

A Comparative Study on the Management Models of Community-Based Elderly Education in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area from the Perspective of Learning Society Construction

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Against the dual backdrop of an accelerating aging population and the deepening construction of a learning society, community-based elderly education has become a critical link in building a lifelong education system. This study takes the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) as its research context and employs a comparative research framework to systematically analyze the similarities, differences, and characteristics of the management models, policy environments, curriculum design, teaching faculty, and resource-sharing mechanisms for community-based elderly education in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. The research finds that Guangdong exhibits an administrative-oriented model characterized by "government leadership and school participation," Hong Kong follows a socialization model driven by "market forces and institutional autonomy," while Macao demonstrates a governance model centered on "community-based approaches and cultural integration." The study further reveals common challenges faced by the three models, including imbalances in resource allocation, lack of coordination in management systems, and misalignment in educational supply. Based on this analysis, this paper constructs an optimization path model for community-based elderly education in the GBA, centered on "multi-stakeholder collaboration, resource sharing, and mechanism innovation," aiming to provide a theoretical reference and practical guide for promoting the high-quality, integrated development of regional elderly education and enhancing the effectiveness of building a learning society.

Keywords: Comparative Study; Learning Society; Community-based Elderly Education; Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As China's population aging continues to deepen, the "silver tsunami" poses severe challenges to social governance and the public service system. Concurrently, "building a learning society where all people learn throughout their lives" has become a national strategic goal. Elderly education, as the "last mile" of lifelong education, is increasingly highlighting its importance. Community-based elderly education, with its geographical convenience, practical content, and sense of belonging, has become a core carrier for meeting the learning needs of the elderly, promoting social participation, and achieving active aging.

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is a key spatial carrier for national efforts to build a world-class city cluster and participate in global competition. The distinct social systems, legal

frameworks, cultural backgrounds, and development stages within its three regions Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao have resulted in rich diversity in the development paths and management models of community-based elderly education. This diversity provides valuable samples for comparative research and offers a unique perspective for exploring regional synergy and model innovation. However, current academic research systematically comparing the community-based elderly education across these three regions remains insufficient, lacking integrated analysis of management models from the overall perspective of learning society construction.

Therefore, based on the macro perspective of learning society construction, this study aims to, through constructing a systematic comparative research framework, deeply analyze the current situation,

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characteristics, problems, and causes of the management models for community-based elderly education in the GBA. On this basis, it explores effective paths for synergistic development and resource sharing among the three regions, hoping to provide theoretical support and decision-making references for the formulation of regional elderly education policies, the optimization of practical models, and the further advancement of learning society construction.[1]

2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

2.1 Construction of the Comparative Research Framework

Based on the requirements of “inclusiveness, personalization, high quality, and sustainability” for elderly education put forward by the construction of a learning society, this study constructs a comparative analysis framework comprising five core dimensions:

- **Policy and Governance Dimension:** Examines the strength of policy support, the composition of management entities, and the characteristics of the governance structure.
- **Resources and Conditions Dimension:** Analyzes the allocation of hardware resources such as funding sources, facilities, equipment, and digital platforms.
- **Curriculum and Teaching Dimension:** Reviews the diversity of the curriculum system, the relevance of teaching content, and the appropriateness of teaching methods.
- **Faculty and Human Resources Dimension:** Investigates the composition of the teaching faculty, their professional level, and the development support system.
- **Collaboration and Sharing Dimension:** Evaluates the coordination mechanisms and the effectiveness of resource sharing across departments, regions, and systems.

2.2 Research Methods

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, comprehensively applying:

Literature and Policy Analysis:

Systematically collects and analyzes policy documents, planning texts, and statistical reports on elderly education issued by the three regional governments, sorting out their institutional environments and development contexts.

Field Research and Interview Method:

Conducts in-depth visits to typical communities in the GBA (e.g., Yucun Community in Shenzhen, centers under Tung Wah Group of Hospitals in Hong Kong, the General Union of Neighbors Association of Macao) to understand the firsthand experiences and views of managers, teachers, and elderly learners through semi-structured interviews.

Case Comparison Method:

Selects 2-3 representative community-based elderly education programs from each of the three regions as typical cases for in-depth cross-case comparative analysis to extract model characteristics.

Model Construction Method:

Based on the comparative analysis, applies systems thinking to construct a future-oriented roadmap for optimizing the management models of community-based elderly education in the GBA.[2]

3. Comparative Analysis of Management Models for Community-based Elderly Education in the GBA

3.1 Comparison of Policies and Governance Models Guangdong: The Administrative-oriented Model of "Government Leadership and School Participation"

Community-based elderly education in Guangdong is primarily integrated into the public service system, led by the education and civil affairs departments at various government levels, with sub-district offices and community neighborhood committees responsible for specific implementation. Public adult higher education institutions, vocational colleges, and community colleges are important supporting forces. Its advantages lie in strong mobilization capacity and high efficiency in resource integration, but it suffers from insufficient flexibility and limited participation of social forces.

Hong Kong: The Socialization Model of "Market-Driven and Institutional Autonomy"

Community-based elderly education in Hong Kong is dominated by market mechanisms and social services. Non-governmental organizations, charitable institutions, and private educational enterprises are the main providers, with the government's role primarily being funding subsidies, standard setting, and quality supervision. This model leads to diversified service supply and strong competitiveness, enabling rapid response to market demands, but it may also result in uneven distribution of resources, excessive commercialization, and insufficient attention to vulnerable groups.

Macao: The Governance Model of "Community-Based and Cultural Integration"

Community-based elderly education in Macao is deeply rooted in its unique associational culture. Large associations, such as the General Union of Neighbors Association of Macao and the Federation of Trade Unions, form the core of a highly community-based education network. The government plays a partnership role, providing funding and policy support. This model boasts a strong sense of community identity and distinctive cultural and life education characteristics, but

needs strengthening in terms of systematization and professional development.

3.2 Comparison of Resource Integration and Sharing Mechanisms

The three regions show different paths in resource integration:

- **Guangdong:** Relies on resource allocation within the administrative system, and has recently begun exploring intensive development models such as "Community Education Groups."
- **Hong Kong:** Allocates resources through market-oriented methods like project bidding and service purchase, encouraging inter-agency cooperation.
- **Macao:** Mobilizes and integrates resources relying on the social capital networks of associations. However, cross-border resource sharing among the three regions still faces significant obstacles such as institutional barriers, differing standards, and poor information flow, and an efficient regional resource sharing platform has not yet been formed.

3.3 Identified Common Problems

- **Fragmentation of the Management System:** Both within and among the three regions, there is overlapping management functions and segmented administration, lacking a top-level coordination mechanism.
- **Imbalance in Resource Supply:** High-quality educational resources are unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas and among different social groups, with a prominent digital divide.
- **Mismatch Between Educational Supply and Demand:** Course content sometimes fails to align with the actual learning needs, interests, and ability levels of the elderly.
- **Persistent Shortage of Professional Faculty:** There is a lack of stable, professional teaching faculty for elderly education, with a high proportion of part-time staff and insufficient systematic training. [3-4]

4. Optimization Paths for the Management Models of Community-based Elderly Education in the GBA Oriented Towards a Learning Society

Based on the above comparative analysis, this study constructs an optimization path model centered on "multi-stakeholder collaboration, resource sharing, and mechanism innovation."

4.1 Building a New Pattern of Multi-stakeholder Collaborative Governance

Promote the transition from single-entity management to multi-stakeholder collaborative governance. It is recommended to establish a "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

Community Elderly Education Development Alliance," involving multiple parties including government, universities, social organizations, and enterprises, to jointly formulate regional development plans, standards, and policies, forming a governance structure featuring joint decision-making and shared responsibility.

4.2 Establishing a Digital-Enabled Resource Sharing Platform

Leveraging the experience of "Digital Bay Area" construction, create an integrated "GBA Elderly Education Cloud Platform." Consolidate high-quality resources such as courses, teaching faculty databases, and activity information from the three regions. Utilize big data and artificial intelligence technologies to provide personalized learning recommendations for the elderly, breaking down the geographical and institutional barriers to resource flow.

4.3 Innovating Supply-Demand Matching Content and Curriculum Systems

Establish a "demand-oriented, dynamically adjusted" curriculum development mechanism. Encourage the creation of courses covering modern life skills such as digital literacy, health management, financial planning, and intergenerational communication, while supporting the development of characteristic courses based on local culture, achieving a unity of standardization and personalization.

4.4 Establishing a Professional and Sustainable Faculty Development System

Implement the "GBA Elderly Education Teacher Training Program," uniting universities and training institutions from the three regions to establish a unified teacher qualification framework and professional development path. Set up special funds to support cross-regional exchange, training, and certification for teachers, enhancing the professionalism and stability of the faculty. [5-6]

5. CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

Through systematically comparing the management models of community-based elderly education in the GBA, this study reveals the different development paths and their internal logic formed under specific social, economic, and cultural contexts. The three models each have their own characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages, and face common challenges such as fragmentation, imbalance, and lack of precision.

Oriented towards the goal of building a learning society, the future development of community-based elderly education in the GBA must transcend the limitations of a single locality and move towards regional synergy and integrated development. The optimization path model of "multi-stakeholder collaboration, resource sharing, and mechanism innovation" proposed in this

paper emphasizes stimulating the vitality of government, market, and social forces through institutional innovation and technological enablement, aiming to build an open, inclusive, and high-quality regional ecosystem for elderly education.

Future research can further focus on specific mechanisms for collaborative governance of community-based elderly education in the GBA, operational models for resource sharing platforms, and scientific evaluation systems for educational effectiveness, providing continuous impetus for theoretical deepening and practical innovation.[7]

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