The Goals and Missions of Modernization of Education and Lifelong Education in China

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Abstract: Modernization of education and lifelong education in China are important strategies to adapt to the challenges of the knowledge economy era, aiming to build a comprehensively developed learning society. Starting from the goals and missions, this article explores the research background, specific goals and content, practical difficulties, and countermeasures of China's modernization of education and lifelong education. By improving systems, establishing values, and promoting social collaboration, we can achieve an organic combination of educational modernization and lifelong learning, providing support for social development and individual self-improvement.

Keywords: Modernization of education in China; Lifelong education; A learning society

1. Introduction

The core of the introduction to the goals and missions of China's modernization of education and lifelong education is to emphasize the grand goal set in "China's Modernization of Education 2035": to build a modern education system that can serve the needs of lifelong learning for all. This goal is not only an important milestone in the development of education in China, but also a profound plan for the future development and utilization of human resources in the country. The key to promoting lifelong education lies in achieving the popularization and balance of educational resources, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to continuously learn and grow throughout their entire life journey. This requires starting from establishing the values of lifelong learning for the whole society, improving the legal and regulatory system, and then collaborating with all sectors of society to jointly promote. Through such efforts, the aim is to cultivate talents with innovative and lifelong learning abilities that can meet the needs of future social and economic development, thereby achieving personal value enhancement and overall social progress.

2. Research Background of China's Education Modernization and Lifelong Education

In February 2019, the central government and the State Council of China released "China Education Modernization 2035", marking the first time China has proposed a medium - and long-term strategic plan with education modernization as the theme. The goal of this plan is to achieve comprehensive development goals by 2020, enhance the overall strength and international influence of education, increase the average length of education for the working age population, and fully modernize education by 2035, entering the ranks of education powerhouses. This not only reflects the deepening of the concept of lifelong education and the clarification of specific policies, but also emphasizes the importance of transforming lifelong education from concept to practice, with the aim of providing personalized lifelong learning services for every citizen.

The "2035 Modernization of Education in China" and the "14th Five Year Plan" jointly envision a modern education system that serves the entire population, in sharp contrast to the traditional school education system. The traditional system usually focuses on school-age adolescents, with a fixed and closed environment, a lack of flexibility in teaching content, and exam scores as the sole measure. This method has led to a series of problems, including narrow knowledge base, low creativity, and excessive physical and mental burden. Faced with the new requirements of social development and globalization, the traditional education system is clearly unable to meet the new goals of talent cultivation[1].

The demand for spiritual and cultural life in modern society is constantly increasing, and lifelong learning has become an important trend. The modern education system emphasizes the importance of students and learning, provides personalized training programs, and truly focuses on personality.
improvement and self-realization in education. This education system is continuous, comprehensive, and flexible, aimed at providing support for lifelong learning for everyone.

In the modern education system, the goal of education is the comprehensive development of individuals and individual freedom. Learning is no longer an activity of a specific class or stage, but a lifelong process aimed at all social groups. This education system has the characteristics of comprehensiveness, universality, and openness, laying the foundation for achieving educational modernization and building a learning society. By emphasizing the concept of lifelong education, China has undertaken a significant historical mission in the future development of the education sector, committed to providing comprehensive and sustainable learning opportunities for every citizen to adapt to constantly changing social and economic needs.

3. The Specific Goals and Content of Modernization of Education and Lifelong Education in China

Modernization of education is a key factor in the progress of a country and a nation, involving continuous improvement and updating of the education system, management capabilities, and technological applications. In China, the goal of modernizing education is not limited to updating the system and technology, but more importantly, the comprehensive transformation of educational concepts, concepts, and consciousness\(^2\). This transformation is particularly crucial during the 14th Five Year Plan period, marking a new stage of China's transformation towards a socialist modernized country after achieving a comprehensive well-off society and the first centenary goal. This stage is not only significant, but also full of challenges and opportunities. In order to achieve the long-term goals of China's Education Modernization 2035, the role and value of lifelong education are particularly important.

The importance of lifelong education in the process of educational modernization is reflected in several aspects. Firstly, it emphasizes the sustainability and universality of education, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow throughout their lifetime. Secondly, lifelong education promotes innovation in educational content and methods to meet the constantly changing needs of society and individuals. Finally, by providing diverse learning paths and flexible learning modes, lifelong education helps to build a more inclusive and adaptable education system. These are the key tasks and missions to achieve modernization of education and promote the country's development towards higher levels. In this process, the promotion of lifelong education will not only deepen the reform of the education system, but also promote the continuous progress and innovation of the entire society.

3.1 Change mindset and establish the value of lifelong learning for all

In the process of promoting socialist modernization construction, the reform and improvement of the education system play a crucial role. The core goal is to safeguard the lifelong learning rights of every citizen, which is not only a concrete manifestation of achieving socialist modernization, but also a significant transformation in the direction of educational development. Therefore, the primary task of building a new education system is to establish the values of lifelong learning for all, and promote a universally accepted trend of "everyone learning" in society. The establishment of these values breaks through the scope of traditional education, emphasizing that education not only focuses on imparting skills and knowledge, but also emphasizes the comprehensive development of individuals and the cultivation of morality.

This concept of lifelong learning for all believes that education should not be limited to the walls of schools, but should accompany individuals throughout their lives, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow. To achieve the popularization of this concept, the country needs to deepen the public's understanding and acceptance of the concept of lifelong learning by formulating policies, strengthening daily publicity and education. In addition, combining the educational goals of socialism with Chinese characteristics and promoting the values of lifelong learning and sustainable development for all is the key to establishing a modern education system\(^3\). Through such efforts, the value concept of lifelong learning can gradually be deeply rooted at all levels of society, making it a part of citizens' daily lives. Lifelong learning for all is not only related to personal growth and development, but also an important driving force for improving the overall quality of the nation and promoting sustainable development. Guided by such values, everyone will become an active participant in knowledge updating and personal ability enhancement, contributing to the realization of the
3.2 Improve systems and promote top-level design from a strategic perspective

Ensuring that every citizen has lifelong learning opportunities has become an important requirement for social development in the pursuit of building a modern education system. This not only reflects people's yearning for a higher quality of life, but also reflects social progress. Therefore, to achieve this goal, the country needs to provide solid support at the policy and institutional levels, and ensure the modernization and transformation of the education system through comprehensive and in-depth top-level design. The core of this transformation is to shift from a traditional education provider to a comprehensive learning service provider, emphasizing the need for governments and educational institutions to play a more active and leading role in serving lifelong learning for all.

The improvement of systems and the promotion of top-level design involve the rational allocation of resources, effective cooperation between educational institutions, and the integration of different forms of education[4]. Given China's vast territory and vast population, the differences and imbalances in educational resources are particularly prominent. Especially to address the issue of uneven educational resources between remote western regions and economically developed regions, as well as the challenges of vertical barriers and horizontal fragmentation within the current education system, these are important issues that must be considered and addressed in the process of institutional design and policy formulation. The future education system should pursue consistency in quality, interoperability of resources, and institutional connectivity. This means that the education system not only needs to achieve seamless connections between various levels internally, but also needs to establish effective connections between on-campus and off-campus education, as well as between different stages of life. To achieve this grand goal, China needs to combine its own national and public conditions, draw on successful international experiences in promoting lifelong education and creating a learning society, and strive to cultivate citizens with a sense of social responsibility, innovation ability, and practical skills.

In terms of resource allocation, promoting the construction of a lifelong education system not only requires increasing the total amount of educational resources, but also optimizing resource allocation to ensure that the supply of educational resources can meet the diverse needs of lifelong learning for all. This includes strengthening the connection between different forms of education, establishing a collaborative mechanism for internal and external educational resources, in order to achieve effective utilization and integration of educational resources. Only when educational resources can be widely and fairly covered to every learner can the concept of lifelong learning be truly realized, and the construction of a lifelong learning education system that serves the whole population be promoted.

3.3 Social collaboration provides lifelong learning services

Collaboration and support from all sectors of society are indispensable in building an education system that covers lifelong learning for all. With the development of society, China's education challenges have shifted from simple resource supply to the contradiction between meeting the growing demand for high-quality education and the imbalance and insufficiency of existing educational resources. The problems manifested by this contradiction vary in different stages and types of education, including but not limited to fluctuations in the quality of preschool education, uneven regional development of compulsory education, insufficient popularization of high school education, mismatch between vocational education and market demand, weak international competitiveness of higher education, and scarcity of special education resources. To solve these problems, it is necessary to start from the perspective of popularizing high-quality education, achieve comprehensive and multi-level education popularization and improvement, and ensure that everyone can receive appropriate education. This includes improving the quality of preschool education, achieving high-quality balance in compulsory education, fully popularizing high school education, enhancing the quality of vocational education, enhancing the international competitiveness of higher education, and improving special education services. To achieve this goal, it is crucial to build a new pattern of education governance in which the whole society participates. This not only provides continuous and lifelong learning services for citizens, but also carefully takes into account the specific learning needs of different groups and age groups in society[5].

To achieve this goal, the construction of the education system needs to focus on individual learning abilities, needs, and goals, in order to provide diverse, personalized, and high-quality educational
services. This means that educational services should not only focus on preschool children, school students, and adult learners, but also on groups in special education, continuing education, and elderly education stages. For example, improve the quality of preschool education by equipping teachers with strong professional capabilities, implement burden reduction policies to improve the compulsory education environment, provide vocational education courses that meet market needs, and inject an international perspective into higher education to enhance its global competitiveness. In addition, building an education system that serves lifelong learning for all also requires extensive participation and cooperation from all sectors of society. This not only includes the leadership and support of government departments, but also the joint efforts of enterprises, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and communities. By integrating these diverse resources, the problem of uneven distribution and uneven quality of educational resources can be more effectively addressed, providing citizens with more comprehensive, efficient, and personalized learning opportunities.

4. Practical difficulties in modernizing education and lifelong education in China

4.1 The legal system for lifelong education is not yet complete

In the development of China's education legal system, the integration and promotion of the concept of lifelong education is a landmark progress, demonstrating the country's emphasis on the modernization and transformation of the education system. However, despite certain achievements, the legal construction of lifelong education still faces challenges and demands.

Firstly, although lifelong education has been recognized and placed within the legal framework of the Education Law of the People's Republic of China, its lack at the constitutional level indicates that the highest legal support for the concept of lifelong education has not yet been formed. The 2015 amendment to the Education Law made clear provisions for the construction of a lifelong education system, marking the country's firm stance on the construction of a lifelong education system and promoting its development through legal guidance. This amendment highlights the macro pattern of education development, clearly sets out the goals of educational equity and balanced development, and promotes mutual recognition and connection of different types of learning outcomes, reflecting the country's expectations for the construction of a lifelong learning society. However, although the Education Law has made breakthroughs in promoting the construction of a lifelong education system, there are still certain shortcomings. Especially the lack of a clear definition of the relationship between the national education system and the lifelong education system reflects the limitations of the legal concept[6]. The release of "Modernization of Education in China 2035" has clearly defined the goal of building a modern education system guided by the concept of lifelong education, but the specific manifestation of this concept at the legal level still needs to be strengthened. In addition, the further revision of the Education Law further strengthens the principle of prioritizing the development of education, reflects the educational concept of "people-oriented", and emphasizes the improvement of people's comprehensive quality and the promotion of comprehensive human development. This is consistent with the goal of lifelong education and demonstrates the further support of the law for the concept of lifelong education.

4.2 Constraints on the Action Force of the Rule of Law in Lifelong Education

In the process of promoting the modernization of lifelong education rule of law, China has encountered multiple challenges, which have affected the practical effectiveness of lifelong education rule of law. Firstly, lifelong education, as a reform of the education system, aims to promote scientific and sustainable development of humanity, emphasizing the subjectivity and agency of learners, and aiming to achieve the life cycle coverage of education and learning. Although this concept has contemporary significance, the promotion and implementation of lifelong education still face challenges in practical operation. The difficulties in integrating educational resources, communication barriers between educational forms, and the increasing willingness of citizens to engage in lifelong learning still exist, indicating that lifelong education in China is still in its early stages of development and requires joint efforts from the state and society to promote the comprehensive development of lifelong education. Secondly, the unified idea of lifelong education and rule of law construction has not yet been formed. Although the revision of the Education Law has raised the status of lifelong education and emphasized the importance of system construction, there are still difficulties in practical operation. The long-term dominance of administrative thinking has led to a greater emphasis on civic obligations than on regulating government responsibilities and power limitations. This has led to a lack of unified
direction and strategies for lifelong education governance, making it difficult to effectively integrate resources, thereby affecting the effectiveness of lifelong education practices. Finally, the legal discourse system for lifelong education has not yet been fully established. Although the Constitution and the Education Law emphasize the right of citizens to education, the promotion of lifelong education requires a more solid foundation and clear discourse system based on the rule of law. However, the performance of lifelong education in legal practice is often limited to focusing on specific stages or forms of education, lacking a comprehensive and unified perspective, which is not conducive to the overall promotion of the lifelong education system and the effective integration of resources[7].

4.3 The concept of lifelong learning rights for citizens has not yet been formed

In China, promoting lifelong learning as a national strategy has become a consensus and a key element of Chinese path to modernization. However, the core to achieving this goal is to stimulate the lifelong learning willingness and behavior of every citizen. At present, although there is an increasing discussion about lifelong learning, the formation of the concept of lifelong learning rights by individual citizens and society is still insufficient. At the individual level, education is seen as a continuous process that accompanies personal growth, and educational resources should be provided continuously throughout an individual's entire life journey. This viewpoint emphasizes that education is not only a necessary stage in early years, but also a continuous practice that runs through an individual's life. However, citizens have varying levels of awareness about this, and the awareness of lifelong learning has not been widely ingrained in people's hearts. At the social level, changes in population structure, especially the challenges brought by low birth rates, declining birth rates, and aging, have exacerbated social uncertainty. This requires society to widely recognize the necessity and urgency of lifelong learning in order to actively respond to the impact of these changes[8]. However, the level of importance and scope of popularization of lifelong learning in society are still limited. At the national level, although education is regarded as the key to solving people's livelihood problems, the current intensification of education anxiety and exam competition, as well as the tension between families, schools, and parent-child relationships, reflect the problems of existing education models. The promotion of lifelong education aims to alleviate these competitions through the symbiosis of education and return to the essence of education - educating people. To address these issues, it is necessary for the whole society to widely recognize and respect lifelong learning as a fundamental right of citizens. Promoting lifelong learning as the norm can not only improve the quality of life of citizens, but also contribute to the long-term stability and prosperity of the country and society. Education governance needs to shift from a simple conceptual recognition to a profound understanding and broad recognition of the concept of lifelong learning rights. However, due to the influence of traditional educational concepts, education is often equated with academic education, neglecting the broad significance of education and the importance of lifelong learning. In the practice of educational rule of law, the educated are often in a disadvantaged position of being managed, their subjectivity is suppressed, and their awareness of their own rights is not strong. This situation needs to be changed through the joint efforts of laws, policies, and social culture to ensure that lifelong learning, as the fundamental principle of future survival, is widely understood and respected, thus deeply rooted in people's hearts and transformed into conscious actions of citizens[9].

5. Practical Strategies for Modernization of Education and Lifelong Education in China

5.1 Improving the Legal System of Lifelong Education

5.1.1 Develop a dedicated lifelong education law

Developing a specialized lifelong education law is an important foundation for building a sound lifelong education system. The promulgation of this law should follow the basic principles and goals of lifelong education, clarify the legal status of lifelong education, and provide legal protection for its implementation. Firstly, a specialized lifelong education law needs to clarify the definition, purpose, principles, and scope of lifelong education, making it an integral part of the education system and establishing its core position in national education policies. Secondly, the law should specify in detail the responsibilities and obligations of the government in the field of lifelong education, including but not limited to formulating relevant policies, providing financial support, promoting resource integration, and ensuring the quality of education. In addition, the lifelong education law should also cover the clear rights and obligations of individuals to participate in lifelong learning, encourage citizens to actively participate in lifelong learning, and ensure their equal access to educational resources[10]. In the process
of formulating this law, it is necessary to consider the challenges and needs faced by lifelong education, such as how to effectively integrate existing educational resources, how to stimulate individual learning motivation, and how to evaluate and certify informal and non-degree education outcomes. In addition, lifelong education methods should focus on flexibility and inclusiveness to adapt to rapidly changing educational needs and technological developments, and support various forms of learning paths and methods.

5.1.2 Strengthen local legislation and policy support

Strengthening local legislation and policy support is crucial for achieving lifelong education goals. Local governments should formulate specific implementation rules and support policies based on the national legal framework and policy guidance, combined with local conditions. Local legislation should not only emphasize the popularization and promotion of lifelong education, but also focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of education, ensuring that everyone can access appropriate learning opportunities according to their own needs and interests. When formulating policies, local governments need to consider how to effectively utilize and integrate local resources, such as public libraries, community centers, online education platforms, etc., to provide convenient learning resources and environments for citizens. At the same time, local policies should also encourage and attract the private sector to participate in investment and service provision in lifelong education. Through cooperation between the government and the private sector, the scope of lifelong education services should be expanded and the quality of services improved. In addition, local legislation and policies should pay attention to the educational needs of special groups, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, rural residents, etc., to ensure the universality and equality of lifelong education. Local governments should also regularly evaluate the implementation effectiveness of lifelong education policies, adjust and optimize policies based on feedback and evaluation results, and ensure the effectiveness and adaptability of policies.

5.2 Enhancing the Action Force of the Rule of Law in Lifelong Education

5.2.1 Establish a cross departmental coordination mechanism

It is particularly important to establish a cross departmental coordination mechanism to enhance the legal action of lifelong education. The core of this mechanism lies in breaking down departmental barriers, achieving resource sharing and policy unity, and effectively promoting the comprehensive development of lifelong education. Specifically, the cross departmental coordination mechanism involves multiple fields such as education, finance, human resources and social security, technology, and culture, and requires collaboration among relevant departments on a common platform to jointly formulate and implement lifelong education related policies. Firstly, an efficient coordination and leadership structure should be established, such as the Lifelong Education Committee, chaired by the main government leaders and composed of relevant department heads, specifically responsible for the planning, coordination, and supervision of lifelong education. The committee is not only responsible for coordinating the work between various departments, but also for monitoring the implementation effect of lifelong education policies, ensuring policy coherence and effectiveness. Secondly, the coordination mechanism should establish an effective information sharing platform. By building a unified information system, real-time sharing and updating of educational resources, policies and regulations, educational needs, and other information can be achieved, avoiding resource waste and policy duplication, and improving the scientificity of decision-making and policy adaptability. For example, by establishing a lifelong education database, collecting and analyzing data on the learning needs of the entire population, distribution of educational resources, and implementation of educational activities, it provides a basis for policy-making. Finally, cross departmental coordination mechanisms should also hold regular joint meetings to discuss major issues related to lifelong education, policy formulation and implementation progress, and promptly address any issues that arise during collaboration. In addition, specialized working groups or project teams can be established to conduct in-depth research and collaboration on specific issues, ensuring the smooth implementation of various measures for lifelong education.

5.2.2 Increase government investment and incentive measures

Increasing government investment is an important guarantee for achieving legal action in lifelong education. The government should consider lifelong education as a key area for investment in the future, and ensure the sustainable and stable development of lifelong education by increasing fiscal budgets, establishing special funds, and other means. Government investment is not limited to direct
fiscal appropriations, but also includes various forms such as tax incentives, loan support, and funding subsidies to meet the diverse funding needs of lifelong education. On the one hand, the government should provide financial support to institutions and individuals engaged in important aspects such as lifelong education research, resource development, curriculum construction, and teacher training, encouraging educational innovation and quality improvement. On the other hand, for individuals and enterprises actively participating in lifelong learning, incentive measures such as tax reduction and subsidies can be taken to encourage more citizens and institutions to participate in the practice of lifelong education. In addition, the government should establish a sound performance evaluation system to evaluate and supervise the implementation effectiveness of lifelong education projects, ensuring the effective utilization of funds. By establishing a transparent and fair evaluation mechanism, not only can the efficiency of government investment be improved, but also the confidence and enthusiasm of all sectors of society towards lifelong education can be stimulated.

5.3 Shaping the Right Concept of Citizens to Lifelong Learning

5.3.1 Strengthen social promotion of lifelong learning

Strengthening social promotion of lifelong learning is an important means of shaping citizens' views on the right to lifelong learning. Through multi-channel and all-round promotional activities, the public's awareness of the importance of lifelong learning can be raised, learning enthusiasm can be stimulated, and the popularization and deepening of the concept of lifelong learning can be promoted. Firstly, utilize media power for publicity and education. Traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers, as well as new media such as social media and online education platforms, are effective channels for promoting lifelong learning. By producing and broadcasting promotional videos, special reports, successful cases, and other content, we aim to showcase the positive impact and practical results of lifelong learning, and enhance public awareness of learning. Secondly, the government and relevant departments can organize various public lectures, seminars, workshops, and other activities, inviting education experts, learning models, and public figures to share learning experiences and strategies, so that citizens can experience the joy and value of learning firsthand, thereby enhancing their interest and motivation in learning. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen the policy promotion of lifelong learning, clarify the rights of citizens to lifelong learning and the measures provided by the government to support it, so that the public can understand the country's emphasis and support for lifelong learning, as well as the rights and resources they enjoy as learners.

5.3.2 Promoting the construction of a lifelong learning culture

The construction of a lifelong learning culture is the social foundation for achieving lifelong learning for all. A social atmosphere that encourages learning, respects knowledge, and advocates innovation has a profound impact on stimulating citizens' learning motivation and shaping a learning society. Firstly, building a learning friendly community environment is an effective way to promote the construction of a lifelong learning culture. Communities can establish public learning spaces, such as libraries, learning centers, and online learning resource sites, to provide residents with convenient learning resources and a comfortable learning environment. Regular learning activities, skill exchanges, and knowledge sharing sessions can be held within the community to encourage residents to participate and cultivate a community culture of learning. Secondly, enterprises and institutions should actively participate in the construction of a lifelong learning culture. By establishing internal training programs, encouraging employees to participate in professional training, and providing study leave, not only can employees improve their professional skills and work efficiency, but it can also help shape a positive and upward corporate learning culture, thereby influencing the attitude and atmosphere of the entire society towards lifelong learning. Finally, educational institutions should play a leading role in cultivating the concept of lifelong learning among students. By reforming educational content and methods, such as increasing practical teaching, encouraging innovative thinking and critical thinking, students can cultivate their learning interest and self-learning ability, laying a solid foundation for their future lifelong learning.

6. Conclusion

The modernization of education and lifelong education in China aims to build a comprehensive learning society, providing opportunities for continuous learning for everyone, and achieving an organic combination of individual self-improvement and sustainable social development. Its goal is to achieve an organic combination of educational modernization and lifelong learning by establishing the
values of lifelong learning for all, improving institutional systems, and promoting social collaboration, providing sufficient human capital support for social development, and providing sustained support for individuals to achieve self-development. Lifelong learning is not only a need for individual self-improvement, but also a need for the overall development of the country. Therefore, we need to continuously improve the legal system of lifelong education, enhance the action force of the rule of law, shape the concept of citizens' lifelong learning rights, in order to achieve the organic combination of educational modernization and lifelong education goals. This is a long-term and arduous task that requires the joint efforts and sustained attention of the whole society, but it is also a direction worth continuously investing energy and resources in, making positive contributions to building a dynamic and innovative country and society.

References