

Formation and Evolution of the Modern Teacher Salary System in Guangdong Province

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Abstract: This article delves into the formation and evolution of the modern teacher salary system in Guangdong Province during recent times. From the late 19th century's feudal traditions to the 21st century's modern education, the teacher salary system has undergone influences from political, economic, and societal changes, gradually aligning with the development of education. Changes in government policies, societal perceptions, and educational ideologies have impacted the status and compensation of teachers. With the advancement of educational modernization, the salary system has gradually become more diverse and incentive-based to meet teachers' new missions in knowledge impartation and comprehensive quality cultivation. In the future, as society continues to change, the teacher salary system will undergo continuous adjustments to adapt to the rapid development and new challenges in Guangdong Province's education.

1. Introduction

The formation and evolution of the modern teacher salary system in Guangdong Province during recent times is a significant topic in the history of educational systems. During the late 19th century to the early 20th century, social unrest, political reforms, and economic development were intertwined, creating a complex backdrop for the establishment and evolution of the teacher salary system in Guangdong. With changes occurring on multiple fronts, such as politics, society, and economics, education not only played a crucial role in Guangdong's society but also profoundly influenced the treatment and career development of teachers. Through an in-depth study of the historical changes in the teacher salary system in Guangdong Province, this research aims to explore the motivations, processes, and impacts on the educational system and the teaching profession, further revealing the developmental context of modern Guangdong education. This study provides a valuable addition to understanding the overall evolution of the Chinese educational system.

2. Overview of Modern Education in Guangdong

The development of modern education in Guangdong Province was deeply influenced by the social context of the late 19th century to the early 20th century. During this period, Chinese society was undergoing political upheavals and facing challenges to its feudal traditions, with various ideological currents and political movements intertwining. Guangdong, as one of the key starting points for modern reforms in China, initiated a series of modern educational reforms in the late 19th century,

aiming to cultivate qualified individuals for societal transformation. Education gradually gained significance in Guangdong society and was viewed as a crucial factor in promoting social progress and modernization. Being at the forefront of overseas interactions, Guangdong was exposed to various new ideas and concepts, making education a vital platform for nurturing talent for the new era and disseminating modern values. Therefore, when viewed from the perspective of the social context, modern education in Guangdong played a significant role in societal transformation and laid the foundation for the formation and evolution of the teacher salary system.[1]

3. Initial Formation of the Salary System (Late 19th Century to Early 20th Century)

3.1. Educational System and Teacher Treatment in Late Qing Dynasty

In the late 19th century, during the late Qing Dynasty, China's educational system was still deeply influenced by feudal traditions, centered around Confucian classics, with rigid content and forms. Guangdong Province, as an important experimental zone for China's reform and opening-up, showed active interest in educational development. However, due to traditional beliefs, the status and treatment of teachers had not been significantly improved. Despite some advanced educational reforms taking place in certain areas of Guangdong, teachers generally held relatively low social status, and their compensation was limited. This situation hindered the enthusiasm of talented individuals to engage in education and also impacted the progress of the educational system.[2] It was in this context that the reform of Guangdong's educational system and the evolution of the teacher salary system became particularly important, taking a crucial step toward modernizing education in Guangdong.

3.2. Government Attention and Reform of Teacher Compensation

With the profound changes in modern Guangdong society, the government gradually recognized the close connection between quality education and teacher compensation. When addressing the challenges of educational modernization, the government began to pay close attention and take action to improve teacher treatment.[3] This attention was not only reflected in policy but also represented a rational reflection of the value of education. In Guangdong Province, the government took the lead in guiding the development of a more just and reasonable teacher salary system, aiming to establish an incentive mechanism that reflected educational contributions and responsibilities. Additionally, government intervention significantly elevated the professional prestige of teachers, emphasizing education as a noble endeavor, which attracted more outstanding talents to join the field. These government-initiated measures provided a solid policy foundation for the formation of the teacher salary system, further advancing the development of education in Guangdong.[4]

3.3. Initial Development and Implementation of the Teacher Salary System

In Guangdong Province, the government actively attempted to establish a more scientific and rational teacher salary system. Especially in some advanced regions, they began to introduce salary systems based on teachers' qualifications and positions. This meant that teachers' compensation would be more targeted and accurately match their contributions and responsibilities in educational work. The initial formulation and implementation of this system had profound effects on education in Guangdong. Firstly, it provided teachers with more attractive career development paths, attracting more talented individuals to engage in education. Secondly, the implementation of this system demonstrated the government's respect and care for teachers, further enhancing the social status of the teaching profession. Most importantly, it laid a solid foundation for the future development of

education in Guangdong, vigorously promoting the modernization of the educational system and the gradual construction of high-quality educational resources. This initial development and implementation of the salary system opened a new chapter for the future development of education in Guangdong.[5]

4. Social Transformation and Institutional Evolution (1920s-1940s)

4.1. The Impact of Social Transformation on Education in Guangdong

In the 1920s to the 1940s, Guangdong underwent a series of significant social transformations, including the May Fourth Movement, the resistance against Japanese aggression, and the Chinese Civil War. These societal changes profoundly affected Guangdong's social structure, values, and cultural traditions, while also exerting a far-reaching influence on the field of education. As a pioneer in modern Chinese education, Guangdong embraced international modern educational concepts and actively promoted the modernization of education. During this period, education began to emphasize practicality and scientific approaches, focusing on developing students' practical skills and gradually shifting towards an education model centered on nurturing talent. These changes directly impacted the teacher salary system in Guangdong. As educational modernization progressed, the roles of teachers gradually evolved from traditional knowledge providers to new-generation talent cultivators. Teachers were now required not only to possess solid subject knowledge but also to foster students' practical abilities and innovation spirit. Therefore, Guangdong Province gradually adjusted the teacher compensation system to reflect their crucial role in nurturing the new generation of talent.

4.2. The Relationship between Educational Modernization and Teacher Career Development

In the process of advancing educational modernization, Guangdong Province attached significant importance to teacher career development. To meet the demands of modern education, Guangdong initiated reforms in teacher training, aiming to cultivate a teaching workforce with higher professional competence, innovative thinking, and practical abilities. This shift expanded the role of teachers beyond traditional knowledge transmission, focusing more on knowledge updates, teaching method enhancements, and educational innovation. Educational modernization had a positive impact on teacher career development. Teachers were required to continually learn and adapt to new knowledge and technologies, improving their own qualifications to better meet the diverse needs of students. As a result, the government gradually elevated the social status and compensation of teachers to motivate more talented individuals to pursue careers in education. This virtuous cycle not only brought higher quality educational resources to Guangdong but also made the teaching profession one of respect and attraction.

4.3. Adjustments and Evolution of the Salary System in the Political and Economic Context

In the 1920s to the 1940s, the continuously changing political and economic environment in Guangdong deeply influenced the teacher salary system. Political movements, conflicts, and policy adjustments often led to changes in the education system, consequently affecting teacher compensation. Fluctuations in the political environment could lead to shifts in educational policies, which, in turn, affected the allocation of education funds, directly impacting the determination of teacher salaries. Simultaneously, the level of economic development also partly determined education budgets and teacher salary levels. During economically challenging periods, education funds might be constrained, affecting the growth of teacher salaries. Conversely, in relatively prosperous economic times, the government might increase its investment in education, thus improving teacher

compensation. In such political and economic contexts, the teacher salary system in Guangdong continuously underwent adjustments and evolution. The government, in response to the ever-changing societal environment and educational needs, continually adjusted compensation policies to ensure that teacher salaries remained balanced with social development.

5. Political Movements and Educational Reform (1950s-1970s)

5.1. Educational Reform Measures after the Establishment of New China

The period from the 1950s to the 1970s witnessed significant political and social transformations in Chinese society. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the government promptly initiated comprehensive educational reforms aimed at constructing a socialist education system. Guangdong, as a pioneer in these reforms, actively responded to and implemented these goals. In Guangdong Province, a wide range of educational reform measures were implemented, with a focus on promoting universal education and ensuring equal educational opportunities for all. Guangdong deepened its educational system reform by phasing out traditional forms of education and promoting mass education and modernization. These reforms emphasized practicality and the cultivation of comprehensive qualities in education, guiding students to better adapt to societal development. Simultaneously, the teacher salary system was also reconstructed within the broader context of educational reform. The government's heightened attention to the field of education gradually elevated the social status of teachers. The teacher compensation system was gradually refined to motivate more outstanding individuals to engage in education. This period of reform not only shaped the landscape of education in Guangdong but also laid a solid foundation for the development of the teaching profession and adjustments to the salary system.

5.2. The Impact of Socialist Movements on the Teacher Salary System

Under the backdrop of socialist movements, the education sector in Guangdong Province experienced profound and far-reaching effects. Particularly during political movements like the Cultural Revolution, the education system in Guangdong was significantly disrupted and disturbed. These political movements led to the destruction of educational institutions, a significant impact on the teaching workforce, and a state of chaos and stagnation in the education system. During this period, the teacher salary system was also severely affected. Due to the drastic changes in the education system and the influence of political struggles, the social status and compensation of teachers experienced dramatic fluctuations. The existing compensation system was overturned, replaced by a more collectivized and egalitarian approach to compensation distribution. This resulted in unfair treatment of many talented education professionals and posed significant challenges to the stability of the education system and the quality of teaching.

5.3. Educational Policy Adjustments and the Reshaping of the Salary System

In the late 1970s, China entered a new stage of reform and opening-up, and Guangdong Province actively explored the path of educational system reform. During this period, the government began adjusting educational policies, placing talent cultivation and educational quality at the forefront, with a focus on restoring and improving the education system to meet the needs of societal development. Against this backdrop, the teacher salary system was redefined. The government recognized the vital role of teachers in nurturing talent and advancing educational modernization, starting to motivate teachers through reasonable compensation policies to enhance their professional enthusiasm and competence. The teacher salary system gradually aligned with the market economy, emphasizing

performance and contributions to better attract, retain, and motivate outstanding individuals in the education sector. This reshaped salary system not only provided a more competitive development environment for the teaching profession but also offered robust support for the flourishing of Guangdong's education system.

6. Economic Reform and the Establishment of a Modern Education System (1980s-1990s)

6.1. Transformation of the Education System amid Economic Reforms

In the 1980s and 1990s, China initiated comprehensive economic reforms, and Guangdong Province, as a crucial experimental zone for these reforms, accelerated the process of educational system reform. During this period, Guangdong's education system gradually adjusted towards modernization and diversification to better nurture talent suited to societal needs. Within the context of economic reform, Guangdong's education focused not only on knowledge transmission but also on fostering students' innovation and practical skills. This shift implied a transition from a singular knowledge-based education model to a comprehensive quality-based one, placing higher demands on the role of teachers. Teachers were now expected to possess not only solid subject knowledge but also the ability to guide students' thinking, cooperation, and innovation. In terms of the teacher salary system, corresponding adjustments occurred alongside educational system reform. The government began to recognize the importance of motivating teachers by acknowledging their contributions to comprehensive student development, gradually establishing a compensation system that matched educational quality and the cultivation of students' comprehensive qualities. This reform not only helped stimulate teachers' enthusiasm but also provided support for the modernization of Guangdong's education system and the achievement of talent development goals.

6.2. Adaptation of the Teacher Salary System to Market Economy Factors

As economic reforms deepened, market economy factors gradually played a role in various sectors of society, including education. Guangdong Province began to realize the adaptability issues of the teacher salary system under market economy conditions. Traditional compensation systems were no longer sufficient to meet the new educational requirements and teacher incentive mechanisms. During this period, teacher compensation was not only subject to government policies but also began to consider factors such as education quality and teacher contributions. Guangdong's education authorities gradually introduced more flexible and incentive-based salary systems to better align with the development of the market economy. This meant that teacher compensation would be more closely related to education quality and student performance, motivating teachers to put in more effort in student development and educational innovation. This adaptive adjustment process helped improve the fairness and reasonableness of teacher salaries and provided more incentives for outstanding individuals to engage in education. Guangdong's education system began to focus more on talent cultivation and innovation, using a rational compensation mechanism to attract and inspire more outstanding individuals to work in education, further promoting the development of the education system in Guangdong.

6.3. The impact of the transformation of the education system on the teaching profession

Under the background of economic reform, the education system of Guangdong province has also experienced a profound transformation period. The traditional knowledge transmission mode gradually evolves to the direction of comprehensive quality cultivation, which directly affects the professional role and mission of teachers. Teachers are no longer just the transmitters of knowledge,

but also the guide to guide students' thinking and cultivate innovative ability. This transformation of the education system has had a profound impact on the teacher salary system. The traditional salary model focusing on class hours and teaching age has been unable to meet the new educational goals and the role needs of teachers. Guangdong province has begun to seek a more fair, flexible and incentive compensation mechanism to ensure that teachers receive their due rewards in developing well-rounded students. The new salary system requires a more accurate measure of teachers' overall quality, teaching effectiveness and educational contribution. The government gradually introduces factors such as education quality and students' comprehensive quality to determine the salary level and encourage teachers to make more efforts in the cultivation of overall quality.

7. Contemporary Education Development and the Issue of Teacher Compensation (From the Early 21st Century to the Present)

7.1. Balancing Teacher Compensation with Educational Modernization

Entering the early 21st century, Guangdong Province continued to advance educational modernization, emphasizing the cultivation of innovative, practical, and well-rounded talents. This modernization process provided a solid foundation for nurturing the new generation to meet societal needs. However, it also brought forth a crucial issue: how to balance teacher compensation in the context of educational modernization. Educational modernization assigns teachers a more significant mission within the new educational system, requiring them not only to impart knowledge but also to cultivate students' innovation, critical thinking, and practical skills. Nevertheless, in comparison, teacher compensation may not fully reflect their dedication and professional expectations. The workload and responsibilities of teachers have gradually expanded, but the level of compensation may not correspondingly increase, which could impact teacher motivation and commitment. In the process of educational modernization, striking a balance between teacher compensation and their pivotal role in education becomes especially important.

7.2. New Challenges in Educational Reform for Teacher Compensation System

As China's education reform continues to deepen, the education sector in Guangdong Province also faces a series of new challenges. These educational reforms encompass various aspects, including curriculum content, teaching methods, evaluation systems, and directly influence teachers' work methods and career development. New educational models and methods may require teachers to possess additional skills and knowledge. For instance, educational reform may emphasize teaching concepts such as innovation, practicality, and interdisciplinary approaches, demanding that teachers, in addition to their subject knowledge, possess flexible teaching methods and educational philosophies. However, such educational reform might necessitate teachers to undergo more training and learning, increasing their workload and pressure.

7.3. Forward-Looking Prospects: Possible Directions for the Future Teacher Compensation System

Looking ahead to the 21st century, the teacher compensation system in Guangdong Province is expected to evolve towards greater diversification and differentiation. With the continuous transformation and diverse demands in the field of education, customized compensation policies may gradually become a reality. This implies that different aspects, such as teachers' roles, levels of contribution, educational domains, regional differences, and more, will be taken into account to formulate more precise compensation policies that incentivize and reward teachers at different levels.

As the focus on educational quality increases, performance assessment and evaluation systems may be more widely incorporated into the compensation system. Linking teacher compensation to factors such as teaching effectiveness, students' comprehensive qualities, and more can help stimulate teacher motivation and encourage them to achieve better teaching quality. This can also drive continuous improvement in Guangdong Province's education system, aligning it with international standards.

8. Conclusion

In modern times, the formation and evolution of the teacher compensation system in Guangdong Province have witnessed changes in the social context, the impact of political movements, economic reforms, and transformations in the education system. From the late 19th century's feudal traditions to the late 20th century's market economy, the status and roles of education have continuously evolved, and the teacher compensation system has developed in tandem, reflecting changing societal perceptions and concerns regarding education and teachers. Today, in the midst of comprehensive reforms, education in Guangdong Province is facing new opportunities and challenges. As educational modernization advances and educational reforms deepen, the teacher compensation system needs to keep pace, fully reflecting the value and contributions of teachers while stimulating their motivation and creativity. At the same time, attention should also be paid to the fairness of the education system, ensuring that all types of teachers receive equitable treatment. In the future, as technology and society continue to evolve, the teacher compensation system will continue to undergo adjustments and innovations, providing solid support for the prosperity and sustainable development of education in Guangdong Province.

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