

POSSIBILITY OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CHINA: A SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

POSIBILIDAD DE EDUCACIÓN EN CIUDADANÍA GLOBAL EN CHINA: UNA PERSPECTIVA PARA EL CURRÍCULO DE LA ESCUELA SECUNDARIA

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Resumen

Este artículo explora la tendencia en rápido crecimiento de la Educación para la ciudadanía global en el contexto chino y examina la posibilidad de éste aprendizaje en el sistema de educación centralizada de China desde una perspectiva curricular de la escuela secundaria. Los elementos de ciudadanía global, aunque no se abordan explícitamente, se pueden encontrar en políticas educativas relacionadas y estándares curriculares, proporcionando así oportunidades para la educación de ciudadanía global a través de la educación secundaria en China.

Palabras clave

Educación para la ciudadanía global; educación cívica; plan de estudios de secundaria; China.

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Abstract

This article explores the rapidly growing trend of Global Citizenship Education in the Chinese context and examines the possibility of global citizenship learning in China's centralized education system from a secondary school curriculum perspective. Global citizenship elements, although not explicitly addressed, can be found in related policies and curriculum standards, thus providing opportunities for global citizenship education through secondary schooling in China.

Keywords

Global Citizenship Education; civic education; secondary school curriculum; China.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Regarded as a major feature of modern society, globalization brings opportunities as well as challenges in the 21st century and influences the world in the economic, political, cultural and social realms (Wang, 2010). On one hand, through globalization the world becomes increasingly interconnected and interdependent, with accelerating communications and the breaking of boundaries, challenging the nation-state citizenship. On the other hand, financial crisis, mass migration, environmental issues, terrorism and other social problems are reaching a global level and affecting humanity as a whole. Under these circumstances, it is appropriate to respond by preparing subsequent generations to be global citizens with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to thrive in a globalized society and with the ability to solve global problems and make a better world (Heater, 2000; Davies, 2006; Oxfam, 2015; Morais & Ogden, 2010; UNESCO, 2013, 2015). Global Citizenship Education (GCE) has become increasingly important in the last few years, particularly as a result of the global finan-

cial crisis; however, the recent rise of strident forms of nationalism and opposition to diversity and inclusion now seem to challenge and displace the notions of global citizenship (Buchanan, Burrige, & Chodkiewicz, 2018).

In the present context, China displays a strong position toward advocating the unity of humanity and proactively enhancing its engagement with the global society in the realms of world economics and politics, as well as cultural, educational and environmental affairs, which is evident by the state's recent policy of the Belt and Road Initiative along with President Xi's proposal and ambition for building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind. In the field of education, the Chinese national policy (Ministry of Education, 2010) articulates the objective of cultivating students' global awareness and competence and encourages schools to expand their overseas communications and to develop a school culture of global visions. Local policies follow this trend; and many secondary schools, especially those in economically advanced regions, have been at the vanguard of GCE promotion in schooling. Although theoretical discussions of global citizenship and global citizenship education are

burgeoning in recent years, a limited number of these discourses have focused on non-western contexts (Goren & Yemini, 2017). This article focuses on GCE in the Chinese context and presents a brief analysis of China's educational system and an examination of the possibilities of GCE in Chinese secondary education, from the perspectives of related policies, curriculum and schooling. Toward this end, it is first necessary to clarify the definition of global citizenship.

2. A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The extensive and increasing amount of literature on the topic of global citizenship has mostly arisen in the last two decades; however, the literature does not contain a systematic theory or consensus with regard to the topic, but rather displays various different understandings of what global citizenship is. Many views regard global citizenship as a means of responding to globalization and securing a better future for mankind (Falk, 1993; Delanty, 2000; Heater, 2000; Osler & Starkey, 2003), while other viewpoints criticize the concept of global citizenship as idealistic and vague, arguing that the validity of global citizenship requires meaningful political and legal participation from governing institutions at the global level, such as a world government (Featherstone, 2002; Parekh, 2003). Some scholars advocate the possibility of global citizenship, regarding it as one of the many dimensions of a multidimensional citizenship definition (Cogan, 1998; Heater, 2000; Osler and Starkey, 2005; Delanty, 2000; Print, 2015) that implies the relationship of indivi-

duals with multiple levels of communities ranging from family, local, regional, and transnational to global. This approach emphasizes a more moral and personal dimension of citizenship and indicates that global citizenship contains no legal status but relies more upon feelings/attitudes and personal perspectives (Osler & Starkey, 2005).

Other scholars provide frameworks in terms of the essential components of global citizenship. Schattle (2009) argues that the most readily converged thinking of global citizenship within the contemporary discourse relates to the elements of awareness, responsibility and participation. Based on Schattle's three elements, Morais and Ogden (2010) describe three dimensions of global citizenship aligned with the prominent theoretical and philosophical perspectives in the literature — global competence, global civic engagement and social responsibility. Global competence involves global knowledge, intercultural communication skills and self-awareness; global civic engagement refers to involvements in global civic organizations and making political voices. Compared to these two strong dimensions, social responsibility is seen as a less clearly defined abstract structure; yet social justice is regarded as an essential quality for citizens, and when extending it to a global level the idea may involve global justice and disparities, empathy with others and a sense of global interdependence and recognition of personal responsibility for the collective good (Morais & Ogden, 2010).

More recently Oxley and Morris (2013) developed a comprehensive and extensive typology

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to distinguish various conceptions of global citizenship and identify key focuses and theorists in the field. The typology categorizes two general types of GC, namely, cosmopolitan and advocacy. The cosmopolitan type represents mainstream models of GC and includes four conceptions: Political GC, which focuses on the relationship of individuals with states or other polities; moral GC, which focuses on ethical ideas such as human rights and empathy; economic GC, which emphasizes the economic aspects of international development; and cultural GC, which concentrates on the symbols that unite and divide members of societies as well as the globalization of art, media and language. In contrast, the advocacy type refers to more critical approaches and tends to involve a strong degree of advocacy from a particular perspective.

The advocacy type includes social GC, which focuses on global civil society and the 'people's voice'; critical GC, which challenges the insufficient role of power relations on inequalities and oppression from a post-colonial agenda, and advocates actions; environmental GC, which promotes actions on environmental and sustainable issues; and spiritual GC, which concentrates on human relations based on spiritual aspects, such as religion. This typology can be applied as a useful tool to identify the foci of certain groups of scholars' conceptions of GC and to categorize GC definitions in studies.

In summary, although contention remains, there is reasonable agreement among academics on

a broad notion of citizenship, as well as on the core elements of GC as relating to awareness, competence and participation. Based on the literature, the characteristics of global citizenship can be summarized as follows:

- Global citizenship can be seen as one of the components of multidimensional citizenship and does not conflict with national citizenship.
- Global citizenship does not imply legal status but refers to a moral sense of belonging to humanity.
- Global citizenship implies essential attributes relating to awareness, competence and civic engagement at the global level, and these can be transformed into domains of knowledge, skills and values in education;
- Global citizenship emphasizes an active and engaged role.

3. GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP FROM A CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

The efforts and practices of educating global citizens are often grouped under the title Global Citizenship Education (GCE) (Davies, 2006). Besides the various factors that influence people's gaining of global citizenship, formal schooling, in particular, is widely argued as providing the best opportunity and sources of learning for preparing the general population of young people to become responsible and responsive global citizens in the 21st century in an effective and unbiased way (Print, 2015; Osler & Starkey, 2003; Pigozzi, 2006; UNESCO, 2015).

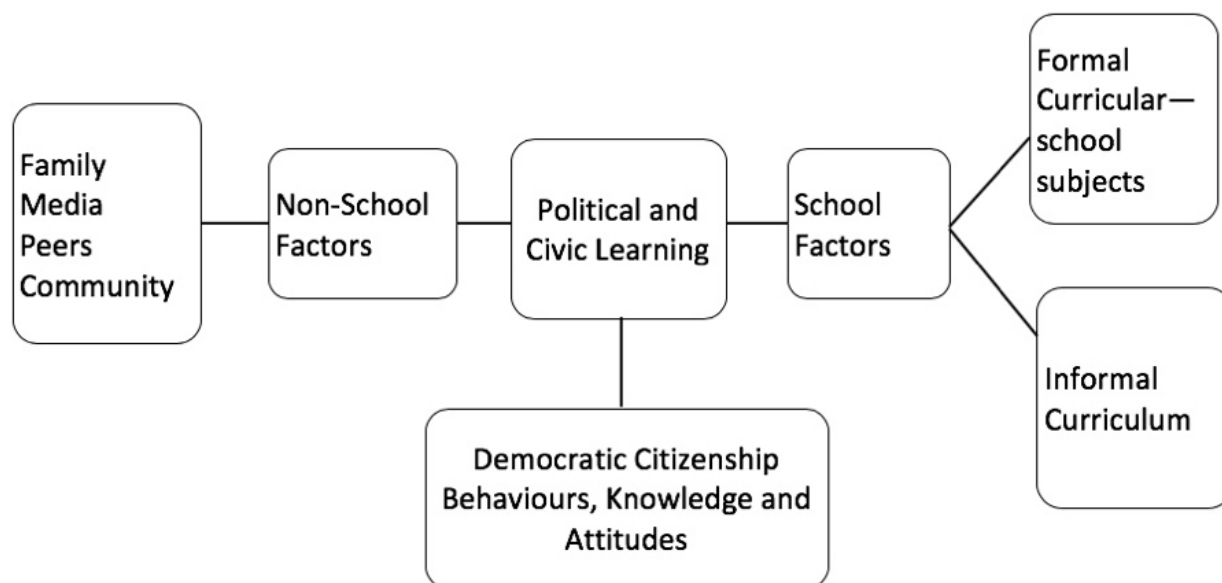


Fig. 1. *Political and Civic Learning Model (Print, 2009)*

Figure 1 presents a model of civic learning (Print, 2009) and can be applied to a global level. Two influential areas for developing active and informed citizens are identified in school curricula — formal and informal curriculum. From the perspective of a formal curriculum — school subjects that are normally taught in classrooms with planned learning activities and anticipated outcomes (Print & Coleman, 2003; Print, 2009) — it is still rare for GCE to be set as a separate, stand-alone subject; it is more prevalent as an integrated component within different subjects such as social studies, civic and citizenship, languages, history, etc. (UNESCO, 2015). From an international scope, some countries have included GCE-related elements in a national curriculum. For example, the Australian Curriculum Civics and Citizenship (ACCC) contains deliberate and specific GCE material in its curriculum organization and content. The curriculum aim is stated as

to develop students' "capacities and dispositions to participate in the civic life of their nation at a local, regional and global level" (ACARA, as cited in Print, 2015, p.4). The curricular organization and content descriptions include topics such as Australian identity in global connectedness and sustainability and intercultural understanding (Print, 2015). In a provincial course in Manitoba, Canada, GCE is integrated into the Grade 12 social studies course "Global Issues, Citizenship and Sustainability", which is based on addressing contemporary sustainability issues and provides space for developing global citizenship (Evans, MacDonald & Weber, 2009). The English National Curriculum of Citizenship also states an aim to develop the knowledge and awareness to contribute to a more equitable world. Nevertheless, Print (2015) examined this curriculum's content and found a lack of systematic and consistent learning objectives for a global perspective.

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In terms of the informal curriculum — learning experiences that are planned within school but do not constitute formal school subjects (Print, 2012) — the literature argues that these have a positive effect on developing active and informed citizens. Davies (2006) suggests that two school-based factors, involvement in school democracy and experience of community service, can have significant impact on the effectiveness of active global citizenship. In particular, many studies show a clearly positive correlation between participation in student elections and student governance with students' later participation in politics (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Print, 2009; Saha & Print, 2010; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Losito, Agrusti, & Friedman, 2017), which could be applied to a global level and contribute to the participation in global issues. Nonetheless, the kinds of informal curricula with a global citizenship orientation that now exist in schools and how they are influencing students' intentions and actions are still under-studied in a worldwide scope and even more so in Asian regions (Goren and Yemini, 2017). One of the purposes of this article is to initiate studies of an informal curriculum's influence on GC learning in China through analyzing the possibilities for related educational policies on curriculum.

Meanwhile, it is important to identify the various definitions of global citizenship and the contextual social, historical and cultural factors that underpin the practice of GCE across different countries (Van der Dussen Toukan, 2018). The following sections briefly unfold the development

of citizenship education and global citizenship education in the Chinese context, and present the main views and discussions of the concept among Chinese scholarship and in related policies.

4. A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINA'S CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The term civic or citizenship education is not prevalent in Chinese educational policies and literature; the related terms in the Chinese context include moral education, political education and values education, which have been assigned different degrees of value during different historical and social periods (Ban & Tan, 2015; Feng, 2014). China has a long history of moral education that can be tracked to the time of Confucius, in terms of educating young people with morality, obedience to the rules of the society and loyalty to one's state. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, citizenship education mainly served to cultivate national identity, loyalty to the state and the Communist party, and a sense of collectivism (Law, 2013). The adoption of the Open Door Policy in 1978 led to great changes in the social and political circumstances in China. Since the launching of the modernization policy by the Communist Party of China and the emergence of a market economy, China has witnessed vast economic growth as well as increasing openness of its society (Zhong & Lee, 2008). However, the modernization of people's thought and spirit does not correspond with the achievement of material modernization (Ban & Tan, 2015). Noting a 'stagnation' of Chinese

people's citizenship quality, educators and scholars argue the importance of cultivating modern citizenship (Feng, 2014; Rao, 2006; Ban & Tan, 2015; Wang, 2010). For example, Ban and Tan (2015) state that people's lack of civic awareness and civic virtues is one of the key obstacles to the development of modern Chinese society. Therefore, developing subsequent generations to be modern citizens is one of the most important educational tasks in contemporary China.

Entering the 21st century, under the powerful influence of globalization and the continuing rise of the socialist market economy within the country, an awareness of the concept of global citizenship has arisen in China. The market economy requires new aspects of citizenship qualities, such as global perspective, an orientation towards achievement, open-mindedness and democratic awareness. Meanwhile, with the impact of globalization, the Chinese government has identified opportunities by expanding the market and promoting communications with a wider part of the world and facing the challenges of a more competitive and pluralistic global environment. In academia, scholars argue that state-citizen oriented citizenship education is insufficient to meet the demands of a pluralistic society (Feng & Liu, 2014). In addition, President Xi Jinping's recent establishment of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind and the Belt and Road Initiative as long-term national policies has resulted in increased attention to and a call for the importance of promoting global perspectives in education (Liu & Zhang, 2018). Hence, along with the continuing mission of strengthening China's civic

education, it is now also necessary to involve an international perspective and to prepare subsequent generations with global awareness and global competence for the 21st century (Feng, 2014; Liu & Zhang, 2018). Global citizenship education, cosmopolitan education and similar terms now appear more frequently in the literature, though they remain limited and intertwined with political-socialist education, ideological education and moral education (Zhao, 2013).

5. GCE IN CHINESE ACADEMIA

As Myers (2016) argues that the discussions and interpretations of GC and GCE by academics and the public can shape the conceptualization and practice of GCE curricula, it is therefore very important to clarify, through further studies in the Chinese context, how GC and GCE are refined in Chinese scholarship. Like the discussions and various views of GC that exist internationally, there are also debates and different propositions regarding GC and GCE among Chinese scholars in the areas of politics, education and sociology. Nevertheless, the different views share one common feature, which is the tendency to define global citizenship from a multidimensional identity framework that includes personal, local, national and global domains. Within this model, Chinese scholars place explicit emphasis on the fundamental status of national identity while expanding the global domain (Law, 2013; Pan, 2011).

Li (2009) views global citizenship as the logical extension of national citizenship within the global society and states that national citizen-

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ship should be regarded as the first priority. Zhou (2008) addresses the so-called “global citizen” as referring to an international perspective based on the premise of the establishment of national identity. Global citizenship has the dual characteristics of global and state, universal and national. Peng (2009) explains that the concept of a global citizen in China has three levels of connotations — namely “China”, “world” and “citizen”. The first connotation symbolizes an awareness of nationalism and the valuing of traditional culture. The second connotation refers to an understanding of world cultural diversity and the development of global vision. The third connotation reflects a combination of the western notion of ‘citizen’ with a traditional Chinese cultural perspective.

The elements discussed above reflect one of the core issues in the contentious conceptualization of global citizenship: the relationship between national and global citizen identities. It is clear that the Chinese scholars’ view prioritizes the position of national identity above global identity. Many scholars make this choice even clearer by asserting that the aim of GCE is to cultivate global citizens ‘with Chinese characteristics’ (Peng, 2009) and ‘participating in the globalized world as Chinese citizens’ (Han, 2010). This prevalent understanding aligns with the national policy and the curriculum design of citizenship education in China, which also adopts a framework of multi-dimensional citizenship to ensure that students maintain their national allegiance while learning about global citizenship (Pan, 2011).

Another method of interpreting GC by Chinese scholars, particularly in the field of education, is to define the desirable attributes of a global citizen (Wan, 2005; Li, 2009; Rao, 2006). Generally, the definitions follow the conventional domains of knowledge, skills and values, and are in agreement with the mainstream views from a world perspective. For example, Wan (2005) posits that global citizens should have knowledge of their own culture as well as other cultures; skills of critical thinking, solving problems and cooperating with others; an understanding of human rights and one’s responsibility to the rest of the world; and the willingness to take actions to create a more equitable, solidary, peaceful, and sustainable world. When applying Oxley and Morris’s (2013) typology model of GC, these Chinese scholars’ views fall under the model of a moral GC.

Other scholars emphasize the importance of developing the competitive skills and abilities that will allow Chinese students to thrive in the globalized world. Li (2009), in particular, stresses the ability for foreign language application and intercultural communication, which reflects a tendency toward the economic type of GC found in the Oxley & Morris typology, with a focus on international development and human capital and resource (2013). Rao (2006) takes an active stance and emphasizes the importance of global engagement and participation. He proposes a means of developing informed and active Chinese citizens by promoting student participation in school life and community, through which

they can make a connection between knowledge and practice.

In summary, Chinese scholars' views contain various types of perspectives regarding the education of global citizens. In light of Oxley and Morris's (2013) typology, the perspectives basically fall into the cosmopolitan GC category, covering political, economic, moral and cultural models; however, despite the heated discussions of GCE found in theoretical literature, the practice of these ideas is scarce in Chinese schooling. Goren and Yemini (2017) argue that there is a gap between the researchers' apparent passion for discuss global citizenship and the unwillingness of policymakers and schools to talk about the notion, and their tendency to avoid the use of this term. Therefore, more empirical studies are needed to scrutinize the implementation of GCE from a practical approach, such as in governments, schools and classrooms.

In the Chinese context, although certain efforts and practices may not be labeled with the term 'Global Citizenship Education', they nevertheless contain related ideas that can be found in educational policies; and existing curricular content with the aim of developing global orientation among students can also be identified. Besides, as there is a lack of in-depth studies examining how these ideas are reflected and possibly implemented in practice from the perspectives of policy, curriculum, pedagogy and student learning, it is difficult to draw a firm conclusion that Chinese education does not include GCE or that it contains few relevant efforts in schooling.

The following sections examine the possibility of GCE from a general policy and curriculum perspective, and identifies existing opportunities for developing global perspectives under China's centralized education system.

6. GCE IN CHINA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RELATED POLICIES

Although usually not referred to as GCE, related ideas have appeared recently in both national policies on education reform and in the revised curriculum standards of relevant subjects for secondary schools in China. In 2010 the Ministry of Education issued the *National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)* emphasizing that "education should be geared to the needs of modernization, of the world and of the future" (p. 2). The highest priority of this schooling policy is adherence to moral and quality education, with an emphasis on the development of civic awareness, a sense of freedom and equality, an understanding of fairness and social justice and an ultimate goal of cultivating citizens qualified for the modern socialist society. In addition, with the purpose of meeting the needs of the future in a globalized world, the policy articulates requirements for involving global perspectives in education. It states that:

In order to meet the requirements of the opening of national economy and society, it is essential to cultivate large numbers of international talents with the qualities of global visions, understanding of international rules

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and capability to participate in international affairs and international competition. (Ministry of Education, 2010, p.19)

This purpose corresponds with the economic GC of Oxley and Morris's (2013) typology, which also reflects the mainstream discourse in the international perspective of considering global citizenship as a means to enhance economic competence in the globalized world.

The Outline also articulates the need for education to be more people-oriented and stresses cultivating students' core values and dispositions as the ultimate goal. One important objective is to develop international understanding in education and a sense of global consciousness; in order to achieve this purpose, the policy suggests: "strengthen primary and secondary schools' overseas exchange and cooperation, develop education for international understanding, promote cross-cultural communication and enhance students' understanding of different countries and diverse cultures" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p.20).

At the policy level, two tensions exist with regard to promoting GCE. First, the vision of education reform addresses both the desire to develop global consciousness and global competence, with the latter as a firm objective for preparing students to be competitive in the global scope and to improve China's international influence. This reflects a tension between consciousness and competence in GCE, with some scholars arguing that global consciousness indicates a "moral conscience" that implies being part of and

acting for the human community (Dill, 2013), while global competence emphasizes the practical knowledge and skills needed to succeed in global economics and the global marketplace (Jiang, 2017; Dill, 2013; Humes, 2008). Second, as the Outline also stresses the need to strengthen patriotism, build national identity and appreciate Chinese traditional culture, this element creates a tension between developing citizenship education with a global perspective, and underscoring an emphasis on nationalism. Jiang (2017), in Chinese, explains the tension that exists between national and global dimensions as well as between competence and consciousness as two inevitable challenges in promoting GCE within a nation-state, especially from a top-down approach. Still, it is worth noting the use of the term "citizenship" and the GCE-related elements in the Chinese national policy, which indicates the intention of involving GCE ideas in education and provides the directions for local educational policies.

Following the national Outline, local educational administrations, in particular those in relatively developed regions, have actively started to promote the development of modern citizens and the internationalization of education, as reflected in important local educational policies. For example, *Shanghai's 13th Five-Year Plan of Basic Education Reform and Development* articulates the intention to build moral education in primary and secondary schools, and to promote moral education content through formal classrooms, informal activities and teacher trainings. From the more practical and executive levels, the Shanghai local

government aims to expand the channels and platforms for high school students' social practice, volunteer service and other social participation activities in order to enhance the students' social responsibility, innovation and practical abilities; it intends to build an international communication platform for primary and secondary schools in Shanghai that includes teacher and student exchanges between Chinese and foreign schools, sources for developing international understanding and cross-cultural communication skills through subject-oriented courses, and foreign language learning programs within schools. Practical implementations of this plan have already been carried out; for example, in 2010, the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission selected several schools as International Understanding Education experimental schools in which to carry out pilot programs oriented toward developing global perspectives and students' empathy towards others. In 2012, the Minhang District in Shanghai launched the "Diversity + Symbiosis + Integration" research program as its regional promotion of the internationalization of basic education (Jiang, 2017).

Similarly, the *Beijing 13th Five-Year Plan for Education Reform and Development (2016-2020)* has taken the special direction of fulfilling Beijing's city orientation strategy of being the "Four Centers" of China, i.e., the political center, cultural center, international communication center and science and technology innovation center. In order to enhance the city's position as the "international communication center", the Plan stresses the importance of learning from

the western countries model of quality education that includes developing the well-rounded person to strengthen international understanding and multicultural education in primary and secondary schools, as well as improving the students' cross-cultural communication abilities. Furthermore, the Plan states the mission of secondary schools as enhancing the value of education by integrating socialist core values into classroom teaching, school culture and social activities, which indicates a balance between emphasizing national identity and fulfilling the visions of the national policy.

7. GCE AND CHINA'S NATIONAL CURRICULUM SYSTEM

China has a highly controlled and centralized education system. Schooling comprises primary school (Year 1-6), junior secondary school (Year 7-9), senior secondary school/high school (Year 10-12) and further higher education. The first nine years (primary to junior secondary) are compulsory. Entrance to high schools and universities are determined through national examinations at Year 9 and 12 respectively. The existence of a large population in a quite competitive admissions environment results in a demand for Chinese schools, teachers and parents to often focus mainly on preparing students for examinations, so that the ratio of higher education entrance of a school is sometimes regarded as the only standard by which to gauge the quality of schooling. There are three levels of curricula that cater to the vast majority of schools under the controlled national system

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in China. The Ministry of Education (MOE) formulates policies for national curriculum objectives, designing frameworks and standards, and monitors the implementation of the national curriculum at the local and school levels. Local education administrative departments have the obligation to ensure curriculum implementation in schools in accordance with national standards, and are responsible for developing local curricula that suit local conditions. Schools have the responsibility of implementing national and local curricula in addition to their autonomy in designing school-based curriculums, all of which are monitored by the local government (Ministry of Education, 2001).

In terms of the formal curriculum, as in most countries in the world, there is no independent subject geared to GC within the national curriculum. Instead, GC content is integrated into or immersed in other subjects. A study by Liu (2011) examining the views of Chinese high school teachers with regard to GCE reveals that

teachers find GCE-related content to be insufficient in the arts subjects, which they believe are the most relevant to GCE, such as political studies, Chinese language studies, English language and history. The teachers also state that content related to GCE does not even exist in science subjects.

As civic or citizenship education is often regarded as a western term that implies a democratic education, it is not a commonly used terminology in Chinese literature (Zhong & Lee, 2008). The areas most relevant to civic or citizenship education in the Chinese context are political and social education, moral education and values education. Related compulsory school subjects throughout school years include Morality and Life and Morality and Society for primary education; Ideology and Morality and History and Society for middle school education; Political and Ideological Studies for high school education and the Comprehensive Practical Activities throughout Years 3-12, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. School subjects related to citizenship education in China from primary to high school.

School	Years	Age	Subjects
Primary School	Year 1-2	6-7	Morality and Life
	Year 3-6	8-11	Morality and Society
Middle School	Year 7-9	12-14	Ideology and Morality
			History and Society
High School	Year 10-12	15-17	Political and Ideological Studies

Li and Print (2017) performed a document analysis study exploring and evaluating civic and citizenship elements in the related subjects for primary and junior secondary education. Upon reviewing the national curriculum guidelines and standards of these subjects, the researchers found an extensive development of the civic issue topics covered in the curricula regarding the learning domains of knowledge, skills and values; for example, rights and responsibilities, democracy principles and processes, globalization and multidimensional citizenship identity were all included in the content.

For senior secondary education, the subject Political and Ideological Studies displays potential GCE elements from various perspectives, even though the subject is explicitly oriented toward educating qualified national and socialist citizens. For example, the overall objective of the course states that students should “learn to use basic Marxist viewpoints and methods to observe, analyze and solve problems; have the ability and attitude of self-reliance, independence and competence in modern social life; initially form an appropriate world outlook on life and values” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p.2). Nevertheless, in addition to the explicit goal of cultivating socialist citizens with Marxist viewpoints, the overall objective also includes the ability to analyze and solve problems that exist in the dimension of global competence. Furthermore, among a total of 18 detailed objectives for the domains of knowledge, skills and values, six are related to GCE and cover the dimensions of competence, awareness and participation. For example, Objective 18 states

that students should “love peace, respect the excellent cultures of all nations of the world, care about the common interests of all mankind, and cultivate a global vision” (awareness dimension) (Ministry of Education, 2004, p.2). Objective 11 declares that students are expected to “develop the ability to collect and screen social information using a variety of methods, especially modern information technology” (competence dimension) (Ministry of Education, 2004, p.2). While the participation dimension is not stressed to the same degree as the awareness and competence dimensions, Objective 7 expresses in general that students should “improve the ability to actively participate in economic, political and cultural life” (p.2). Although there is no explicit reference to the global level, on the whole, there are indications that in the formal curriculum, the subject designated as Political and Ideological Studies does include some intention of adopting GCE-related learning.

In terms of the informal curriculum, its flexibility and diversity provide a powerful potential for developing global citizenship (UNESCO, 2013; Liu & Wang, 2014). The current Chinese curriculum incorporates integrated practical activities, project-based learning, community service and other forms of activities that can convey a GCE perspective. For example, the Comprehensive Practical Activities (CPA) subject shows possibilities for promoting GC learning. The Ministry of Education issued the standards for Comprehensive Practical Activities in 2001 and allocated the subject as a national compulsory curriculum throughout primary and secondary school years;

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but a substantial flexibility in the form provides the schools with the autonomy to design specific contents. A notable example of the three-level curriculum system, CPA is often referred to as “national planning, local managing and school designing” (Ministry of Education, 2001, p.3), with the objective of enhancing students' sense of inquiry and innovation; improving their ability to use knowledge; cultivating their sense of social responsibility and global awareness; and most importantly, encourage student engagement in social and civil issues through practical activities (Feng, 2010; Li & Print, 2017). Other forms of informal activities, such as student councils, student societies, and student-initiated activities are also common in secondary schools in China and can also provide possibilities for GC learning.

It is necessary to be aware of the fact that the informal curriculum is more influenced by the contextual factors of schools and local communities than the formal subjects. For this reason, implementation and conditions can be uneven and disparate between different regions and schools, and effectiveness largely depends on the effort made by local governments and schools (Feng, 2010). In addition, the informal curriculum can be easily undervalued by both teachers and students in practice, because it does not constitute a formal subject (Print, 2009). In the examination-oriented school context in China, the time for informal activities is often excluded or occupied by formal subjects, which leads to unsatisfying and ineffective outcomes (Wang, 2015); however, educational reforms in recent years demonstrate a tendency

toward including more practical and skill-based activities and evaluations in schooling from both the national and provincial levels, which emphasizes the importance of the informal curriculum. Still, detailed investigations into schools are needed to examine the practices and outcomes of delivering global perspectives through the informal curriculum.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the notion of educating global citizens has been considered to be increasingly important in China in the last decades, as evidenced in both academia and related national policies, although in many cases it is not explicitly referred to as “GCE”. Meanwhile, there is distinct tension between the concept of developing global competence and global consciousness and the obvious character of emphasizing the priority of national citizenship under GC learning. From a curriculum perspective, although the three-level system is highly centralized and featured by an orientation toward knowledge and examination, intentions and possibilities for GCE-related learning can be found in both the formal and informal curriculum for secondary education. From a schooling perspective, high schools are given autonomy over their school-based curriculum and other activities that can provide opportunities for developing global perspectives. Some high schools have implemented international curricula and have enhanced international communication with the world that involve elements of GCE. As the autonomy is left to the schools, the practice of GCE related education can be variable.

Several challenges and tensions with regard to GCE-related learning are noteworthy, including an emphasis on the competence and consciousness dimensions; a lack of attention to participation; the possibility of undervaluing global citizenship learning as a result of stressing nationalism (Jiang, 2017). Overall, as few systematic studies have focused on global citizenship education in China from the schooling approach, it is indicated that empirical studies are needed to enrich the theories and clarify the interpretations of the concept in practice within the Chinese context.

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