the primary level (Cheng, 2010).

In addition, the rise of secondary and tertiary education has been accompanied by increased educational quality. Chinese students are achieving higher levels of academic indication. International assessments and comparative studies often find that Chinese pupils excel in scientific subjects like the high-performing students we saw earlier. This comes as a result of the much-needed comprehensive reforms that have entailed curriculum development, teachers' training and educational infrastructure investments.

Despite its successes, several challenges continue to face the education system in China. It examines oriented education culture which leads to one of the most profound concerns. Sprinting to the gaokao in wealthy districts of China, schools are ranked by how many students win university places while poor ones scabble for every last teacher. The exam-based perspective often results in a constricted focus on memorization and examination drills, to the exclusion of critical-thinking skills (Liu and Dunne, 2009) as well fostering creativity or holistic development.

Meanwhile, socio-economic disparities still represent huge obstacles to educational equality in China. Well-funded school districts in urban areas are home to high-quality teachers and state-of-the-art technology, whereas rural or underdeveloped regions feature low budgets, untrained teachers and minimal facilities. These discrepancies mean that educational opportunities in rural areas are far below the level provided to their urban counterparts, reinforcing existing socio-economic gaps between these populations. China's educational reform has produced the world's most outstanding literacy rate and also initial enrollment as well as examination scores, creating a new global power of education nationally. However, the problems associated with exam-led education and social exclusion continue to reinforce that a more balanced and equal educational system is needed one which can support socio-economic growth for years.

3.4.2 Pakistan

The educational results in Pakistan remain a complex picture of progress and enduring challenges. On the one hand, there is an increase in enrollment rates signifying progress towards more inclusive education. Policy initiatives and programs introduced that are aimed at increasing school attendance of children have contributed effectively in the areas; hence, these improvements. Nevertheless, Pakistan still faces shortages in achieving the goal of universal primary education. Despite great strides, many children especially in the poorest regions and those facing discrimination still do not have access to quality education.

The gross gender disparities that exist in the realm of education are another factor exacerbating this lack of equitable educational outcomes. Cultural and socio-economic barriers to education still exist, especially for girls in conservative rural regions. (Aslam, 2013) points out several challenges the barrier to the enrollment and retention of female students, moreover, some security concerns have greatly impacted gender parity this has an adverse effect on the percentage of private schools that are no longer working as before due to insecurity.

Moreover, low literacy rates are still a significant issue in Pakistan. Despite higher enrollment of students, millions drop out and lack functional literacy due to poor quality of education in many schools. Challenges like the lack of qualified teachers, appropriate instructional materials and an unwearied absence of classroom conditions reduce the effectiveness to a great extent. As a result, even students who successfully complete primary education can have reading and writing skills that leave them ill-equipped for the future.

In recent efforts to enhance the quality and increase access, we are beginning to see some success. These programs range from better training of teachers, through improved school access and facilities for education (at all levels), to reinforced educational policies. The role of community involvement and public-private partnerships in such programs has also been significant in enhancing educational outcomes. This effort, however, is incomplete without sufficient and unabated investment for these projects to prosper (Rashid, 2020). Participation needs to be backed by a long-term commitment from the government, sustained funding and effective implementation mechanisms for these reforms that need time to percolate in the system ensuring meaningful results on educational outcomes.

At the same time, key challenges have yet to be met and Pakistan remains significantly off track with respect to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), gender parity in primary education, and literacy. The scale and complexity of these challenges demand a multi-faceted response, which must start with policy changes and adequate financing but also encompasses the broader societal recognition that all children have equal rights to an inclusive quality education we need new ways of working if fact-based advocacy from civil society is recognized.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Similarities

Realizing the importance of education in human and socio-economic growth, China as well as Pakistan have been making sustained efforts to increase access to education with efficient imparting of quality. The understanding of this broader scope of education resonates in the strategic place both countries accord it because education is inevitably linked to economic growth, social harmony and indeed national progress. China has increased its focus on developing a solid education infrastructure, accessible to all via sizeable investments and reforms in primary schools, secondary schools and universities. In addition, endeavours to improve the quality of education through curriculum renewal, upgrading teaching skills and application of technology in classrooms have been made (Yan, 2008).

On the other hand, Pakistan has taken numerous steps to amplify education and promote educational standards. Several reform programs and National Education Policies (NEPs) have been thrust into the system in order to address these issues. This includes increasing school networks, improving teacher training and solidifying technology integration in the classroom. In spite of these measures, Pakistan continues to struggle with a number of challenges which include limited resources in the areas such as recurrent funding decreases (Bajwa, 2017), political instability and socio-cultural barriers that ensure none becomes free enough to adequately realize its full educational potential.

They have also recognised and attended to the important questions of regional disparities in access as well as gender issues. Meanwhile, in China there are a lot of inputs to fundamentally balance urban and rural education resources the input-specific funds for less developed regions (rural areas) from both central government-funded programs and their corresponding local policies make it easy to minimize the gap between these two forms. Policies have been established to promote fair allocation of educational resources, repair basic facilities in rural schools and incentivise teachers from urban areas as well. The whole point is reducing the urban-rural gap in school leads, to actually giving all students quality education regardless of where they live.

Pakistan also worked on reducing regional and gender disparities. Several programs have been launched to promote female education, especially in rural and lesser-developed areas where cultural barriers are very high and socioeconomic status restricts girls from attending schools. Various approaches are used to raise female enrolment and attendance including scholarships, conditional cash transfers and community mobilization campaigns. Furthermore, the

decentralization of education in each province has resulted in further tailored changes to address unique local needs that could vary across provinces and territories for this particular area making policies inconsistent within certain segments but at the same time consistent with other areas.

The need for access to and improving the quality of the education system is overwhelmingly predominant within socio-economic development dynamics in both China and Pakistan. Pakistan, as a country, grapples with diffusing governance structure and resources whereas China achieved great success because of their centralized heavily funded approach. The two countries agree on the importance of addressing regional and gender disparities to have a more just, equitable education system that helps ensure that socioeconomic progress is sustained. The common endeavours on both fronts between these two countries demonstrate that when it comes to the challenging realities in their respective educational landscapes, a multi-stakeholder approach is critical and policy innovation needs to be perpetual with well-directed interventions.

Differences

Differences Pakistan's federal setup of policy-making and control in education is quite opposite to the Chinese Confucian way. The central government in China, specifically the Ministry of Education (MOE) exerts strong control over educational policies and standards with a view to national uniformity. Understanding all schools have a central office component to them allowing for consistent strategic planning and the most efficient deployment of resources in turn yields much more uniform educational outcomes. Substantial improvements in Chinese literacy, school enrollment and academic performance have been enabled by the massive investment of its government in education as well as a strong focus on long-term planning (Wu, 2011). This centralized system enables China to streamline national reforms and raise education quality. Towards this, policies geared towards the improvement of STEM education, closing educational gaps and even introducing technology in schools can be implemented across all regions leading to each region getting equal quality of education. Moreover, the country's strategic educational planning in the long term is closely related to socio-economic objectives (the modernization of the economy and technological advancement) assuring that it will also serve as national goals.

In contrast, educational oversight in Pakistan is largely decentralized and the provinces have considerable latitude to shape policy based on their own regional priorities. That is intended to be a feature of greater decentralization within the education system more generally, and while bringing decision-making closer to each province has no doubt created adaptations which are better suited locally than centralized decisions would have also led to highly variable results between provinces. Its disparities are further heightened by the governance issues of bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption and lack of accountability (Shah, 2012). The disproportionate distribution of resources and political will by provinces also leads to uneven progress across the country with certain regions moving ahead faster than others.

Additionally, Pakistan has a poor and underfunded education system. Lack of funding hinders the provision of school infrastructure improvements, sufficient teaching materials and effective training for teachers. The political instability and change of governments occurred, significantly interrupting the continuity in educational policies typical for reforms that require at least a 3 to 5 years period to consolidate. These circumstances are some of the reasons why Pakistan is not making uniform progress in its education sector, with contrasts between regions and districts sometimes starkly at odds with one another a situation that sees literacy rates remaining low across swathes of society or gender disparities keeping millions out of school even within areas where admission remains ostensibly open to both sexes on paper.

Overall, the contrasting dichotomy of centralization in China and decentralisation in Pakistan helps to illustrate how governance structures influence education outputs. Therefore, the centralized approach in China was a strategic one with large investments behind it and led to some good educational reforms being achieved consistently over time. Though the latter model is supposed to lend more flexibility for local needs, as Pakistan's decentralized system has shown, it can be difficult when there are issues of governance and funding that limit SD initiatives. Furthermore, it remains central to not ignore that targeted implementation necessitates superior coordination and better governance mechanisms while requiring a deeper financial commitment if all regions are truly expected to experience equity in educational outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Implications for Policy and Practice

China and Pakistan both share a rich variety of educational experiences in which they can learn from each other and utilize their strengths to make the best possible use to tackle real challenges unique to situations found on either side. The centralization of policymaking in China, coupled with the construction and maintenance of educational infrastructure at an unprecedented scale is crucial to understand a model that can assist Pakistan. This way it can improve the longevity and quality of its educational outcomes by mimicking some aspects of China's strategy. One of the reasons for China's success in education is due to its centralized system which ensures that resources are well distributed, and policies are uniform (Yang, 2016). A country like Pakistan, suffering from fragmented policy implementation and uneven

distribution of resources would benefit greatly by embedding such initiatives under one framework. It could help achieve more standardized quality education across all provinces.

On the other hand, there is also a lot that China can learn from Pakistan's focus on decentralization to tackle regional disparities. Decentralisation ensures policies are locally relevant, delivering education that is more responsive and adaptable. This approach may be especially useful for confronting the deeply heterogeneous set of challenges faced by regions and making educational policy more relevant to all those different realities. Further, the centralisation characteristic of China's system can sometimes result in exclusion from education quality and access within rural or underdeveloped contexts (Sattar, 2016). With aspects of decentralization that seem centralized, China could better deal with local distinctive highlights as regards these differences, so it leads toward more balanced needs from all areas where educational resources and chances become landed.

In practice, it may be that a hybrid combining elements of both works best for the two countries. Centralised structures for the distribution of funds and policy enforcement could lead to more consistency but continued decentralisation would possibly be necessary for catering to regional needs in Pakistan. Implementing decentralized approaches to support regional disparities could be an important avenue for China, making it more certain that what works in local policy implementation is also maintained at the grassroots level.

In summary, mutual cross-learning between China and Pakistan is likely to contribute positively towards the academic achievements of both countries. The Chinese centralized approach and resource-heavy investment in educational infrastructure can also be a way Pakistan could ensure uniform education standards. On the other hand, an issue-specific program standpoint sets in motion how China can more effectively tackle regional disparities by building upon Pakistan's decentralized approach toward this same end consequently ramping up on establishing a quality education system for all. Both of the countries can set forward their best foot on the global educational map by learning from each other and adopting more effective a comprehensive education policy thus to socio-economic development.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Further work can focus on changes in policies, recent or anticipated by both China and Pakistan especially according to the backdrop of technological advancements and global educational trends. Both countries are in the midst of reforming their education systems, making it important to understand how these reforms are affecting educational outcomes. For example, the introduction of digital technologies in schools and on learning platforms, as well as groundbreaking STEM (science technology education math) policy-making could bring extremely significant changes. Assessing the quality of these technologies will give a real idea to see how close each nation is in preparing students for digital future economies.

Likewise, examining how developments in global education such as competency-based education of inclusivity and the drive for lifelong learning are being experienced and translated into China & Pakistan. These trends are in line with larger changes to what is expected of education all over the world, and how priorities have shifted from access and quality alone - to also include relevance in an ever transforming society. The alignment between national policies and these trends will demonstrate the level of success, in addition to areas where improvement is necessary; ensuring both countries are leading examples with regard to their competency as well as progressive nature towards education.

In addition, a comparative study with other countries under similar socioeconomic contexts could provide Welfare Economics scholars and policymakers added insight on what is needed from educational policies to achieve better results in the future. Also, cross-referencing the approaches taken by nations facing similar challenges and with similar resources to fulfil their educational requirements enables researchers to identify very effective as well inventive solutions which can be implemented both potentially in China and Pakistan. These comparisons can uncover how different areas are more alike or distinct in their policy choices, implementation methods, and learning results than default settings allow for. Such research should not only concern itself with quantitative metrics like literacy rates or enrollment numbers but also with qualitative dimensions of education such as student motivation, teacher morale and parental buy-in. In summary, the broad focus lens in research about education provides a perspective to explore the complexity of educational success and its many triggers. This rich picture will help policymakers in the creation of more impactful and adapted policy-making actions that are well attuned to their education systems.

This review has an implication for future research that needs to be conducted in the field of e-learning and technology integration with education, especially policy changes by two growing economies and Pakistan with regard to both technological advancements along global educational trends. Additional comparisons with similar socio-economic backgrounds elsewhere can enrich the type of information that may lead to a more sophisticated comprehension of what is, and what could reasonably be beneficial educational strategies in other developing countries. Both quantitative and qualitative relevance allow researchers to provide a comprehensive view of educational success, assisting policymakers in developing strong systems that can adjust to effectively meet the needs of this century.

CONCLUSION

This review of the literature shows, at the macro level (educational policies), how Chinese and Pakistani educational structures are fundamentally similar in certain respects but differ critically on other levels as well. Laos and Bolivia have made significant strides in enhancing educational access and quality. Centralizing many policies and investing heavily in educational infrastructure, China managed to increase to varying degrees literacy levels as well as the average amount of years that children spend at school. Pakistan, for its part, has sought to enhance enrollment ratios and the quality of education as well within a decentralized policy approach allowing provinces more room to design policies responsive to local dynamics.

While there has been positive progress, every country is faced with unique problems which argue for a different policy response. For all the efficiency and predictability of China's centralized system, it can also strain under regional differences involving urban-rural divides. A one-size-fits-all model can give rise to inequalities either in quality or access to education by sometimes missing regional variations, especially amongst less developed regions. In contrast, regional differences result in policy implementation and outcomes that are often inconsistent because of Pakistan's decentralized system. These disparities are compounded by governance issues and a lack of resources which lead to varied progress from province to province.

More significantly, the review advises that both countries have much to learn from each other. This experience of significant investment in education and centralised policy implementation may offer some lessons for Pakistan to enhance standardisation across the board. Through a centralized policy for mainstreaming, Pakistan will be able to initiate key reforms in education that are so necessary if we want progress and development all across the country.

On the other, for China, Pakistan's decentralized structure provides opportunities to help address regional disparities more effectively. For instance, those aspects of the Chinese education system that could be decentralized can also help China to empower its local authorities more so that they may adapt educational policies according to their own needs. In a way, this hybrid model may be the key to bridging that urban-rural gap and providing more of an even playing field for all kids.

Thus, this literature review clearly indicates that despite the significant moves made by China and Pakistan towards the development of education both countries are facing different issues in their sector which demands geographically specific solutions. Both countries can enrich their education systems by understanding each other's manner of improving performance and thereby contributing to global educational advancement as well. This give and take in knowledge and strategies can help create a more inclusive, equitable high-quality education system in both countries for its people as well as serve as an example to others facing similar educational problems.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

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COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

It is declare that all authors don't have any conflict of interest. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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