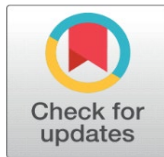


# COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ELDERLY EDUCATION POLICIES AND REGULATIONS IN GUANGDONG, HONG KONG, AND MACAU

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## ABSTRACT

Elderly education focuses on the special needs and interests of elderly individuals, aiming to improve their cultural literacy, knowledge level, physical and mental health, and promote their overall development and active lifestyles, while delaying the decline of physical function and cognitive abilities. The governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau have increasingly attached importance to elderly education, and have introduced a series of policies and regulations to support its development. This article provides a detailed analysis of the "Regulations on Elderly Education in Guangdong Province" in Guangdong, the "Elder Academy Scheme" in Hong Kong, and the "Welfare Law for the Elderly" in Macau. It conducts targeted analysis and comparisons of the policies and regulations on elderly education in these three regions, as well as analyzes typical cases in elderly education. The article also identifies shortcomings and provides guidance for the research and development of elderly education.

**Keywords:** Elderly Education, Guangdong, Hong Kong, Macau, Policies and Regulations, Comparative Study

## 1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

According to the data from the National Bureau of Statistics in 2022, by the end of 2021, the population aged 60 and above in China has reached 267.36 million, accounting for 18.7% of the total population. Among them, the population aged 65 and above is 190.64 million. According to international standards, when the proportion of the population aged 60 and above reaches 10% or the proportion of the population aged 65 and above reaches 7%, a country or region can be considered to have a high degree of population aging. China has become one of the countries with a high degree of population aging, and the aging trend is developing rapidly. It is estimated that by 2050, China's elderly population will reach nearly 500 million.

According to the results of the seventh national census, the proportion of elderly population in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is 12.35%, and it is estimated that the proportion of elderly population in the province will exceed 20% by 2030. Therefore, Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau are all facing varying degrees of population aging issues.

The elderly education policies and regulations in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau all encourage and support the participation of elderly individuals in various forms of education and cultural activities, aiming to improve their quality of life and self-development capabilities. However, there are some differences in specific implementation:

The "Regulations on Elderly Education in Guangdong Province" emphasizes that the government should increase investment in elderly education and promote the participation of social forces in elderly education. The regulations also specify the scope of elderly education content and teaching methods.

The "Elder Academy Scheme" in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region provides various lifelong learning opportunities for individuals aged 60 and above, including free courses and discounted tuition fees, to encourage their participation in learning and social activities.

"Welfare Law for the Elderly" in the Macau Special Administrative Region specifies the rights and benefits of elderly individuals, including encouraging their participation in various forms of education and cultural activities, especially those beneficial to improving their quality of life and maintaining their health, such as sports, culture, art, and handicrafts. In addition, Macau also offers various types of courses and activities, such as university open days, cultural lectures, and art courses, to meet the diverse learning needs of the elderly.

In summary, the elderly education policies and regulations in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau have their respective focuses, but they are all dedicated to improving the quality of life and self-development capabilities of elderly individuals. However, there are some differences, and further improvement is needed in the comparative study of elderly education policies and regulations in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

Elderly education refers to educational activities conducted specifically for individuals aged 60 and above [Zhonghai \(2022\)](#), [Yu \(2022\)](#). Elderly education focuses on the special needs and interests of senior citizens, aiming to enhance their cultural literacy, knowledge level, physical and mental health, and overall development, while also delaying the decline of their physical functions and cognitive abilities [Lin \(2021\)](#), [Xianping \(2021\)](#), [Cuiping \(2022\)](#).

The main components of elderly education include community cultural activities, health knowledge education, cultural and recreational activities, technology applications, and vocational skills training [Hongai \(2022\)](#). Community cultural activities encompass lectures, artistic performances, calligraphy and painting, dance and sports, among others. Health knowledge education involves imparting knowledge in nutrition, health care, and medicine. Cultural and recreational activities encompass literature, arts, sports, and tourism. Technology applications involve the use of computers, smartphones, and other technological devices. Vocational skills training includes areas such as repair work, handicrafts, and farming [Zhonghua \(2022\)](#), [Shu \(2022\)](#).

The purpose of elderly education is to enable senior citizens to enhance their physical and mental well-being, improve self-awareness and self-management abilities, maintain social connections and quality of life, actively participate in social activities, and achieve the goals of being productive, enjoying life, continuing to learn, and staying engaged [Qinghong \(2022\)](#).

### **3. ANALYSIS OF POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ON ELDERLY EDUCATION IN THE GUANGDONG-HONG KONG-MACAO GREATER BAY AREA**

#### **3.1. ANALYSIS OF GUANGDONG'S POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ON ELDERLY EDUCATION**

The "Guangdong Province Regulations on Elderly Education" was officially implemented on July 1, 2013, making it the first local regulation in China specifically targeting elderly education. The regulations consist of 60 articles covering various aspects of elderly education and have the following characteristics:

**Emphasis on key issues:** The regulations clearly define key issues in elderly education such as educational objectives, content, forms, and resources, providing a legal basis for the implementation of elderly education.

**Emphasis on practicality:** The regulations emphasize the importance of practicality in elderly education, encouraging active participation of elderly people in community development and specifying the content and forms of practical education for the elderly.

**Emphasis on guarantee:** The regulations stipulate that the government and society should support and guarantee elderly education, specifying the necessary funding and resources that should be provided by the government and social organizations. The regulations also establish mechanisms for funding sources and guarantees for elderly education.

**Emphasis on supervision:** The regulations define the supervision mechanism and responsibilities for elderly education, specifying the supervisory departments and targets. The regulations also outline the penalties for violations of the regulations.

Currently, the implementation of the "Guangdong Province Regulations on Elderly Education" is satisfactory. The Guangdong provincial government and local governments attach great importance to elderly education, increasing funding and resource allocation for elderly education. They have also launched a series of high-quality educational resources and services for the elderly, achieving certain results and receiving widespread recognition and praise from the elderly population. Elderly education has become an important part of human resources and social security work in Guangdong province.

#### **3.2. ANALYSIS OF HONG KONG'S POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ON ELDERLY EDUCATION**

The "Elder Academy Scheme" is an elderly education program launched by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government in 2001. It aims to encourage and support lifelong learning among the elderly population in Hong Kong, improve their cultural literacy and knowledge, promote their mental and physical health, and enhance their self-awareness and social participation abilities. The program has the following characteristics:

**Flexibility and diversity:** The "Elder Academy Scheme" emphasizes flexible and diverse educational methods and forms, including academic courses, recreational activities, handicrafts, and other types of activities to meet the diverse learning interests and needs of the elderly.

**Community-based approach:** The program is community-based, establishing a series of community-based elderly learning centers and districts to facilitate the participation of the elderly in learning activities and improve their learning enthusiasm and engagement.

**Comprehensive services:** In addition to providing learning opportunities, the program also focuses on the physical and mental health of the elderly, providing relevant services and support such as health check-ups and psychological counseling.

**Policy support:** The government encourages lifelong learning among the elderly by providing discounted tuition fees, various learning subsidies, and multiple scholarships to incentivize active participation in learning.

Currently, the "Elder Academy Scheme" has become one of the most influential elderly education programs in Hong Kong, receiving widespread recognition and praise from the elderly population. As of 2021, the program covers all 18 districts of Hong Kong, with over 150 elderly learning centers and nearly 200,000 elderly individuals participating in learning activities. The government continues to increase investment and support for the program, further improving the accessibility and quality of elderly education.

### **3.3. ANALYSIS OF MACAO'S POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ON ELDERLY EDUCATION**

The "Law on the Welfare of the Elderly" in Macao was promulgated and implemented in 2009, serving as a legal framework by the Macao Special Administrative Region government to protect the basic rights and welfare of the elderly. The law has the following characteristics:

**Protection of basic rights:** The law stipulates the basic rights and treatment of the elderly in areas such as basic living, medical care, education, and culture, and prohibits any infringement of the rights of the elderly by individuals or organizations.

**Strengthening social responsibility:** The law stipulates that all sectors of society should assume social responsibility for the elderly, encouraging various sectors to pay attention to the lives and health of the elderly and jointly create a favorable living environment for them.

**Enhancement of welfare support:** The law stipulates that the government and society should increase welfare support for the elderly, improve their living standards and medical security, and provide necessary material and spiritual support.

**Establishment of a sound welfare mechanism:** The law requires the government to establish a sound welfare mechanism for the elderly, including areas such as medical security, pensions, and the construction of elderly welfare facilities, to better protect the basic rights of the elderly.

Currently, the "Law on the Welfare of the Elderly" in Macao is being implemented effectively. The government and various sectors of society attach great importance to the welfare of the elderly, introducing a series of policies and measures to support and protect the welfare of the elderly, including strengthening

medical security, increasing pension levels, and promoting the construction of elderly welfare facilities. At the same time, all sectors of society are advocating for attention to the lives and health of the elderly and actively participating in elderly welfare protection, creating an atmosphere of collective concern for the elderly throughout society.

#### **4. COMPARISON OF ELDERLY EDUCATION POLICIES AND REGULATIONS IN GUANGDONG, HONG KONG, AND MACAO**

Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao have policies and regulations specifically targeting elderly education, but there are certain differences in implementation and policy focus.

##### **4.1. SIMILARITIES IN ELDERLY EDUCATION POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

**Similar policy objectives:** The elderly education policies in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao all aim to encourage and support lifelong learning among the elderly, improve their cultural literacy and knowledge, promote their mental and physical health, and enhance their self-awareness and social participation abilities.

**Community-based approach:** The policies in all three regions are based on community involvement, establishing elderly learning centers and districts to facilitate local participation in learning activities.

**Diverse learning methods:** The policies emphasize flexible and diverse educational methods and forms, including academic courses, recreational activities, handicrafts, and other types of activities to meet the diverse learning interests and needs of the elderly.

**Government and social support:** The governments and various sectors of society in all three regions attach great importance to elderly education, introducing policies and measures to support and guarantee elderly education.

##### **4.2. DIFFERENCES IN ELDERLY EDUCATION POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

**Legislation:** Hong Kong and Macao have enacted laws on the welfare of the elderly, while Guangdong province has not implemented similar legislation.

**Policy focus:** Guangdong's elderly education policy focuses mainly on skills training and employment guidance, while Hong Kong and Macao place more emphasis on cultural literacy enhancement and cultivating hobbies and interests among the elderly.

**Learning content:** The learning content of elderly education also differs among the three regions. Guangdong province mainly offers practical courses such as handicraft production and language training, while Hong Kong and Macao focus more on humanities and interest-based courses.

**Tuition fees and subsidies:** There are variations in tuition fees and subsidy standards for elderly education among the three regions. The government-provided tuition fees and subsidies in Hong Kong and Macao are relatively higher compared to Guangdong province.

In conclusion, there are certain differences in elderly education policies among Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. However, overall, the governments and various

sectors in all three regions attach great importance to elderly education, encouraging lifelong learning among the elderly and improving their cultural literacy and quality of life. With the advancement of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area initiative, the government departments of the three regions can strengthen communication and collaboration to promote the development of elderly education and facilitate coordinated regional economic development.

## **5. TYPICAL CASES OF ELDERLY EDUCATION IN GUANGDONG, HONG KONG, AND MACAO**

- 1) Huizhou Senior University in Guangdong Province: Established in 1995, Huizhou Senior University is one of the earliest elderly education institutions in Guangdong Province. With the aim of "learning, communication, fitness, and entertainment," the university offers various courses in culture, technology, health, and more to cultivate the interests, cultural literacy, and quality of life among the elderly.
- 2) Hong Kong Elder Academy: The Elder Academy is an elderly education institution established by the Hong Kong Social Welfare Department and is open to the public free of charge. The academy offers a wide range of courses, including academic subjects, recreational activities, health, and lifestyle guidance, providing a platform for learning and communication for the elderly.
- 3) Macao Polytechnic Institute Elderly Education Center: Established in 2004, the Elderly Education Center of Macao Polytechnic Institute is a government-promoted elderly education institution in the Macao Special Administrative Region. The center provides various courses in academic subjects, culture, technology, health, and even offers courses related to Macao's culture, such as Macanese dialect and Macao history.

These elderly education institutions not only provide learning and communication platforms for the elderly but also offer opportunities for physical exercise, self-awareness enhancement, and social participation. These typical cases illustrate the achievements and efforts in elderly education in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, while also providing references and inspiration for elderly education in other regions.

## **6. IMPROVEMENTS IN ELDERLY EDUCATION IN GUANGDONG, HONG KONG, AND MACAO**

The elderly education in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao still has some shortcomings to address:

- 1) Insufficient elderly education resources: Although there are elderly education institutions and courses in all three regions, some elderly people are unable to meet their learning needs due to limited educational resources.
- 2) High tuition fees: Despite subsidies and loan support provided by the Hong Kong and Macao governments, some elderly people still cannot afford the tuition fees due to financial reasons.
- 3) Lack of diversified learning content: Although there is a variety of elderly education courses in the three regions, some elderly people express the desire for more innovative and practical courses.

- 4) Insufficient teacher quality: There is a significant difference in the level and quality of elderly education teachers. Some elderly education institutions cannot provide high-quality educational resources and services.
- 5) Lack of effective evaluation and supervision mechanisms: Due to the lack of effective evaluation and supervision mechanisms, the teaching quality and service level of some elderly education institutions may have issues.

In conclusion, while Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao have made certain achievements in elderly education, there are still some shortcomings in terms of resource supply, tuition fees, learning content, teacher quality, and evaluation and supervision mechanisms. To better meet the learning needs of the elderly and improve the quality of education, the governments and various sectors of society need to continuously pay attention to the situation of elderly education and take effective measures for improvement.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Elderly education is an important component of social development. Researching the policies and regulations of elderly education in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao can deepen our understanding of and promote the development of elderly education. This article analyzed the policies and regulations of elderly education in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, and conducted comparative analysis. Based on this, typical cases of elderly education in the three regions were analyzed, and the shortcomings were identified. The Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao regions have abundant cultural resources and academic research advantages, which can leverage these regional strengths to enhance the value and influence of elderly education research.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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