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Advocacy of Northern Education in the Context of Multiculturalism and Religion

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Abstract: With the development of the global economy and communication, the world has become a whole. The exchange and integration of different cultures will inevitably lead to higher requirements for education in the new era. In the face of increasingly complex cultural exchange phenomena and the emergence of new cultural phenomena, the formulation and research of educational policies under this background are of great significance. This paper analyzes and recommends educational policy, educational focus, and teacher training programs in the new era from the perspectives of multicultural education and religious education. This paper emphasizes the viewpoint of religious education in the context of multiculturalism and advocates for corresponding educational policy. The development of the teaching force, the creation of educational policy, and the challenge of educational equity are the key issues that governments of all nations face in the face of cultural interactions and collisions in the context of globalization. Applying the concept of "diversity" in practice, placing a high value on the effects of various cultural differences, and developing diverse, individualized, and localized policies and procedures are important components of the solution.

Keywords: multicultural, education, pluralistic religious, diversity policy

1. Introduction

Education in the context of globalization has always been a hot issue. Different countries have offered various solutions to the educational problems brought about by globalization, and the academic community also has different views. Many scholars have put forward many unique opinions and suggestions based on their multicultural backgrounds. Geneva Gay's research has laid a solid foundation for the development of multicultural education. He paid attention to the necessity of multicultural education for people of color and sensitive groups [1]. JA Banks took the lead in proposing different dimensions and problems of multicultural education and proposed the goal of pursuing educational equality in multicultural education [2]. In his subsequent research, he pointed out the gap between goals and implementation [3]. In addition, scholars like Bennett have collected a variety of multicultural education theories for reference and are committed to developing more efficient and universal multicultural education theories [4]. The innovation of this paper lies in advocating the importance of religious education and formulating educational policies according to local conditions to solve multicultural problems in different regions. But there is no "standard answer" in this research. Many educational problems lack effective solutions. The relevant

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academic research did not fully account for religious background and cultural foundation differences. This article begins with the perspectives of multi-culture and multi-religion: Strive to provide higher quality educational programs in the face of a rapidly changing multicultural background.

2. Initiatives for Education in the Global North in a Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education Background

2.1. The Context of Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education

The development of the world today is increasingly characterized by a phenomenon in which, on the one hand, different nationalities and cultures are increasingly integrated, exchanged and unified. On the other hand, social forms and cultural types are becoming more and more diverse and complex, together forming a "garden of a hundred" of world cultures. The myth of the mono-ethnic nation is no more, and the culture and education of minorities are of great concern to any multi-ethnic country in the world. The global North has a greater number of ethnicity and cultures, and its diversity and complexity is unmatched by any other region [5]. As globalization advances, the world becomes flattened and individuals take on multiple identities in cultural, national, regional and global dimensions. Multicultural education helps students to recognize global identity and depth and to understand their role in the international community. At the same time, such a delicate balance also allows students to maintain their own cultural and national identities. Furthermore, by learning about local traditions, customs and histories, students are better able to pay close attention to the different traditions, customs and histories of other regions with a more discerning eye.

The main value in the context of multiculturalism and multicultural education lies in the formula and the pursuit of social justice. The goal of education in a multicultural context is to enable students to become knowledgeable, caring, and motivated citizens in an unsettled and polarized country and society. The uniqueness of education in multiculturalism lies in its initial focus on ethnicity and its current focus on a range of issues such as gender, class, and religion, helping students to deal appropriately with diversity in the context of the basic demands of equity. Multicultural education theory draws heavily from race theory, feminism, and group relations theory, and a common feature of these theories is the nature of knowledge, i.e., that it reflects the social, cultural, and power positions of human beings. The process of knowledge construction is socially and culturally embedded with implicit power. A key aspect of multicultural education is to help students become aware of the hidden power structures behind curricula and materials, and in turn to further reflect on, question, and challenge the injustices of power within the principle of equality.

2.2. Requirements on Education

The increasing cultural diversity of society and the flourishing of multicultural education have placed a number of requirements on teacher education, namely that it should produce teachers with multicultural knowledge, the development of multicultural awareness and the ability to practice multicultural education. Only by meeting these requirements can teacher education produce teachers who are suited to the needs of society. At the same time, traditional teacher training no longer meets the needs of the times, given the growing trend towards multiculturalism in the Global North. As a result, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in the Global North had to revise the objectives of teacher education to include a component on multicultural education. Since then, many institutions have incorporated multicultural education into their curricula.

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2.2.1. Criteria for Teacher

In a multicultural context, a "good" teacher meets the following criteria: (1) The teacher is a teacher with specific multicultural specialist training and is recognized as intercultural by teachers, students, and parents in other schools; (2) The teacher enables students from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds to significantly develop in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes; (3) Successful intercultural teachers don't only specify learning tasks but are able to explain how students are expected to complete them. Teachers understand learning from the student's point of view and assess students' academic achievement in the context of their different cultural backgrounds; (4) Successful intercultural teachers, unlike teachers from mono-cultural contexts, are generally effective in using "active teaching methods" that are relevant to improving student achievement in reading and mathematics; (5) Successful intercultural teachers usually teach in both their native language and English, alternating between the two when necessary to ensure clarity of instruction.

2.2.2. Educational Equity and the Educational Model of "Pluralism"

In terms of multicultural education policy, the focus could be on providing equal educational opportunities for people with disabilities and students from all cultural backgrounds in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Let the content of education reflect cultural diversity and provide equal educational opportunities for ethnic minority students. These manifest themselves in multicultural education policies, often in the form of curriculum reforms. Specific measures of curriculum reform include the development of a large number of teaching materials with content on the culture and history of ethnic minorities and the introduction and teaching of the historical development, cultural traditions, living customs and festivals of ethnic minorities. The integration of the broad concept of multicultural education into educational policy involves at least two aspects: firstly, the harmonization of pluralism and integration, which is between different subjects. Secondly, educational equity in the context of multiculturalism. The proper coordination of these two aspects is approached as follows.

Firstly, we need to recognize and acknowledge cultural diversity in our educational policies and provide certain strategies to address it. In 2015, Australia proposed to provide individualized education for students with different cultural elements [6]. However, more governments have obviously failed to recognize the necessity of such measures. Take China as an example, the current state of cultural diversity in China's current society in terms of urban-rural, regional, ethnic, class and gender. However, cultural diversity is still not sufficiently visible in the current education policies of the comprehensive category [4]. The educational shortcomings of multicultural groups can, on the one hand, weaken the cultural and social capital of this group, bringing about the fragmentation and stratification of Chinese society, and on the other hand, affect the image of China's education in the international community. Applying the broad concept of multicultural education to education policy requires, first and foremost, acknowledging and publicizing the current state of diversity and potential inequalities in educational opportunities, academic achievement and cultural integration.

Secondly, we still need to provide tailored policy support to the disadvantaged groups in the multicultural community and insist that equity comes first. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of conservatism and right-leaning forces that have criticized the ideas of democracy, fairness, and social justice that have been advocated by various sectors for many years and have used the label of "political correctness" to attack them. In particular, some groups have questioned and criticized policies that favor and privilege education for ethnic minorities and rural areas. It is true that these policies are not properly implemented and are not precise in their implementation,

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but they are a great support for most disadvantaged groups. In the design of the policies, it is still necessary to adhere to the priority of equity, to see the disadvantaged status of most multicultural groups in education against the background of accumulated poverty and weakness in the socioeconomic sphere, to consider the bigger picture, and to use dynamic thinking to coordinate. On the basis of ensuring equity, the education of this group will then be managed and evaluated through the criterion of quality of education.

Thirdly, we can innovate multicultural education by means of information technology and networking to provide more accurate and humane educational support. One of the major challenges of multicultural education is how to cater to a small number of students without sacrificing the educational progress and achievement of the majority. The combination of artificial intelligence and education can provide some new ideas for multicultural education and educational equity. The use of AI technology can capture real-time teaching data in the classroom, focus on students' learning journeys, provide timely analyst-student interaction, improve teaching efficiency, and promote accompanying assessment and personalized teaching. Technologies such as knowledge mapping, big data platforms, and pattern recognition can also be used to analyse and accommodate students' sociocultural backgrounds beyond the curriculum, making it a true treasure trove of pedagogical knowledge and making teaching and learning more relevant.

Fourthly, we need to give multicultural groups the right and space in the curriculum to provide space and flexibility beyond standardized education. Standardized education and examinations, essentially a product of the industrialized model of education, represent the educational needs and interests of the majority of groups, but do not necessarily meet and accommodate the cultural identity of minority groups. A viable approach is for the national curriculum to be responsible for underpinning basic knowledge, basic competencies, and educational equity while empowering local areas and schools with appropriate curricular space and flexibility, allowing education managers and practitioners who are more knowledgeable and familiar with local and school contexts to provide a more appropriate education.

3. Initiatives for Education in the Global North in a Pluralistic Religious Context

In this day and age, religion is undoubtedly a hot issue in social life. Whether within a country or between countries, religion is always at the centre of exchanges and clashes of civilizations. To deal with the issue of religion, we must constantly deepen our understanding of religion; only by knowing more about religion can we better deal with the issue of religion in school education. From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between religion and education involves many aspects of society, with multiple constituent elements and complex interrelationships, and is therefore a difficult issue in related research.

3.1. Why Education Should Consider Religious Issues

Religious education has always played an important role, both in the Church and in society. At the same time, religious education, as part of the formation of the national character, not only produces good people for the various denominations but also guides people to maintain good mental qualities and provides them with a spiritual haven. Since the Middle Ages, religious education has been the monopoly on education in many countries, where the integration of national cultures and a stable social order have been achieved mainly through religious education. Religious education has exercised the role of moral education, acting as a spiritual anchor for people, promoting national unity and maintaining social order.

Religious education is an important part of general education in various countries of the global north and an important part of liberal education. Education in religious studies is not to introduce

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the basics of religious studies because religious studies does not take a particular religion as its starting point, but is a science. The origins of religious studies actually began with comparative religious studies and arose under the vision of comparative religious studies, and the vision of comparative religious studies means that it has abandoned the position of looking at religion from the standpoint of a particular religion. It is from a more transcendental perspective, from the perspective of the social sciences, the humanities, that the phenomenon of religion was understood, and thus the discipline of religious studies was formed. This is not the same as Buddhist Buddhism or Christian theology, which have their own standpoints, but what is the standpoint of religious studies?

It is an education in the humanities, an understanding of the relationship between religion and human beings from the point of view of "why people need religion". As a human being, the need for religion is a dimension that all human beings have, but in different forms, and in this sense atheism is of course also a religious aspiration. What religion seeks to convey is the dimension of metaphysical and ultimate concern, and atheism certainly expresses such a concern, and should certainly be the object of religious studies. The comparative study of religions in history aims to reveal the religious orientation of man, and through this orientation, to the philosophy of religion, to try to answer religious questions in a philosophical way [7].

3.2. Attach Importance to Art Education

The relationship between religion and education is complex and changes over time, requiring rational understanding and reflection, as well as rational arrangements, balances and adjustments. In addition to being a particular form of ideological belief, religion is also a universal cultural phenomenon in human society. Culture is a concept that is said to be the opposite of nature, created by man, which is essentially the 'humanization of nature', i.e., humanization. Religion is an important part of human culture and contributes positively to the cultural uplift of society and the spirituality of the people [8].

Even with the rapid and spectacular development of technology, human society is still inseparably linked to religion. Prohibiting religious education in the national education system deprives an important part of human society and culture of an effective means of transmission, but allowing religious education in the national education system would run counter to the principles of freedom of religion and the separation of church and state. The introduction of various religions to students at all levels of schooling, with a humanistic and social scientific interpretation, and even their inclusion in the official curriculum, is not contrary to the principle of the separation of education from religion and the principle of freedom of religious belief. An important function of public school education is to impart cultural knowledge, form a rational structure of human knowledge, improve the quality and cultivation of human beings, and lay the foundations for the study of professional knowledge. Due to its long history, religion as a culture has a deep and extensive knowledge base, so aspects of its cultural nature can be included in public school education. By learning this component, individuals in society can better understand and appreciate the nature and historical role of religion, the important role it has played in contributing to the formation of human culture, and the contribution it has made to culture, all of which will benefit them in their future lives.

Religious education cannot simply be a presentation of religious knowledge, but rather an inspiration for a sense of life. But religious education does not stop at the discovery of individual life consciousness; it must also be able to connect the destiny of the whole community through the sense of destiny of individual lives, to link individual destiny with collective destiny, and to derive a sense of social responsibility naturally from a sense of responsibility for life. The social community is a community of destiny. Individual life has to assume its individual ethical

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responsibility, but it also has to transcend its small self and expand to reach the realm of the big self. Religious education, as education for life, is not obsessed with the individual life, but rather with enlarging it and speaking of the meaning of the individual life in the context of collective destiny. All religions have some kind of saintly ideal, and saints in whatever sense do not live only for themselves, but are great individuals who live for the sake of others. What makes the leap from the individual to the collective genuinely possible from the ground up is beauty and art. Aesthetics cannot replace religion; if the leap itself is a moral establishment, beauty and art make this leap a fully conscious act, and it is beauty that enables the individual to feel beyond the individual to the larger group of people and the world, to resonate more deeply.

Art is used by the world's major religions to spread and develop their religious influence because of its vividness, concreteness, and imagery. Religions have not only successfully used the strong infectious power of art to reinforce the infectious power of religion, to render the sacredness and solemnity of religion, to consolidate the religious faith of believers and to arouse their religious emotions, but they have also made good use of the popular and vivid nature of art to transform their profound religious ideas into a form that can be felt and understood by the general public, thus spreading their ideas to all walks of life and all corners of the world. Religious art, such as ancient Greek temples, Gothic architecture, Italian painting, and Mozart's Requiem, has made a positive contribution to the history of human civilization and to the development of human art, which cannot be denied. The influence of religious art has long since spread beyond the religious masses to every corner of the world, permeating all aspects of the material, spiritual, and cultural life of human society and influencing people's psychology, feelings, and behaviour. Religious education, therefore, can only be completed as a liberal education if it is combined with an artistic education foundation.

3.3. The Construction of Teachers' Team under the Background of Multiple Religions

As human society enters the stage of globalization, with various cultures impacting, penetrating and integrating with each other, religions, while adapting and absorbing various cultures, are increasingly reflecting the characteristics of secularization, openness and inclusiveness. Combined with the actual situation of religious issues and religious policies, we believe that the following aspects should be addressed.

Firstly, we should clarify the difference between religious beliefs and education and knowledge education. In general, religious education can be divided into two types: education about religious beliefs and education about religious knowledge. They have different connotations and objectives and have different scopes for implementation. It is only by fully understanding the difference between the two that we can properly address the issue of religion in public school education in a secular era. Religious education is education that promotes religious knowledge and culture among pupils and students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels and is concerned with the transmission of knowledge about various religions or the analysis and study of religions in the social and human sciences. Liberal Religious Education is the introduction of different religions in an open and objective way into the school curriculum, not with the aim of promoting a particular religion, but rather with the aim of making students aware of different religious views. Academic religious education is an integral part of the academic field. This type of religious knowledge education is professional and purely academic, with the primary aim of training people for the academic study of religion.

Secondly, good education in religious knowledge requires good assurance in terms of teachers. School education is the main way in which students receive knowledge, and teachers are the leading actors in it. Therefore, to receive a good education in religious knowledge, our teachers should make some adjustments. Firstly, they must liberate their minds and change their understanding.

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This requires strengthening the relevant training so that teachers can abandon the notion that religion is reduced to a political ideology and instead understand religion from a cultural perspective, integrate it into the cultural system created by mankind, develop a multicultural awareness of a pluralistic society, understand the richness of religion in a more comprehensive way, raise awareness of religious affairs and adapt to the needs of teaching. Secondly, religions must be studied and understood. Religion is an idea of culture, influencing society with its colourful philosophy, morals, art and customs, and is a valuable subject for cultural study. As an aspect of human culture, religion is closely related to the life of human society. For this reason, it is important for teachers to understand religion, and a proper understanding of religion requires positive education. With this understanding, it is possible to leave behind the mentality of not daring to teach in the past, introduce students to a more comprehensive knowledge of religion, and lay the foundation for their future cultural exchange and adjustment.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, in the face of cultural exchanges and cultural collisions in the context of globalization, the construction of the teaching staff, the formulation of educational policies, and the issue of educational equity are the main problems faced by governments of all countries. The key factor to solving the problem is to apply the theme of “diversity” to practice, attach great importance to the impact of different cultural differences, and formulate diversified, personalized, and localized policies and measures. At the same time, we should pay attention to the challenges and opportunities brought by the multi-religious background, pay attention to the spiritual construction of students, solve conflicts, and build a harmonious and stable society.This paper is committed to putting forward specific requirements and advocates for education methods in combination with multicultural and religious backgrounds. The innovation and discovery of multicultural education theories are missing. The future research will mainly focus on the discovery of multicultural education theories and the empirical research of “adjusting measures to local conditions” education methods.

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