

The Evolution, Development Potential and Future Path of Chinese-Style Lifelong Education Modernization

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Abstract

Since the founding of New China, China's lifelong education system has gone through a process ranging from initial exploration to overall development. Through the organic combination of policy potential energy, resource potential energy, technology potential energy and cultural potential energy, the modernization of Chinese lifelong education can be promoted. In the context of Chinese style modernization, the development of lifelong education is closely combined with national strategies, integrating Chinese cultural characteristics, focusing on coordinated regional development, and constantly promoting social equity and inclusiveness. In the future, it is necessary to continuously innovate the education system, expand educational resources, strengthen policy guarantees, cultivate a lifelong learning culture and strengthen international exchanges and cooperation to promote the reform and development of lifelong education in China.

Keywords

Lifelong Education Modernization, Evolution Process, Developing Potential Energy, Future Path

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) clearly pointed out that we should comprehensively promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. The so-called Chinese-style modernization is modernization with a huge population

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size, modernization of common prosperity for all people, modernization where material civilization and spiritual civilization are coordinated, modernization of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and modernization that follows a path of peaceful development (Xi, 2022). Chinese-style modernization aims to comprehensively realize the modernization of the economy, society, culture, science and technology and other fields on the basis of adhering to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, giving full play to the country's cultural advantages, and combining national conditions and international situations. The essence of modernization is the modernization of people (He, 2023), which emphasizes the exertion of China's unique culture, historical tradition and national conditions. As the key factor promoting the modernization of human beings, the modernization of education has key significance for the improvement of national quality (Dewey, 1930), the enhancement of national core competitiveness and the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In many fields of education modernization, the modernization of lifelong education is the root of the topic; it is a key means by which improve human capital but also an effective way in which to achieve social equity and inclusive development. However, in the process of Chinese-style modernization, lifelong education has certain deficiencies related to system construction and resource allocation, which makes it difficult to meet diversified educational needs (Li & Gu, 2019). At the same time, challenges in social equity and inclusion need to be addressed, as disadvantaged and marginalized groups have limited opportunities to participate in lifelong education. Therefore, lifelong education needs to keep pace with the times, innovate and develop, closely combine national strategies, regional characteristics and social needs, comprehensively improve national quality and ability, and provide strong support for Chinese-style modernization. Therefore, this study systematically reviews the development process of lifelong education in China, deeply explores its internal potential factors, and discusses the development path of its adaptation that aims to meet not only to national strategy needs but also social needs and other needs related to Chinese-style modernization.

2. The Course of China's Lifelong Education Modernization

Since the founding of New China, China's lifelong education system has gone through a process ranging from preliminary exploration to comprehensive development; in the early days of the founding of New China, emphasis was placed on restoring and developing basic education. After the reform and opening up, the concept of lifelong education was gradually established, and personnel training and quality education were emphasized through measures such as educational system reform, curriculum setting and educational resource expansion. At the beginning of the 21st century, China further increased investment in and support for lifelong education, promoted the modernization of education by using modern information technology, made lifelong learning an action of the whole people, and worked hard to realize an equal emphasis on education equity

and quality. Since the new era, the lifelong education system has been gradually improved and innovated. In this process, the Party and the government have formulated a series of policies and measures, including the establishment of vocational education, adult education, distance education and other forms of education to meet the learning needs of different groups. At the same time, with the development of information technology, China has realized the sharing and popularization of educational resources, thus promoting the modernization of lifelong education. Specifically, this modernization can be divided into the following four stages.

2.1. Reconstruction and Development of Basic and Adult Education (1949 - 1977)

In this stage, New China's education mainly focused on the reconstruction and development of basic and adult education. In the 1950 s, the government improved the national education level through measures such as universal primary education, eliminating illiteracy, and promoting amateur cultural education. At the same time, adult education received attention at this stage; the government effectively improved people's cultural literacy and education level by organizing adult education institutions and amateur schools, which promoted the social progress and economic development of the country. Although the concept of lifelong education was not explicitly proposed at that time, the educational policies and practices of this period laid the foundation for the development of lifelong education. For example, literacy and universal primary education measures provided more people with access to higher education and further learning. The development of vocational education and adult education provided a way for people to continue to learn and grow (Emami & Nazarpour, 2013), and trains more professionals and technical personnel (Jiang, Kennedy, & Zhong, 2023). All these measures provided experience and inspiration for the development of lifelong education in the future.

2.2. Reform and Opening up and the Vigorous Development of Education (1978-1994)

Since the reform and opening up, China has made remarkable achievements in education. In this stage, the government vigorously promoted the implementation of the compulsory education system to ensure the gradual realization of nine-year compulsory education nationwide. China began to vigorously develop all kinds of education at all levels, including adult education and continuing education; at the same time, the fields of higher education, vocational education and adult education also developed rapidly in this stage. The state promoted the modernization and diversification of the education system through diversified reforms in higher education and vocational skills training. After the resumption of the college entrance examination system in 1977, the reform of the education system achieved initial results, greatly improving the popularization rate and quality of education. In this stage, the concept of lifelong education was gradu-

ally introduced and widely recognized and promoted. In 1981, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the Decision on Strengthening Employee Education, which clearly stated that “all employees shall be trained in a planned way and a relatively regular employee education system shall be established”. Special emphasis was placed on “making full use of television, radio, correspondence and other teaching means, giving full play to the strength of full-time colleges, middle schools, primary schools and technical schools, and holding radio and television colleges (middle), correspondence colleges (middle), night colleges and various regional night schools for workers”. This policy helped to promote the popularization and development of lifelong education among workers. In 1985, the Decision of the CPC Central Committee on the Reform of the Education System was promulgated, which carried out a comprehensive reform of the education system, focused on solving problems related to the development of education, and created favorable conditions for the establishment and improvement of the lifelong education system. In 1992, the State Education Commission issued the “Opinion on Further Reform and Development of Adult Higher Education”, pointing out that “the higher education in our country has emerged prevocational education and post vocational education, full time education and amateur education cooperate with each other, continuing education and lifelong education gradually develop a new situation”.

2.3. The Initial Construction of the Lifelong Education System (1995 - 2011)

In this stage, the Chinese government increased both its input and support for lifelong education and began to build a comprehensive lifelong education system. In 1995, Article 11 of the Education Law of the People’s Republic of China clearly stated that it should “promote education reform, promote the coordinated development of all types of education at all levels, and establish and improve a lifelong education system”. The Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council on Deepening Education Reform and Comprehensively Promoting Quality Education promulgated in 1999 clearly proposed that a “modern distance education network should be used to provide lifelong learning opportunities for members of society” and that a “social and open education network should be formed to gradually improve the lifelong learning system” (Liu & Li, 2000). The reports of the 16th CPC National Congress (2002) and the 17th CPC National Congress (2007) also proposed to “strengthen the reform of the education system, establish a lifelong education system and a modern distance education system” and “comprehensively promote quality education, accelerate the construction of a learning society, and form a lifelong learning system for all”. At the practical level, adult education, as the basis of lifelong education development, received greater attention and promotion, and a new type of community education began to sprout. The theoretical research undertaken in this stage mainly focused on the review of the

concept of lifelong education and the connection between lifelong education and other education. In 2010, the Outline of the National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010 - 2020) further emphasized the concept of lifelong learning, proposing to “build a lifelong learning ‘flyover’”, “build a flexible and open lifelong education system”, and “basically form a learning society with lifelong learning for all”. The plan also formulated specific development goals and proposed policies and measures for lifelong education, which were aimed at promoting lifelong learning for all, promoting the sharing of educational resources and educational innovation, and implementing a series of policies; these policies included increasing investment in lifelong education, improving laws and regulations, and building a “flyover” of lifelong learning, with the goal of optimizing the allocation of lifelong education resources and promoting new education models, to meet the needs of social development.

2.4. Perfection and Innovation of Lifelong Education System (2012-)

The reports of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2012) and the 19th National Congress (2017) also proposed to “deepen education reform, accelerate the construction of a modern vocational education system, and build a national lifelong learning system” and to “comprehensively deepen education reform, comprehensively promote quality education, strive to make every child enjoy fair and quality education, and build a modern education system”. In particular, the report of the Party’s 20th National Congress (2022) proposed “building a learning society and a learning power with lifelong learning for all”. Thus, learning power was written into the report of the Party Congress for the first time, and the modernization of Chinese lifelong education has entered a new stage of historical development.

Specifically, China continues to promote the improvement and innovation of the lifelong education system in the following five aspects. The first aspect is online education. The use of modern information technology to promote information and digital education has improved the effectiveness and convenience of education. By encouraging the development and application of online education, distance education and digital education resources, the popularization and convenience of education are improved (Liu, Cao, & Zhang, 2023). Through platforms such as massive open online courses and distance education, broad masses of people can easily access rich learning resources and realize the goal of independent learning and lifelong learning (Jiang, Jotikasthira, & Pu, 2022). The second aspect is vocational education and skills training. To meet the needs of the ever-changing labor market, the government has increased its support for vocational education and skills training, and established a training system integrating industry and education through cooperation with enterprises to help people improve their vocational skills and promote employment and re-employment. The third aspect is continuing education. To meet the learning needs of people from all walks of life, the government has promoted the comprehensive reform

of the Open University system and encouraged universities, vocational schools and social training institutions to carry out diversified continuing education programs to provide learning opportunities for working people, retirees and other people with learning needs (Zhang & Li, 2019). The fourth aspect is community education. The government supports the development of community education and establishes community schools and learning centers to provide residents with convenient learning places and rich curriculum resources. For example, in 2016, the “Lifelong Learning Activity Week for All” was held to promote the concept of lifelong learning and popularize educational resources, attracting the active participation of a broad mass of people. Community education further enhances the willingness and participation of community residents through cultural activities, skills training and other forms. The fifth and final aspect is policy support and regulation improvement. Through the formulation of relevant policies and regulations, the government provides a strong guarantee for lifelong education. For example, by exploring the reform of the credit system and academic certification system, we can promote the recognition of lifelong education achievements (Hardy & Liu, 2022).

In general, since 1949, the modernization of China’s lifelong education has experienced different stages of development. Starting from the reconstruction and development of basic education and adult education, New China emphasizes improving the education level of the whole population, popularizing primary education, eliminating illiteracy, and attaching importance to the promotion of adult education. With the advent of reform and opening up, education has ushered in vigorous development, and compulsory education has been gradually popularized, while higher education, vocational education and adult education have also been greatly developed. In the initial construction stage of the lifelong education system, the government increased investment and support to comprehensively promote the construction of the lifelong education system. Since the new era, with the improvement and innovation of the lifelong education system, the government has made great efforts to promote online education, vocational education, skills training and continuing education to meet the needs of social and economic development and scientific and technological innovation and provide more lifelong learning opportunities for all people. In the past few decades, both the Party and the government have promoted the reform of the education system to gradually establish and improve the lifelong education system. Unfortunately, China has not yet formulated a law specifically for lifelong education or lifelong learning at the national level (Wu & Deng, 2022), which also means that there is still much of room for development in the promotion, popularization and protection of lifelong education.

3. The Development Potential of Chinese-Style Lifelong Education Modernization

Potential energy refers to the energy that an object has due to the situation in

which it has to do work (Zhang, Zhang, Guo, & Wen, 2011). Potential energy theory originates from the field of physics. It studies the potential energy field and aims to reveal the development potential of things. The theory focuses on the study of the potential energy of a thing and discusses how to transform this potential energy into actual energy to promote the development of things through the action of both internal and external factors. After a long period of practice and development, potential energy theory has been extended to many disciplines, including social sciences, psychology and economics. In these fields, potential energy theory can explain the interactions between individuals, groups, or systems, and how these interactions shape behavior, choices, and outcomes. In the field of education, the factors that affect the potential energy of education mainly include educational policies, resources, technology, culture and other factors. Analyzing the interaction between these factors can help us better understand the generation, release and transformation process of the potential energy of education, to determine the potential of education development and promote the progress and innovation of education. Based on this, the current study mainly analyzes the potential energy of China's lifelong education modernization from four aspects: policy, resources, technology and culture.

4. Policy Potential Energy

The so-called policy potential energy is defined as the amount of system state generated by the difference in national policy objectives in the process of policy implementation in a certain period and a specific region compared with those from a reference system (Wu & Duan, 2022). This comparison can provide strong support and guarantees for the development of related fields through policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. In the field of lifelong education, policy potential energy is mainly reflected in the government's understanding, support and guidance of lifelong education, including the formulation of policies and regulations, capital investment, education reform and innovation. The promotion of policy potential energy can help to create a policy environment that is conducive to the development of lifelong education and provide a strong guarantee for the modernization process of lifelong education.

Specifically, the application of policy potential energy in the field of lifelong education mainly includes the following aspects. The first aspect is to formulate a lifelong education strategy, clarify the status and development path of lifelong education in the national education system, incorporate it into the national education development plan (Xin, 2023), and ensure that lifelong education receives long-term and stable policy support. The second aspect is to increase the investment in education, through the financial budget, educational funds, social donations and other channels to raise funds to ensure the smooth operation of lifelong education. The third aspect is to optimize the allocation of educational resources to promote the sharing and optimal utilization of resources, and reform the educational management system to strengthen the connection be-

tween lifelong education and basic education, vocational education, higher education and other types of education. In addition, this aspect also includes innovative policy measures that aim to provide learners with a variety of ways to support, reduce learning costs, implement credit systems, certification systems, etc., so that learners' learning results are recognized. Through innovative policies, enterprises and social organizations are encouraged to participate in the development of lifelong education, which will form a pattern in which the government, the market and the society jointly promote the development of lifelong education.

Ensuring educational equity is another important aspect of policy potential in the field of lifelong education. The government should pay attention to the fairness of lifelong education and eliminate inequality in the distribution of educational resources, so that different regions and different groups can enjoy high-quality lifelong education services. Through the implementation of the educational policy of benefiting the people, we can improve the education level of rural areas, poor areas and disadvantaged groups and narrow the education gap. To give full play to policy potential energy, we should also pay attention to the close combination of lifelong education and economic and social development to meet the national strategic needs and talent training goals. In accordance with the national development strategy and industrial layout, lifelong education policies that meet actual needs should be formulated to promote the deep integration of industry and education (Wu, 2021). In addition, we should also pay attention to cultivating an atmosphere of lifelong learning; guide all people to participate in lifelong learning through publicity, demonstrations, incentives and other means; and develop a social trend of lifelong learning for all.

In short, policy potential energy plays a vital role in the process of lifelong education modernization. The government should strengthen the top-level design of lifelong education, formulate reasonable policies, invest necessary funds, and promote educational reform and innovation, to ensure the smooth development of lifelong education. At the same time, we should work together with all social parties to strengthen the synergistic effect of policy potential energy and other potential energy, and jointly promote the Chinese-style modernization process of lifelong education.

5. Resource Potential Energy

Resource potential energy refers to the potential energy of various material, human and intellectual resources in a field, which lies in the effective integration, utilization and development of these resources to support and promote the development of the field (Sellar, 2015). In lifelong education, resource potential energy is mainly reflected in the acquisition, allocation and utilization of educational resources, including educational facilities, teachers, teaching content, technical support and so on. The improvement of resource potential energy can provide a strong guarantee for the modern development of lifelong education,

meet the learning needs of different groups and stages, and subsequently improve the quality and effect of education.

In the field of lifelong education, resource potential energy is embodied in the following aspects. First, the improvement and renewal of educational facilities is the foundation of resource potential energy, including hardware facilities such as schools, libraries, and laboratories, as well as software facilities such as online education platforms and digital resource libraries. Governments, businesses and social organizations should invest more in improving and expanding educational facilities to meet the needs of lifelong learners. Second, teachers are the core resources of lifelong education. The key to improving the quality of lifelong education is to train and introduce excellent teachers (Jung, 2012), improve the overall quality of teachers, and stimulate their innovative spirit and enthusiasm for education. In addition, teaching content and technical support are also important components of resource potential energy. To meet the needs of social economic development and scientific and technological progress, it is necessary to update teaching materials, curricula and teaching methods in a timely manner and adopt modern educational technology, such as online education and virtual laboratories, to improve the attractiveness and effectiveness of lifelong education (Park, Whang, Watts, & Han, 2022).

To fully tap and exert the potential energy of resources, the following strategies should be adopted. First, we should aim to strengthen the integration and optimal allocation of resources, promote the sharing and rational allocation of educational resources across the country, and improve the efficiency of resource utilization. Second, social forces should be encouraged to participate in the investment and construction of lifelong education (Li & Xu, 2023), and more educational resources should be raised through various forms such as government purchases of services, enterprise cooperation in the running of schools, and social donations, with the aim of accelerating the integration and innovation of educational resources and improving the overall level of lifelong education. Finally, the synergistic effect of resource potential energy with policy potential energy, technological potential energy, cultural potential energy and other potential energy should be strengthened to form a comprehensive force to promote the modernization of lifelong education. At the same time, we should pay attention to the problems that may occur in the utilization of resources, such as the uneven distribution of resources and the waste of resources, and we should take effective measures to ensure the sustainable development of resource potential energy in the field of lifelong education.

In short, resource potential energy plays an important role in promoting the modernization of lifelong education. By increasing resource investment, optimizing resource allocation and integrating social resources, it is helpful to improve the quality of lifelong education and meet diversified learning needs. Thus, the government, enterprises and educational institutions should work together to strengthen cross-sectoral and cross-industry cooperation and ex-

changes, give full play to the potential energy of resources, and promote the comprehensive development and progress of lifelong education in China.

6. Technical Potential Energy

Technological potential refers to the extensive application of modern scientific and technological means and information technology in a certain field, and the potential to promote the development of this field (Bell & Lane, 1998). In the field of lifelong education, technological potential energy is mainly reflected in the profound impact and innovation of modern information technology, network communication technology, artificial intelligence and other technical means on educational resources, teaching methods, evaluation mechanisms, etc. With the rapid development of science and technology, technological potential energy will bring more convenience to lifelong education and break the restrictions of time and space, thereby helping to realize the efficient utilization and fair distribution of educational resources, and effectively promote the modernization process of lifelong education.

The specific content of technical potential energy in the field of lifelong education mainly includes the following aspects. First, modern information technology and network communication technology provide a convenient learning platform and rich learning resources for lifelong education. For example, online education platforms, distance education courses, interactive learning software, etc., enable learners to obtain knowledge anytime and anywhere to meet personalized learning needs (Kumar & Chaudhary, 2017). Second, artificial intelligence technology is playing an increasingly important role in lifelong education. Intelligent teaching systems, intelligent guidance robots and other innovative technology products help personalize teaching and improve the teaching effect; however, they can also provide assistance to teachers and help reduce the teaching burden. In addition, big data analysis, cloud computing and other technologies play an important role in educational evaluation and management through the analysis of learners' behavior data, which can provide a scientific basis for educational decision-making and improve the efficiency of education management (Abhirami & Kavitha, 2022).

To give full play to the technological potential and promote the modernization of lifelong education, it is necessary to take a series of measures. First, the government, enterprises and educational institutions should increase investment in; strengthen the technological research, development and application; and cultivate the innovation ability of education science and technology. Second, we should aim to strengthen the training and introduction of educational technical talents, improve the level of educational informatization, and ensure the effective use of technical potential energy. Finally, emphasis should be placed on the synergy of technical potential energy, policy potential energy, resource potential energy, cultural potential energy and other potential energy to form a comprehensive force to promote the modernization of lifelong education. Furthermore,

we should aim to achieve cross-field and cross-industry cooperation and exchange to accelerate the innovation and popularization of educational technology, and improve the overall level of lifelong education. In addition, it is also necessary to not only pay attention to the challenges brought about by technological potential, such as digital divide issues and data security issues, but also formulate corresponding policies and measures to ensure the sustainable development of technological potential in the field of lifelong education.

In short, technological potential plays an important role in promoting the modernization of lifelong education. With the rapid development of science and technology, technological potential will provide more possibilities for lifelong education, help to optimize the allocation of educational resources, improve the quality of education, and meet diversified learning needs. In the future, it is necessary to further increase investment in scientific and technological innovation to promote the comprehensive development and progress of lifelong education in China.

7. Cultural Potential Energy

Cultural potential energy refers to the cultural driving energy formed by different regional cultures according to the strength of their respective influences (Yang & Liu, 2018). It can provide impetus and guidance for the development of related fields through cultural inheritance, innovation and exchange. In the field of lifelong education, cultural potential energy is mainly embodied in the maintenance and promotion of national cultural traditions, the cultivation of lifelong learners with global vision, and the construction of a learning society. The promotion of cultural potential energy helps to enhance the connotation value of lifelong education and promote the development and innovation of lifelong education in the context of globalization.

The specific content of cultural potential energy in the field of lifelong education mainly includes the following aspects. First, carrying forward national cultural traditions is the core content of cultural potential, including integrating Chinese culture into the lifelong education curriculum system, cultivating learners' national cultural identity and cultural self-confidence, and actively promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture. Second, to cultivate lifelong learners with a global vision, it is necessary to strengthen cross-cultural communication and cooperation in the process of lifelong education and cultivate learners' cross-cultural communication ability, innovative thinking and international competitiveness (Chris, 2012). In addition, building a learning-oriented society is an important manifestation of cultural potential energy in lifelong education. By creating a social environment that is conducive to learning and improving the learning awareness and ability of all people, the concept of lifelong learning can be popularized and practiced.

To harness the full potential of culture, governments, educational institutions, and society need to adopt the following strategies. First, it is necessary to pay at-

tention to the integration of national cultural tradition and modern culture, combine cultural elements with lifelong education, and enrich the connotation of lifelong education. Second, we should strengthen international cooperation and exchanges, introduce high-quality educational resources, and promote cross-cultural cooperation and development in the field of lifelong education. Finally, it is necessary to promote the formation of a learning cultural atmosphere in the whole society, improve the learning awareness and ability of all people, and help sustainable development and innovation in the field of lifelong education.

In short, cultural potential is of great significance in the field of lifelong education. Carrying a forward national cultural tradition, cultivating lifelong learners with a global vision and building a learning society are the core contents of cultural potential. To give full play to cultural potential energy, it is necessary to pay attention to the integration of national cultural tradition and modern culture, strengthen international cooperation and exchanges, and promote the formation of a learning cultural atmosphere in the whole society. Under the support of cultural potential energy, the joint efforts of government departments and all social parties will effectively promote sustainable development and innovation in the field of lifelong education, and provide strong support for the economic and social development of the country.

In summary, through the organic combination of policy potential energy, resource potential energy, technical potential energy and cultural potential energy, we can promote the development of Chinese-style lifelong education modernization. Policy potential energy ensures that lifelong education is rationally planned and effectively implemented. Resource potential energy provides abundant material and human support for lifelong education. Technological potential energy drives the innovation and upgrading of the lifelong education service system. Cultural potential energy strengthens the concept of lifelong learning and creates a cultural atmosphere that is conducive to the development of lifelong education. These four potential energies jointly promote the modernization of Chinese-style lifelong education and cultivate better talent for social and economic development.

8. The Future Approach of Chinese-Style Lifelong Education Modernization

8.1. The Characteristics of Lifelong Education Development in the Context of Chinese Modernization

In the era of Chinese modernization, lifelong education has become a key supporting factor. Chinese modernization emphasizes giving play to China's unique culture, historical tradition and national conditions to meet the needs of the country's economic development, social change and global competition. In this context, the development of lifelong education presents the following characteristics:

1) Closely Integrates National Strategies. Against the background of Chinese-style modernization, the government attaches an increasing level of importance to lifelong education, integrates it into the national strategy, and forms a series of policy measures to support the development of lifelong education. By reforming the education system, optimizing the allocation of educational resources, strengthening educational research and technological innovation, and other measures, we strive to build a personnel training system that meets the needs of national development. At the same time, the government also pays attention to international cooperation and exchanges in the field of education, and actively introduces foreign high-quality educational resources and advanced experience to improve the overall level of lifelong education in China.

2) Integrates into Chinese Cultural Characteristics. In the context of Chinese-style modernization, lifelong education integrates China's unique culture, historical tradition and national conditions into the content and methods of education. It includes exploring the educational wisdom in traditional culture, carrying forward the dignity of "respecting teachers and respecting Dao", carrying forward the lifelong learning concept of "learning without end", and integrating the excellent traditional culture, moral norms and values of the Chinese nation into educational activities. Strengthening cultural education with Chinese characteristics will help enhance the cultural confidence and identity of the people (Chen, 2018).

3) Focuses on Coordinated Development among Regions. In the process of Chinese-style modernization, lifelong education focuses on balancing the differences in educational resources between different regions, urban and rural areas, and groups. Education cooperation and resource sharing between urban and rural areas and eastern and western regions can be realized by means of preferential policies, resource allocation and personnel training, which will help eliminate regional development differences and promote the balanced development of education across the country (Gao, 2019).

4) Promotes Social Equity and Inclusion. In the context of Chinese modernization, lifelong education pays more attention to the educational needs of disadvantaged groups and marginalized groups in society (Ilieva et al., 2022). For example, measures such as the establishment of special funds, the implementation of targeted support policies, and the implementation of targeted training programs can provide equal educational opportunities for these groups and improve their social participation and development opportunities. This will help narrow the gap between the rich and the poor and promote social equity and inclusion.

In short, against the background of Chinese-style modernization, lifelong education needs not only continuous reform and innovation but also to closely combine national strategy, regional characteristics and social needs, thereby, taking the cultivation of the quality and ability of the whole population as its core goal. Lifelong education should make continuous efforts to perfect the edu-

cation system, expand education resources, strengthen policy guarantees and cultivate a lifelong learning culture. Through these measures, China's lifelong education will provide strong support for building a modern socialist country and contribute to economic growth, social progress and people's well-being.

8.2. The Future Approach to Lifelong Education in the Context of Chinese Modernization

In the context of the Chinese path to modernization, lifelong education will give full play to its important strategic role in national and social development. To further promote the reform and development of lifelong education, we need to pay attention to the following five aspects and build a lifelong education system that meets the requirements of the new era.

1) Creating an Innovative Education System: Building a Diversified Lifelong Education System. First, we need to establish flexible and diverse learning paths that encourage learners to learn across disciplines and fields according to their needs and interests. Flexible and diverse learning paths help cultivate talent in individuals who will in turn adapt to social development and industrial changes and provide strong support for national strategies and social needs. In this way, learners can accumulate knowledge and skills in different fields and achieve overall personal development. Second, it is necessary to promote the interconnection of various educational institutions and promote the sharing of educational resources and courses. Through the network platform and cooperation mechanism, different educational institutions can realize the sharing of educational resources and courses, thus providing learners with a wider range of learning choices. Such connectivity helps to optimize the allocation of educational resources and improve the efficiency of the use of educational resources while simultaneously creating more learning opportunities for learners and reducing learning costs (Tang, Zhang, & Tian, 2023). Moreover, the status of vocational education and continuing education should be strengthened to provide high-quality vocational skills training and re-education for society. Both the government and society should increase support for vocational education and continuing education, improve the quality of vocational education, and meet the needs of the ever-changing labor market. Providing high-quality vocational skills training and re-education will improve the quality of the people, train more talent with practical skills and innovative ability, and provide talent support for the construction of Chinese-style modernization.

2) Expanding Educational Resources: Realizing the Balanced Development of Educational Resources. First of all, we need to improve the allocation mechanism of educational resources, giving priority to the quality and equity of education. Both the government and the education sector need to prioritize their limited resources on improving the quality and equity of education to ensure that quality education is available to all. This process includes optimizing the teaching staff, improving the level of educational facilities, strengthening curriculum development and teaching method reform. Improving the resource allo-

cation mechanism is helpful for improving the quality of education, narrowing the educational gap between regions and groups, and realizing educational equity. Second, we should support education in rural and remote areas to improve the education level of the residents. The government should increase the investment in education in rural and remote areas and aim to improve the level of education in these areas. Specific measures include increasing education funding, improving the pay of rural teachers, improving educational facilities, and launching education and training programs. These measures will improve the quality of education in rural and remote areas, promote the balanced development of education levels between urban and rural areas, and lay the foundation for the realization of lifelong education equity. Moreover, through the construction of a digital education platform, we can realize the sharing and utilization of high-quality education resources. Such a digital education platform can provide learners with convenient and personalized learning experiences, broaden learning channels, and promote educational equity and optimal allocation of resources (Ritimoni, Prasenjit, & Kandarpa, 2020). The government and education departments should actively promote the development of digital education platforms and use modern information technology means such as network technology, cloud computing and big data to realize online sharing and wide dissemination of educational resources.

3) Strengthening Policy Guarantees: Ensuring Platform Development and Promoting Education Equity and Popularization. First, it is necessary to improve the relevant laws and regulations of lifelong education to provide a strong legal guarantee for lifelong education. At the national level, the government and legislative departments should formulate and improve laws and regulations related to lifelong education; clarify the goals, principles and implementation methods of lifelong education; create a good legal environment for the development of lifelong education; and promote the popularization and implementation of lifelong education in society as a whole (Sun, 2023). Second, targeted policy measures need to be implemented to support the educational needs of specific groups. The government should formulate targeted policies and measures according to the characteristics and needs of different groups, such as providing education subsidies for vulnerable groups and providing study leave for working people. These policy measures help to meet the educational needs of specific groups and improve their opportunities to participate in lifelong education, thereby enhancing the overall level of human capital and promoting social equity and inclusive development. Moreover, the structure of financial expenditure can be optimized to ensure the funding needs of lifelong education. The government should reasonably adjust the structure of fiscal expenditure, increase investment in lifelong education, and ensure that the demand for funds for lifelong education is met (Park, Yoon, Kang, & Won, 2015). At the same time, it can also encourage all sectors of society to participate in the investment of lifelong education; give play to the active role of enterprises, social organizations and individuals; form a diversified investment system; and jointly promote the development

of lifelong education.

4) Fostering a Lifelong Learning Culture: Promoting Lifelong Learning as a Way of Life for Common People. First, the concept of lifelong learning should be popularized through media publicity and social activities (Khurram et al., 2022). Government and education departments should actively promote the concept of lifelong learning through various media platforms, so that more people can understand the importance of lifelong learning. In addition, various social activities can be held, such as learning weeks, lectures, seminars, etc., to guide people to establish the concept of lifelong learning and enhance their willingness to learn. Second, it is necessary to improve the quality of teachers and cultivate teachers with the lifelong learning ability. Education departments should strengthen the training and development of teachers and pay attention to the promotion of teachers' professional quality and lifelong learning ability so that teachers can adapt to the changing needs of education (Kostina, 2015). Moreover, enterprises and social organizations are encouraged to carry out staff training to promote lifelong learning in the workplace. The government and all sectors of society should pay attention to the promotion of lifelong learning in the workplace, and encourage enterprises and social organizations to set up special training departments or cooperate with training institutions to provide employees with diversified training courses and learning opportunities. At the same time, enterprises and organizations should also encourage employees to actively participate in lifelong learning and continuously improve their abilities by establishing incentive mechanisms, such as promotions, salaries and rewards (Thongmak, 2021).

5) Strengthening International Exchanges and Cooperation: Providing Chinese Solutions for the Lifelong Education Modernization in the World. First, we can learn from developed countries' lifelong education experiences and models, which can serve as useful references for our country's lifelong education reform. This includes not only paying attention to the successful practices of developed countries in regard to lifelong education policy, system construction, the integration of educational resources and the application of educational science and technology but also understanding the effective measures used to solve problems related to education equity and improve the quality of nationals. Second, China's level of cooperation with international organizations, foreign universities and research institutions can be strengthened with the aim of introducing international high-quality education resources and improving the quality of lifelong education (Kalesnik, Kleiman, & Vasicheva, 2020). Through cooperation-based projects with international organizations, sharing advanced educational ideas and technologies, and establishing cooperative relations with foreign universities and research institutions, teachers, scholars and students can promote the exchange, interaction and sharing of educational research results. Finally, we should actively participate in international education projects and activities, demonstrate the achievements of lifelong education development in our country, and improve our international influence. Thus, the government and

educational institutions should organize and participate in international educational forums, exhibitions, competitions and other activities to display the development level and achievements of lifelong education in our country to the world, and actively strive for international cooperation and financial support to further enhance the international status of lifelong education in our country.

In summary, in order to promote the reform and development of lifelong education in China, we need to constantly innovate the education system, expand educational resources, strengthen policy support, cultivate a lifelong learning culture, and strengthen international exchanges and cooperation. These measures will improve the quality of life for all people, promote sustainable economic and social development, and lay a solid foundation for China to play a greater role on the international stage.

9. Summary and Prospects

With the rapid development of information technology and social changes, lifelong education will play an increasingly important role in China's future. Thus, we should actively explore a lifelong education model adapted to Chinese characteristics and build a lifelong education system that offers international competitiveness. Looking forward to the future, the modernization of Chinese-style lifelong education has the following trends:

1) The first trend is personalized and customized education. Technical means such as big data and artificial intelligence can be used to achieve accurate matching and personalized pushes of educational resources to meet the needs of different learners.

2) The second trend is online and offline integrated development. Online education and physical education should be integrated to create a lifelong learning platform that can be used both online and offline and makes full use of technological means to improve the quality and efficiency of education.

3) The third aspect is a lifelong learning community. We should encourage and support all kinds of social organizations, enterprises, institutions and individuals to participate in lifelong education, form a learning society, and integrate learning into the habits of daily life.

4) The fourth aspect is flexible and diverse learning paths. The boundary between academic education and vocational education should be breached to achieve diversified learning paths and provide more development opportunities for learners.

5) The fifth aspect is lifelong career development planning. To help talent grow, we should provide vocational training, skills upgrading and career development planning services that are closely in line with the needs of national and regional economic development.

6) The sixth aspect is policy and legal guarantees. Laws and regulations related to lifelong education should be improved to provide a strong institutional guarantee for the promotion and development of lifelong education.

7) The seventh and final aspect is international exchanges and cooperation.

Through active participation in international lifelong education exchanges and cooperation, we can enhance the international status and influence of China's lifelong education and provide Chinese solutions for the modernization of global lifelong education.

To achieve this goal, we also need to make efforts at the following four levels. First, at the government level, we need to increase investment in lifelong education, optimize the allocation of educational resources, improve relevant laws and regulations, and provide strong policy and legal guarantees for lifelong education. Second, at the level of educational institutions, we should reform the education system, promote the interconnection of various educational institutions, strengthen educational research and technological innovation, and improve the quality and equity of education. Third, at the social dimension level, financial support for learners can be provided by encouraging businesses, social organizations and individuals to participate in lifelong education. Fourth, at the international cooperation level, we can strengthen our cooperation with international organizations, foreign universities and research institutions; actively participate in international educational projects and activities; and learn from the lifelong education experiences and models of developed countries.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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