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The Offsite National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) policy in China

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been published before. I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the development of the Offsite National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) in China by examining the context, the policy programming, the policy implementation, the impact, and the views of the stakeholders. This research employs a multiple case study approach in order to study the Offsite NCEE policy from multiple perspectives in real situations. Two provinces, one inbound province and one outbound province, were chosen as the two research contexts. Each province was the subject of an individual case study, but the study as a whole covered the two provinces. Interview, questionnaire survey, and documentary analysis were adopted as the main instruments for data collection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with government officers and migrant students, and group interviews were conducted with local students. The interviews aimed to encourage the participants construct their experience and express their views of the Offsite NCEE policy. The questionnaire survey was designed to explore students' experiences and views. Documentary analysis was used to explore the themes and trends from the policy documents in an attempt to understand the intentions and motivations of the government.

The findings suggest that the context for the NCEE policy concerns the regionally unequal opportunities for accessing higher education in the Chinese education system. The purpose of the Offsite NCEE policy is to solve the entrance examination problem for migrant children, and provide equal opportunity of accessing higher education for migrant children. The cultural value of harmony guides the policy makers to carefully balance the relationship between local residents and migrants. Meanwhile, the discretionary powers of local governments in the programming of Offsite NCEE policy provide opportunity for both the inbound and the outbound local governments to design their policy plans based on their self-interests. The findings of this study show that the Offsite NCEE policy is being selectively implemented. In the inbound province, it was found that the mismatch between educational demand and supply is a major variable in the implementation of Offsite NCEE policy. The local government set up school admission criteria to restrict the opportunity of migrant children to access schools. While in the outbound province, it

was found that the funding allocation mode and exam-oriented educational system affected the decisions of schools and the local government in student transferring management. Schools and the local educational department make an attempt to intervene in student school transferring. Based on the views of stakeholders, the Offsite NCEE policy benefits the migrant children in the inbound province and left-behind children in the outbound province. However, the interests of local students in the inbound province might be threatened and the local government of the inbound province has to afford extra pressure to provide education for migrant children. The findings suggest that the central government should be more focused on the implementation of Offsite NCEE policy and take measures to improve the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The aim of this thesis is to examine the development of the Offsite National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) policy in China. The National Unified Examinations for Admission to Regular Higher Education Institutions (also translated as National Higher Education Entrance Examination, often abbreviated as NCEE, short for National College Entrance Examination), commonly known as Gaokao, is a national, standardized, educational testing system designed to select high school graduates for higher education at the undergraduate level (Ministry of Education of P.R. China, 2016). It is an annual examination that is normally taken by high school students in their final year. Students' academic performances in the NCEE decide their opportunities to access higher education at undergraduate level. It is one of the most influential national standardised tests for student selection. According to the Ministry of Education, in 2015, 9.42 million students took the NCEE. 7 million students were offered places at higher educational institutions throughout the NCEE, including 3.66 million students for academic HEIs and 3.34 million students for vocational HEIs (China Education and Research Network, 2016). It is widely recognised that the NCEE is at the core of Chinese higher education admission policies (Zhang and Wang, 2014). Most reforms and changes of Chinese higher education admission policies are related to the NCEE. Changes to the NCEE policy affect different elements of the education system.

Scholars in the field of education in China often focus their discussion of China's educational equity issues on the NCEE policies (Zhang and Wang, 2014; Chan, 2009; Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). On the one hand, the NCEE is regarded as the most equitable method to select student for higher education (Zhang and Wang, 2014). The golden principle of the NCEE requires the equal treatment of students based on their academic performance (ibid). That is, all students should be treated equally according to their examination results, regardless of their social background. Consequently, any student who meets the required college admission scores can access HE. On the other hand, the NCEE and higher education admission policies

have been criticized by scholars in terms of equity (Chan, 2009; Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). That is, different orientations or biases in certain NCEE policies have exacerbated existing inequalities within access to higher education (Wang, 2011; Chan, 2009; Yu et al 2012). Most discussions emphasise the impact of the Chinese household registration system on the NCEE policies (Wang, 2011; Cai, 2011; Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). Scholars argue that the Chinese household registration system has created a strong social stratification within Chinese society through its impact on education, particularly on National Unified Examinations for Admission to Regular Higher Education Institutions (Cai, 2011; Yu et al, 2012).

The examination of equity in the NCEE policies must begin by understanding the Household registration system and intra-province migration and their relationship to education. The Chinese household registration system, known as the 'hukou' system, is an institution controlling population movement (Chan, 2009). Starting in 1958, the Chinese population was categorized by the Household registration system. The hukou system requires the registration of every Chinese citizen at birth, and officially identifies a person as a resident of an area and his or her hukou (Chan, 2009). Every Chinese citizen must be registered in one and only one place of residence. The residential place defines the individual's rights to pursue eligibility for services and to gain access to benefits in a specific locality which is not available to citizens whose location is elsewhere (Chan, 2009).

Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in scale of internal migration in China (Chan, 2009). Economic reforms in China encourage many workers to move to developed regions for working and living. Every year, millions of people leave home and move to other provinces for better financial reward and opportunity. There are two categories of migrant, migration with hukou and migration without hukou. However, while migrants are allowed to move to the destinations, it is very difficult for them to obtain a local hukou where they stay (Chan, 2010). As they do not have local hukou, these migrants are generally excluded from the basic social services where they stay, such as education, health and housing (ibid).

According to the Annual Report on Chinese floating migration population 2015, there were 252 million floating migrants by the end of 2014 with an annual growth

of 8 million during the past five years (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). It is predicted that the floating migrant population will reach 291 million in 2020 with an annual growth of 6 million (ibid). Internal migration creates two special groups, left behind children and migrant children. The large scale of internal migration has caused millions of children to be left behind in their hometown and be apart with their parents. Left-behind children have to live with grandparents and relatives. The Annual Report on Chinese floating migration population 2015 also claims that more and more migrants are moving with their dependents in the most recent decade (ibid). It reports that migrants who move with their dependents are estimated to account for 60% of the whole floating migrant population (ibid). According to the latest national population census of 2010, the total stock of left-behind children and migrant children reaches over 96 million across the country, including 61 million left-behind children and 35 million migrant children (ibid). According to the Statistical Communiqué on national Educational Development 2014, there were 12.94 million migrant children studying in compulsory schools, including 9.55 million in primary schools and 3.39 million in junior high schools. There were 20.75 million left-behind children studying in compulsory schools, including 14.09 million in primary schools and 6.65 million in junior high schools (ibid).

China's constitution promulgates that all citizens shall enjoy equal opportunity of education regardless of their nationality, race, sex, occupation, property or religious belief (Ministry of Education of P.R. China, 2016). However, scholars argue that the hukou system has limited the equity and fairness of the education system in China (Cai, 2011; Wang and Chan, 2005; Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). Firstly, all students are required to attend the college entrance exams where their original household is registered, regardless of their current residence and school location, resulting in great inconvenience for the migrant students (Cai, 2011). Secondly, the admission score lines of each province are different. According to the policy that students must attend the NCEE at their hukou zones, it is much easier for the students who have a 'low admission score line province' hukou to enter institutions of higher education (Wang and Chan, 2005). Thirdly, candidates with local hukou are preferred in the college recruitment while a certain quota is set to enrol a limited

number of students from other provinces (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). The uneven distribution of higher education resources makes the rates of entering HEIs different between provinces (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007).

Within the Chinese context, educational equity largely depends on policy (Zhu, 2010). Zhu (2010) points out that educational equity is closely associated with educational policy. One the one hand, educational policy might cause inequity issues (ibid). On the other hand, scholars suggest that education policy is only one of the ways of resolving educational inequity (Zhang and Wang, 2014; Zhu, 2010). The increasing demand of migrant children for education and taking the NCEE where they currently live has become a significant social issue in China. Both central and local governments pay more attention to the provisions of migrant children education. The Offsite NCEE policy was therefore published. This policy allows students from migrant families to attend the college entrance exams in their current place of residence and school location, but not where their original household is registered. This policy can be seen as a very important step in China's college admission reform. It witnesses that China has moved towards providing equity in higher education admission. In this thesis, the relationship between educational equity and policy is shown through the Offsite NCEE policy.

Provinces stand at different positions with regard to the Offsite NCEE policy. Some provinces have a large number of migrant children to move in, while some provinces have a large number of migrant children that move out. Regarding the Offsite NCEE policy, there are two different types of province: inbound province and outbound province. An inbound province refers to a province with a large number of inbound migrant children. While an outbound province refers to a province with a large number of outbound migrant children or left-behind children. In this study, two provinces, including one inbound province and one outbound province, were chosen as the research places. This will be explained in detail later (section 4.4).

1.2 Personal motivation

The reasons for doing this research are due to my personal experiences of studying in China. I had completed the compulsory education and senior high school in China.

In 2007, I took the NCEE in the outbound province. According to my own experiences, the NCEE is the most important event in a student's life in China. In the Chinese educational system, students prepare for the NCEE from very beginning of school. Any small change in the NCEE would directly impact on each individual student. However, students in the outbound province have to get higher score to access HEIs. Students in the outbound province like me have to pay more to access higher education. In other words, students in the outbound province are victims in the unequal higher education admission system. Students are concerned with the issues of educational equity in China.

Secondly, when I was in school, some of my classmates were left-behind children. Their parents were working in another province. They had strong demand for moving out with their parents. However, they had to stay in the outbound province as they could not attend schools and take the NCEE in inbound places. For these two reasons, I decided to explore the unequal issues of the NCEE, and especially investigate the Offsite NCEE policy.

1.3 Research questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Offsite National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) policy in the research places. The main research questions of the thesis are as follows:

What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy? How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed? How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented? What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy? What are the views of the stakeholders tasked with the Offsite NCEE policy?

Chapter 2 defines the concept of policy analysis. On the basis of the conceptual and theoretical discussions of policy analysis, Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach of policy analysis is adopted in this study. However, no policy evaluation project has been conducted for the Offsite NCEE policy so far. Therefore, in order to look at the development of the Offsite NCEE policy, this research analyses the Offsite NCEE policy by using three stages of Knoepfel et al's (2011) four stages of policy process: agenda setting, policy programming, and policy implementation. Furthermore, this

research explores the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy and the views of stakeholders. To answer the main research question, four groups of sub-questions are posed. Each group of sub-questions addresses a specific perspective of the Offsite NCEE policy and includes one of the main research questions.

Table 1.1 Research questions

Themes	Research questions
Context	Q1.1 What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy?
	Q1.2 What are the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy?
Policy programming	Q2.1 Who is responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?
	Q2.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed?
	Q2.3 What are the factors affecting the decisions of policy makers?
	Q2.4 What is the impact of these factors on the decisions of policy makers?
Policy implementation	Q3.1 Who is responsible for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?
	Q3.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented?
	Q3.3 What are the factors that affect the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

	Q3.4 What is the impact of these factors on the policy implementation?
	Q3.5 To what extent is the Offsite NCEE policy effectively implemented? That is, to what extent does the policy implementation in reality follow the documentary requirement?
Impact & the views of stakeholders	Q4.1 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the inbound province?
	Q4.2 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the outbound province?
	Q4.3 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to 'educational equity'?
	Q4.4 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the context in China for the Offsite NCEE policy?
	Q4.5 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?
	Q4.6 What the views of stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

To find out more about the stage of 'agenda setting' of the Offsite NCEE policy, the first group of sub-questions addresses the context for the Offsite NCEE policy.

Q1.1 What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q1.2 What are the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy?

In order to analyse the development of the Offsite NCEE policy, it is necessary to have an understanding of the context. This is important to this study, as the drivers

behind a policy are often subject to contextual issues, historical events and past policies. By placing the Offsite NCEE policy in a contextual position, it is possible to identify the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy. The context in China explored included those concerned with the political administration system, household registration system educational system higher education, undergraduate admission system, National College Entrance Examination and cultural value. This group of sub-questions was firstly explored in the context review, and then further discussed in this research.

The second group of sub-questions addresses the stage of 'policy programming' of the Offsite NCEE policy.

Q2.1 Who is responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q2.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed?

Q2.3 What are the factors affecting the decisions of policy makers?

Q2.4 What is the impact of these factors on the decisions of policy makers?

To answer the research questions concerning policy programming, it is necessary to collect information on the responsible authority (Q2.1), the specific process of policy programming (Q2.2) and the factors that affect the programming of the policy (Q2.3 and Q2.4). This information represents the programming process of Offsite NCEE policy.

The third group of sub-questions addresses the stage of 'policy implementation' of the Offsite NCEE policy.

Q3.1 Who is responsible for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented?

Q3.3 What are the factors that affect the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.4 What is the impact of these factors on the policy implementation?

Q3.5 To what extent is the Offsite NCEE policy effectively implemented? That is, to what extent does the policy implementation in reality follow the documentary requirement?

To answer the research questions concerning the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy, it is necessary to collect data at the local level in relation to the responsible authority (Q3.1), the detailed process of the policy implementation (Q3.2), the factors that affect the policy implementation (Q3.3 and Q3.4). These data provide information on the current situation of policy implementation. Then, an assessment is made as to whether the Offsite NCEE policy is effectively implemented, by comparing what is happening in reality with what is stipulated in the documents (Q3.5).

The fourth group of sub-questions addresses the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy.

Q4.1 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the inbound province?

Q4.2 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the outbound province?

In addition, collected data identifies:

Q4.3 the views of stakeholders with regard to 'educational equity'

Q4.4 the views of stakeholders with regard to the context in China for the Offsite NCEE policy

Q4.5 the views of stakeholders with regard to the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy

Q4.6 the views of stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy

As stated earlier, there are two types of province with regard to the Offsite NCEE policy: inbound province and outbound province. Given the different situations in the two provinces, to answer the research questions concerning the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy, the data of the two provinces are discussed separately. In order to explore the views of stakeholders, it was necessary to collect data on the views of stakeholder in relation to multiple perspectives of the Offsite NCEE policy,

including educational equity (Q4.3), the context (Q4.4), the policy programming (Q4.5), and the policy implementation (Q4.6).

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter two describes the context of the Offsite NCEE policy. It aims to illustrate the social and policy background of the Offsite NCEE policy by exploring eight contextual dimensions, including political administrative system, household registration system, educational system, higher education, undergraduate admission, national college entrance examination, geographical inequity and cultural value.

Chapter three reviews the broader literature related to this research. The literature review chapter is organized into three sections: educational equity, why there is geographical inequity in China's higher education admission and policy analysis. Firstly, the literature review serves to contribute to an understanding of the ideological ideas surrounding the concept of educational equity. Then the second section explores educational equity issues in China's higher education admission at undergraduate level. The focus of the discussion is placed upon the reasons behind geographical inequity in China's higher education admission. The last section looks at the concept of policy analysis. It serves to underpin the analysis of the Offsite NCEE policy by providing a theoretical basis for policy analysis. Previous theories surrounding policy analysis are explored, and Knoepfel at al's (2011) approach is adopted in this research as the theoretical basis for the Offsite NCEE policy analysis.

Chapter four explains the methodology and methods of this study. Multiple case study design was adopted in this study. This chapter describes in detail the methods of data collection. Interviews, questionnaire survey, and documentary analysis were adopted in this research. This chapter also addresses the quality issues of this research, including limitations, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations. Two provinces, one inbound province and one outbound province, were chosen as the two research places. Each province is the subject of an individual case study, but the study as a whole covers the two cases. The contexts of the two research places are discussed to explain the reasons for choosing them as the research places. This

chapter also presents an overview of the field work by describing the schedule for data collection, the pilot study and sampling. The last section discusses the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter five presents detailed information regarding the findings of data collected in the inbound province. On the basis of Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach to policy analysis, the findings of inbound province case are presented in a structure of research questions. The first section presents the contexts of the inbound province. The second section focuses on the policy programming stage, and the third section focuses on the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province. The final section discovers the views of stakeholders. The findings reported in this chapter are based on qualitative and quantitative data collected through student questionnaire survey, student interviews, officer interview and documentary analysis.

Chapter six reports detailed information about the findings of the data collected in the outbound province. On the basis of Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach to policy analysis, the findings of the outbound province case are presented according to the structure of the research questions. The first section presents the contexts of the outbound province. The second section focuses on the policy programming stage, and the third section focuses on the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province. The final section discovers the views of stakeholders. The findings reported in this chapter are based on qualitative and quantitative data collected through student questionnaire survey, student interviews, officer interviews and documentary analysis.

Chapter seven addresses the discussion of the research findings. The discussion chapter is presented according to the structure of the research questions. It looks at four dimensions of the two cases, the context, the policy programming, the policy implementation and the impacts. The two single cases are compared and contrasted in the discussion.

Chapter eight summarises the findings of this study. It firstly answers the research questions and evaluates the contributions that this study can make to existing research. The concluding chapter also discusses the implications and contributions for further research.

Chapter 2 The Chinese Context

Introduction

Chapter two describes the context of the Offsite NCEE policy. It aims to illustrate the social and policy background in which the Offsite NCEE policy was formulated. This chapter focuses on five contextual dimensions: the political administrative system, household registration system, educational system, geographical inequity and cultural value.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section provides an over view of the political administrative system in China. In order to examine the development of the Offsite NCEE policy, it is necessary to have an understanding of the political administrative system in China. This is helpful in understanding how the decisions and directives of the Offsite NCEE policy are delivered within the government system.

The second section introduces the Chinese household registration system. The issues of migrant children's education originally come from control of the Chinese household registration system. Under the control of the Chinese household registration system, migrant children were denied to attend school and the NCEE of their current residence and school location. Faced with these issues, the central government decided to formulate the Offsite NCEE policy.

The third section provides an overview of the educational system in China. As a new college admission policy, the Offsite NCEE policy is an integral part of the education system in China. In order to examine the context of the Offsite NCEE policy, it is necessary to have an understanding of the educational system in China. The focus of discussion will be placed upon three dimensions including higher education, undergraduate admission and the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE).

The fourth section discusses geographical inequity in China's higher education admission. The Offsite NCEE policy was formulated within the context of inequity in China's higher education admission. Different orientations or biases in certain

NCEE policies and uneven distribution of higher education resources have exacerbated existing geographical inequalities within access to higher education. This section is to illustrate the history and the status quo of the issues, and its consequences in relation to the Offsite NCEE policy.

The final section discusses cultural value in China. In traditional culture of China, education is highly valued. The cultural value guides people to pay close attention to the issues of educational equity and the Offsite NCEE policy.

2.1 Political administrative system in China

The People's Republic of China has an authoritarian political system, controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Lawrence and Martin, 2013).

Figure 2.1 China's leading political institutions

 (Lawrence and Martin, 2013)

As is shown in Figure 2.1, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is committed to a Leninist model of political control (Saich, 2011). It dominates the government at all levels. The National People's Congress is the highest organ of state power, and local People's Congresses at different levels are local organs of state power. "State administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs are created by, responsible to and supervised by the people's congresses" (China.org.cn, 2015). It is China's fundamental political system. The People's Political Consultative Conferences

(PPCCs), in which CCP consult with PPCCs on policy issues, is also considered as one of the leading political institutions. The central people's government, the State Council, is the highest state administrative body (ibid).

In the United Nations' China country profile, a detailed explanation of the function of the State Council is provided:

> *"The State Council carries out the laws enacted and decisions adopted by the National Peoples Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee. The State Council is responsible to the NPC and its Standing Committee, and reports to them on its work. Among others, the State Council exercises the following functions and powers, formulates administrative measures, enacts administrative regulations, promulgates decisions and orders and exercises unified leadership over the work of the ministries and commissions and the work of other organizations under its jurisdiction"* (United Nations, 2006, p.7).

State power in China is exercised through the central administrative system and the local administrative system. The administrative system refers to "a series of regulations and practices in regard to the composition, system, power and activities of the state administrative organs" (China.org.cn, 2015). The central administrative system includes the central administrative organs under the system of the NPC and the leadership of the central administrative organs over local administrative organs at different levels (ibid).

The local administrative area refers to the special administrative region directly under the central government (GOV, 2015a).

Table 2.1 Level of local government

Level	Name	Types
1	Provincial level (34)	• Provinces (23) • Autonomous regions (5) • Municipalities (4) • Special administrative regions (2)
2	Prefectural level (334)	• Prefecture-level cities (291) • Prefectures (10) • Autonomous prefectures (30) • Leagues (3)
3	County level (2,852)	• Counties (1,408) • Districts (913) • County-level cities (360) • Special district (1) • Forestry district (1) • Autonomous counties (117) • Banners (49) • Autonomous banners (3)
4	Township level (40,466)	• Towns (19,683) • Townships (12,395) • Subdistricts (7,194) • District public offices (2) • Ethnic townships (1,085) • Sumu (106) • Ethnic sumu (1)
5	Village level (704,386)	• Village committees (623,669) • Neighborhood committees (80,717)

(GOV, 2015a)

As seen in Table 2.1, there is five-level administrative network of local governments: provincial level, prefectural level, county level, and township level. The provincial level is considered to be the most important level of sub-national administration in the system (Saich, 2011). There are four types of provincial administration at the first level: sub-national administration, provinces, autonomous regions,

municipalities and special administrative regions. At present, China has 34 provincial level administrative areas, including 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities directly under the central government, and 2 special administrative regions. The prefectural level administrative regions include prefecture-level cities, prefectures, autonomous prefecture and leagues. Basically, under the provinces and equivalents, there is a three-level administrative network of governments: counties, townships, and villages. The county level includes counties, county-level cities, special districts, forestry districts, autonomous counties, banners, and autonomous banners. At the township level, there are towns, townships, subdistricts, district public offices, ethnic townships, sumu and ethnic sumu. The village level includes village committees and neighbourhood committees.

In order to examine the Offsite NCEE policy, it is necessary to have an understanding of the political administrative system in China. The importance of introduction of the political administrative system is that it defines the government structure in China. This is helpful in understanding the policy background of Offsite NCEE policy, and in illustrating how the Offsite NCEE policy sits within the Chinese political administrative system.

2.2 Household registration system in China

The issues of migrant children's education originally come from control of the Chinese household registration system (Cai, 2011). The Chinese household registration system, known as the 'hukou' system, was formally established in 1958 (Wang, 2005). The hukou system requires the registration of every Chinese citizen at birth, and the household registration record (hukou registration book) officially identifies a person as a resident of an area and his or her hukou types (ibid). It is mainly intended for the purpose of population management and social administration (ibid). Under the hukou system, strict controls are imposed on intra-province migration.

All Chinese citizens' hukou are categorized according to two related classifications: "one by hukou type and the other by residential location" (Chan, 2009, p.201). The first aspect is hukou type or classification, consisting of 'agricultural' and 'non-

agricultural categories (ibid). 'Agricultural' hukou is considered as 'rural' hukou while 'non-agricultural' hukou is considered as 'urban' hukou (ibid). Non-agricultural hukou is not just assigned to the people who live in the cities, but can be assigned to those only temporarily working in rural areas (Wang, 2005). Likewise agricultural hukou holders may be temporarily working and living in cities (ibid).

The second aspect, hukou location, refers to hukou place or place of registration (Liu, 2005). Chinese citizens are categorized according to their place of hukou registration. Every Chinese citizen must be registered in one and only one place of residence (ibid). Hukou location defines the individual's rights to pursue eligibility for services and to gain access to benefits in a specific locality, which normally are not available to citizens whose location is elsewhere (Chan, 2009). Regarding the college entrance examination, all students were required to attend the NCEE where their original household is registered.

In addition, "the hukou system also serves as an inheritance system" (Cai, 2011, p.14). Children born into rural hukou families will automatically inherit their parents' rural hukou while children born into urban hukou families will inherit the urban hukou (ibid). Second generation migrants who are born in urban areas will still inherit their parents' rural hukou and are not able to possess urban hukou. The second generation migrants who are born in other regions will still inherit their parents' original-region hukou, and are not able to possess local hukou.

2.3 Educational system in China

In China, basic education consists of six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education and three years of senior secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2016). Children normally start their basic education at six or seven years of age, and receive the nine-years of compulsory education (primary and junior secondary education). The legal obligation of compulsory education, Compulsory Education Law, stipulates that "all school age children must receive compulsory education…their parents and legal guardians should guarantee that their children complete compulsory education" (NPC, 1986, Article 5 and Article 11). After junior secondary education, students have two options to continue their study, studying in

vocational secondary high school which usually results in employment or studying in normal senior secondary high school which usually results in entrance to higher education (Ministry of Education, 2016). The State Council establishes the national principles of education, and its related policies and planning (ibid). The Ministry of Education is responsible for the overall administration of education, and the guidance of relevant central ministries and the provincial governments (ibid). It formulates the policy implementation of educational matters at the provincial and municipal levels (ibid). Each local level government (provincial, city) has its educational department that governs their educational institutions (ibid).

Higher education in China

According to Article Two of the Higher Education Law of 1998, higher education in China is defined as "education that is carried out after the completion of senior secondary education" (NPC, 1998, Article 2). Higher education in China involves post-secondary education provided by universities, colleges, vocational institutions, academies, institutes of technology and certain other collegiate-level institutions, including vocational schools, trade schools, and career colleges that award academic degrees or professional certifications (Ministry of Education, 2015). It also offers non-degree programmes (ibid).

In China, according to ownership-based categories of HEIs, higher education institutions can be divided into two categories, state-owned or government-owned HEIs and non-government or private universities (Yu et al, 2012). Due to the large population, state-owned HEIs are not able to enrol everyone as a student. Private HEIs thus meet the need for the students who wish to access higher education but fail their college entrance examination. It is generally recognised that public HEIs are much better than private HEIs. Public HEIs includes Public Regular HEIs, Independent Institutions, Higher Vocational Colleges, and Adult HEIs. Public Regular HEIs are viewed as the 'cornerstone' in China's higher education (ibid).

According to the latest data of Ministry of Education's statistical report on education, in 2015, there were 2845 Chinese National Higher Institutions, including 2,553 National General Colleges and Universities and 292 Adult Higher Institutions, with more than six million enrolments in total (Ministry of Education, 2016). Among the

2,553 National General Colleges and Universities, there are only 447 private HEIs, and 275 Independent Institutions, and 7 Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Institutions (ibid). That is to say, most higher education institutions in China are public institutions administered by a government agency. The number of Public Regular HEIs reached 1824 in 2015, accounting for 64% of China's total number of higher education institutions (Ministry of Education, 2016).

As shown in Figure 2.2, public Regular higher education institutions in China may be classified into three categories in terms of governance (Zhou, 2006):

1. Central HEIs: the HEIs under the direct administration of the Ministry of Education;
2. Ministry-affiliated HEIs: the HEIs under the non-educational central ministries (for example the ministry of finance);
3. Provincial or Local HEIs: the HEIs under provincial and other local authorities.

Figure 2.2 China's higher education system governance
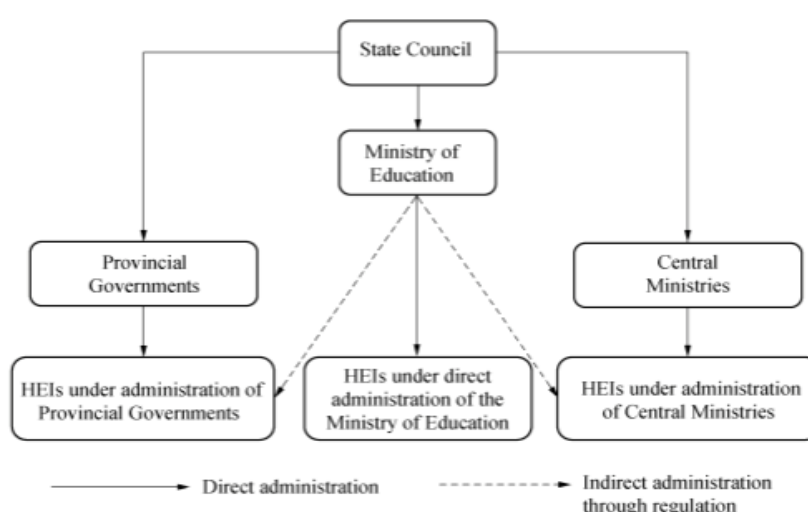
(Zhou, 2006)

China has a sanctioned higher education degree system, including Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees. Each level has its academic and professional routes. For undergraduate education, there are 1219 HEIs that provide 'Benke' (academic undergraduate) education, while there are 1334 HEIs provide 'Zhuanke' (vocational undergraduate) education (Educational Statistic Yearbook of China, 2014).

According to the Higher Education Law of 1998, 'Benke' education:

"Shall equip students with the essential principles and general knowledge of the discipline and subject area in a relatively systematic way, and the essential basic skills and methods and relevant knowledge of the subject area, and the elementary ability to conduct practical work and research work within the subject area" (Article 16, Higher education Law of 1998).

Meanwhile, the purpose of 'Zhuanke' education is:

"To equip students with the essential principles and specialized knowledge of the subject area and the basic skills and elementary ability to conduct practical work within the subject area" (Article 16, Higher education Law of 1998).

The main difference between the two routes lies in the type of education and the level of qualification they offer. 'Zhuanke' education offers students "specialized knowledge of the subject area", while 'Benke' education offers students "general knowledge of the discipline and subject area" (NPC, 1986, Article 16). The 'zhuanke' route normally leads to a vocational diploma degree, while the 'Benke' route normally leads to a bachelor's degree.

Figure 2.3 Types of Higher Education Institutions in China

HEIs in China (2845)			
Natiaonal General Colleges and Universities (2553)		Adult Higher Institutions (292)	

Natiaonal General Colleges and Universities (2553)			
State-owned Regular HEIs (1824)	Private HEIs (447)	Independent Institutions (275)	Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Instituitons (7)

Public Regular HEIs (undergradaute)	
Benke (academic undergraduate)	Zhuanke (vocational undergraduate)

Figure 2.3 shows the route for narrowing this study down. In This study firstly starts with National General Colleges and Universities, as majority (89.45%) of Higher Education Institutions in China are National General Colleges and Universities (People.cn, 2015). Then, among the four types of National General Colleges and Universities, this study chooses stated-owned regular HEIs. Because more than half

(64.11%) of Higher Education Institutions in China are stated-owned regular HEIs (People.cn, 2015). Stated-owned Regular HEIs are the cornerstone of China's higher education with the largest number of enrolments. Finally, this study focuses on 'Benke' admission. Because it is widely recognised that 'Benke' is much better than 'Zhuanke', and students are expected to access 'Benke' HEIs (ibid). Competition for 'Benke' HEIs places is fierce, but competition for 'Zhuanke' is not. The number of students enrolled by 'Benke' HEI is a significant criterion in assessing school quality, or even regional education quality in China (ibid). Meanwhile, it is a significant criterion in examining regional differences on higher education admission (ibid). For these reasons, in this study, in order to discover the context of Offsite NCEE policy, 'Benke' (academic undergraduate) admission of stated-owned regular HEIs is illustrated.

Undergraduate admission

Access to higher education for secondary school graduates in China can be gained by going through the Nationally Unified Higher Education Institution Admission Process and Independent Enrolment. According to the latest data of Ministry of Education, in 2015, only 93 HEIs conducted Independent Enrolment, offering no more than 5% of enrolment quotas of each HEIs (Ministry of Education, 2016). That is to say, very few students were admitted to HEIs by going through Independent Enrolment. Accessing higher education in China is most commonly gained by going through the Nationally Unified Higher Education Institution Admission Process. As explained earlier (section 2.4), this study focuses on stated-owned regular HEIs 'Benke' (academic undergraduate) admission in the Nationally Unified Higher Education Institution Admission Process. Because 'Benke' admission is an appropriate way to examine the regional differences on higher education admission in China.

The national unified higher education institution admission process is administered by the Ministry of Education, and is supported by the admissions office of each province (Ministry of Education, 2016). The Ministry of Education provides general guidance, and makes major decisions. The provincial admissions offices are responsible for "maintaining candidate records, communicating with institutions, and sending enrolled student profiles to the institutions" (Yu et al, 2012, p.23).

The procedures

Each year, before the admission, HEIs report the number of students they would like to enrol to the central government (Wang, 2010). Then, the Ministry of Education decides the size of National Unified Admission in higher education (ibid). It assigns a quota to each HEI. HEIs are expected to meet the enrolment quotas by enrolling the exact number of students (ibid). It is generally impossible for HEIs to accept more students without the permission of the MoE (ibid). Also, if an HEI fails to meet the enrolment quota, the MoE may reduce the quota for the institution in next year (ibid).

In the nationally unified admission process, the most important step is the examination. As introduced in section 1.1, the National Unified Examinations for Admission to Regular Higher Education Institutions is a national, standardized, educational testing system designed to select high school graduates for higher education at undergraduate level (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). The National Higher Education Entrance Examination will be discussed in detail in a later section.

Participants are allowed to complete an application form to select the HEIs they wish to attend (Ministry of Education, 2016). Students in different regions list their HEIs preferences at different times. They may list their HEIs preferences prior to the exam, after the exam or after they know their scores (ibid). For example, in Beijing and Shanghai, students complete the application form before taking the exam.

Table 2.2 Time of application to HEIs

Before Exam (2)	Beijing, Shanghai
After Exam (4) Before Result	Tianjin, Shanxi, Liaoning, Xinjiang
After Result (25)	Jiangsu, Shandong, Hubei, Hunan, Hainan, Hebei, Zhejiang, Fujian, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Sichuan, Yuan, Qinghai, Tibet, Chongqi, Jiangxi, Anhui, Guangdong, Jilin, Gansu, Guisu, Guizhou, Henan, Shanxi.

Students complete the form after taking the exam but before getting their score result in the following 4 provinces: Tianjin, Shanxi, Liaoning, Xinjiang. Students complete the form after getting their scores in the following 25 provinces: Jiangsu, Shandong, Hubei, Hunan, Hainan, Hebei, Zhejiang, Fujian, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Sichuan, Yuan, Qinghai, Tibet, Chongqi, Jiangxi, Anhui, Guangdong, Jilin, Gansu, Guisu, Guizhou, Henan, Shanxi. As Table 2.2 shows, the majority of applicants select the HEIs they wish to attend after they know their scores.

For undergraduate admission, a highly tiered system has been designed and developed in China. Preferences are given in several tiers. All 'benke' HEIs can be categorized into three tiers: yiben (first class undergraduate HEIs), erben (second class undergraduate HEIs), and sanben (third class undergraduate HEIs) (Goldman, 2011). Yiben, the top tier, normally refers to the elite public HEIs, while the second tier, erben, refers to the lower ranking HEIs. Erben constitutes the majority of HEIs in China. The third tier, sanben refers to other Benke institutions. Goldman (2011) gives a full explanation of each tier.

Table 2.3 'Benke' HEIs Tier

Tier	Detail	Mandate
Tier One, yiben	- Generally public HEIs - Extremely competitive admission - Receiving additional funding - Selected to reflect highest quality, as well as a certain geographical distribution - Most deeply internationalized - Relatively free speech - Highest quality	- Research and create knowledge - Raise China's international prestige - Train a next generation of leaders to be able to guide China successfully through the challenges of the 21st century in all fields of the public and private sector
Tier Two,	Generally public HEIs	Educate a wider selection of

erben	- Fairly competitive admission - Less funded than Tier One universities - Less internationalized - Lower quality that Tier One	Chinese people and help China transform itself from an investment-driven economy to a talent-driven economy - Train a next generation of talented workers in fields of education, political science, law, medicine and health, publicity and cultural information, disaster prevention, equipment manufacturing, information technology, biotechnology, new materials, aeronautics and astronautics, oceanography, finance and accounting, international business, environmental protection, energy resources, agricultural technology, and modern traffic and transportation
Tier Three, Sanben	- Generally private institutions, accredited by the Ministry of Education - Tend to be technical schools - Generally low quality	- Train Chinese youth in skills needed to navigate the job market

(Goldman, 2011)

Each student is allowed to choose a number of institutions that they wish to attend in each tier. Each tier contains around 3-6 choices in HEIs and course. Within a single tier, students need to prioritize their choices by selecting a first choice, second choice, third choice, and so on (Yu et al, 2012). "A student's profile is first sent to the top-choice institution; if rejected by that institution, the student's profile goes to the

second institution, and so on" (Yu et al, 2012, p.25). If no institution in this tier accepts the student, the student's application will be sent to next tier. If no institution in all tiers accepts the student, the student may enter into a 'clearing house' to see if s/he is matched with institutions unable to fill all available places (ibid). However, HEIs normally give priority to students who are ranked as higher priority in the application (ibid). For example, if a student fails to get a place at his first choice HEI, the application goes to the second choice. But the second choice HEI may also reject the student, and prefer to offer the place to other students who rank it as their first choice.

Each HEI has its specific score line and each course within the HEI has its specific admission standards (Zheng, 2010). Moreover, each province sets its superior score line for each tier (ibid). The score lines are decided by the number of participants and enrolment quotas. If a student wishes to access a HEI, firstly, he or she must pass the score line of the tier which the HEI belongs. HEIs are not allowed to enrol students who are below the score line of the tier which it belongs. For example, Beijing's score line for yiben (the first tier) was 495 in 2012 (People.cn, 2015). Students who want to access the first tier HEIs must exceed 495. Following this, the student must pass the specific score line of the HEI. Finally, the student must meet the course admission standard.

National College Entrance Examination (NCEE)

The National Unified Examinations for Admission to Regular Higher Education Institutions (NCEE) was established by the Ministry of Education under the State Counsel in 1952 (Zheng, 2010). The foundation of the NCEE system aims to give "everyone an equal opportunity to participate in higher education and compete for society's resources" (Zheng, 2010, p.14).

1950s-1970s

After the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, in order to bring the education system back on track as soon as possible, each HEI conducted its own independent admission policy (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011). Students were required to attend the exam in the HEI which they applied to, and then go through the application procedures. However, some problems were shown in this

independent admission process. Top HEIs usually had enough applicants, while other HEIs were short of applicants (ibid). Registration rates were very low for non-top HEIs, ranging from 20% to 75%. A total of 58,000 students were enrolled in higher education in 1950 (China Statistical Yearbook, 2011).

Thus, the NCEE was established based on the nationally unified higher education institutions admission system in 1952. There were two main purposes of the NCEE: "selecting highly qualified candidates for the colleges and cultivating reserve cadres for the nation" (Zheng, 2008, p.138). Under this system, applicants who failed to be admitted by an HEI might be admitted another HEI that had not enrolled enough students. Thus, most HEIs enrolled enough students (Liu and Wu, 2006). The NCEE was further enhanced in the 1950s and finally set as a fundamental policy system in 1959 (Zheng, 2010). Approximately 105,000 students were enrolled in 1957, 1.8 times more than in 1950 (China Statistical Yearbook, 2011).

However, from 1958, the unified higher education institutions admission system was greatly affected by political movements. The NCEE was defined as the 'flaw' in the 'revolution' of the cultural and educational spheres (Zheng, 2010, p17). In 1966, the NCEE was officially cancelled and substituted by a new recommend admission policy (ibid). Only farmers, workers and soldiers were able to be recommended to access HEIs during that time. The students were selected by considering their family and political backgrounds rather than their academic achievements (Zheng, 2010).

The NCEE was resumed in 1977 (Zheng, 2010). This has been seen as a 'turning point', as the higher education admission system took a transition from chaos to order (Zheng, 2010). Scholars point out that the resumption changed the fate of "not only thousands of Chinese people but also the nation and the ear" (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011, p.17). 1978 was a very significant year for China as the government launched the 'Reform and Open-door' policy (Zheng, 2010). Since then, both the number of institutions and enrolments have increased. The number of HEIs increased from 598 in 1978 to 1016 in 1985, and the number of enrolments increased from 0.4 million to 0.6 million (China Statistical Yearbook, 2005).

This resumption officially established two tracks of NCEE. Students are required to undertake one of two distinct tracks of NCEE: 'science' track or 'arts' track (Liu and

Wu, 2006). The exam in the arts category consisted of politics, Chinese, mathematics, history, geography, and foreign language, while the science and the science tack consists of politics, Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and foreign languages (ibid). There were more than 5,700,000 applicants who took the first NCEE in 1977, but only around 270,000 students were admitted (China Statistical Yearbook, 2005).

1980s-2000s

In its early years, the NCEE was highly centralized. It was uniformly designed and controlled by the Ministry of Education, and all the students across the country took exactly the same examination (Feng, 1999). The State Admission Bureau within the Ministry of Education strictly controlled admission quotas, score lines and each step of the admission procedure. Provincial educational officers were only responsible for administration and evaluation. They did not participate in the policy-making (Zheng, 2008). However, for a long time after 1950s, there had been arguments as to the highly centralized admission. It was indicated that the highly centralized admission failed to "sufficiently consider candidates' preferences and colleges' requirements", to "accomplish the organizational work", and to "carry out the admission work in detail" (Zhu, 2011, p.32).

The main characteristics of the higher education reforms in 1980s-1990s were marketization, decentralisation and privatization. (This is discussed in section 3.2 as important factors that impact on equity in higher education admission in China.) Replacing the previous planning economy, the socialist market economy was introduced in 1993. Since then, higher education in China was required to adapt to the market economy. The public HEIs were given much more autonomy and the private HEIs were encouraged by the government. "The reform transformed higher education institutions to become more independent from the government in governance, financing, teaching and research activities in this period" (Zhu, 2011, p.32). Since 1997, all HEIs began to charge fees to all students. Tuition fee became a main funding source of institutions. The provincial proposition has been promoted since 1980s. In 1985, Shanghai and Guangdong were allowed to customize their own exams, which was the beginning of provincial proposition. Until now, there have been 17 provinces or municipalities adopting customized exams (Ministry of

Education, 2016). That is to say, the exam questions are designed by the 17 provinces themselves.

The subjects tested in the exam have changed over time. Traditionally, students undertake 'arts' track or 'science' track. In 1994, a national reform programme on examination subjects was conducted. This programme created a '3+2'mode: three compulsory subjects-Chinese, mathematics, foreign language; two optional subjects: politics and history for arts track while physics and chemistry of science track (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011). However, some scholars argue that this mode has made the whole education rigid and inflexible, which could seriously weaken the quality of education (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011; Liu, 2012). Thus, this mode was soon replaced by a new scheme '3+X' in 1998 (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011). In this mode, '3' still refers to three compulsory subjects: Chinese, mathematics and foreign languages, and 'X' refers to one or more additional subjects that students can choose from the list of six (ibid). In some provinces, 'X' also represents a combined subject's exam that consists of several subjects (Liu, 2012). This reform aimed to "achieve a comprehensive assessment of students' ability to understand, integrate, grasp and apply a level of knowledge appropriate for high school graduates" (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011, p.275).

Higher education enrolment expansion in 1998 marked China's entry into the process of mass higher education from elite higher education. Some scholars reveal that the expansion proposed by the government was actually an economic policy (Zhu, 2011; Wan, 2006). With the implementation of the 'Reform and Open-door' policy in 1978, economic development has become a central theme in China. There has been general consensus among scholars and policy makers that China should expand its higher education system to meet the demand of social and economic development (Zhu, 2011; Wan, 2006). "Higher education enrolment should keep up with the levels of economic development" (Wan, 2006, p.21). However, it was indicated that Chinese higher education had failed to meet the vast increase in demand for higher education in Chinese society (ibid). The Gross Enrolment Rate before 1997 had been lower than 7%, which was far below the average level of other countries. Thus, in order to "stimulate domestic demand, stimulate consumption, promote economic growth and alleviate employment pressure", in 1998, the higher

education enrolment expansion began (Wan, 2006, p.21). The admission rate jumped sharply from 33.75% in 1998 to 55.56% in 1999 (China Statistical Yearbook, 2013). From 1999, the admission rate kept on increasing to 75% in 2012, despite a rapid increase in NCEE applicants (China Statistical Yearbook, 2013).

2000s-Present

The present NCEE administrative units are organized in the light of China's political system (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). The NCEE is under the control of the National Examination Authority within the Ministry of Education (ibid). However, now it is not uniform across the country, but administered uniformly within each province of China or direct-controlled municipality (ibid).

Figure 2.4 The Structure of the NCEE system
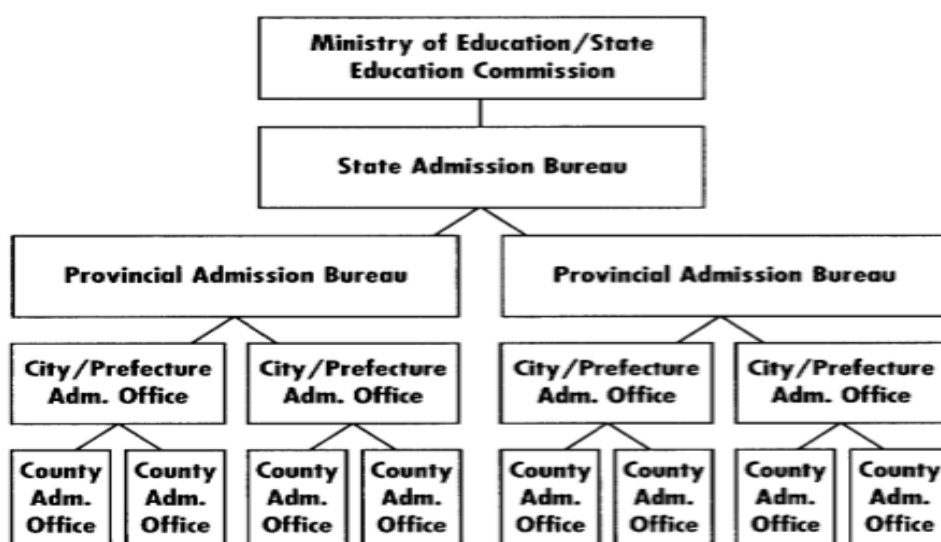
(Feng, 1995, p.42)

As Figure 2.4 shows, the NCEE administrative system consists of four levels: the state level, the provincial level, the city or prefecture level and the bottom level (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007). At the state level, the State Admission Bureau that decides the national size of the annual higher education recruitment, the admission quotas for different provinces and the criteria for admission (ibid). A provincial admission bureau issues NCEE authorizations, decides the subject areas to test, designs the examination questions and answers, prints and distributes examination papers to city and country admission offices, supervises the administration of the

examinations, conducts evaluations and makes admission decisions (ibid). A city/prefecture office keeps application files and makes admission recommendations to the provincial bureau (ibid). A bottom-level county office investigates and determines an applicants' qualifications (Feng, 1999).

Prior to 2003, the NCEE was held in July, but now it has been moved to June to avoid the hot weather. Now all students across the country sit the exam during the same period. It take places on the 7 June to 8 June, each subject exam lasts between 2 and 2.5 hours. The results are available within two to three weeks after the examination and can be obtained via telephone or the Internet.

Table 2.4 The NCEE reform

Year	NCEE Reform	Enrolment Policy
1952	NCEE first established	
1966	NCEE was stopped during the cultural revolution	The only way to access higher education was through local office's recommendation according to the political status.
1977	NCEE was resumed	
1984		The MOE tried to carry out 'recommendation to college admission'; Part of the NCEE candidates with relevant low test scores could pay tuition to be enrolled, before this, higher education was free.
1985	NCEE standardization reform first initiated in some provinces	The MOE issued an official regulation for this 'recommendation to college admission' policy.
1989	All the provinces in China adapted the standardized NCEE	

1991	Some provinces adapted the '3+2' scheme	NCEE no longer took responsibility for preparing reserve cadres; 37 universities began to charge tuition; Graduates would not get tenure job, but had to find a job by themselves, which was consistent with the market economy reform
1995	All the provinces adapted the '3+2' scheme	
1997		All HEIs began to charge tuition fee, and no longer be responsible for graduate's job.
1998		Higher education expansion began
1999	Guangdong province first adapted the '3+X' scheme	The MOE began to use online system to process the admission; All recommended students were required to pass the qualification exam in order to be enrolled to HEIs without taking the NCEE
2000	Other provinces adapted the '3+X' scheme	
2001		The MOE tried 'Autonomous Recruitment Reform' with three universities; The MOE cancelled the restriction on age and marriage of the eligibility of NCEE.
2003	Beijing and Shanghai autonomously assign their own examination questions; The date of NCEE changed from July 7th-9th to June 7th-9th	22 HEIs are granted a 5% quota for antonymous recruitment

2005	There were 15 different sets of the NCEE papers across the provinces	42 HEIs are granted a 5% quota for antonymous recruitment
2007	Shandong Province designed the new text scheme '3+X+1'.	
2010		80 HEIs are granted a 5% quota for antonymous recruitment
2012		The new policy 'Offsite college entrance examination' came out
2013	20 provinces conducted the 'Offsite College Entrance Examination'	

2.4 Geographical inequity in China's higher education (undergraduate) admission

In China, the NCEE largely determines an individual's access to higher education, impacting on his or her career choices, income and social status. Therefore, the NCEE policy is not only about personnel selection, but can be seen as an important tool for promoting social integration, reducing gaps in regional development, and maintaining social stability (Wang, 2011). However, policy discussions and studies show that different orientations or biases in certain NCEE policies have exacerbated existing geographical inequalities within access to higher education (Wang, 2011; Chan, 2009; Yu et al, 2012).

Provincial fixed-quota admission policies are currently employed in the higher education admission. Provincial fixed-quota admission policy refers to a type of admission policy in which the quota of higher education enrolment numbers is allocated to each province by the state according to certain criteria (Wang, 2011). According to the provincial fixed-quota admission policies, students in different regions (provinces or municipalities directly under the central government) have to pass different cut-off scores to be admitted to the same HEI (Zhang et al, 2012). The opportunity for students to access higher education is not only based on how well

they perform academically, but also which regions they take the exam in. As a consequence of provincial fixed-quota admission policies, the quota has a large effect on the score line and number of higher education opportunities for students in a given province. The score line and number of students admitted are thus different in each province. Table 2.5 shows the number of undergraduate entrants in all HEIs from 2007-2010, including Benke and Zhuangke.

Table 2.5 Entrance numbers of all HEIs(undergraduate)

Region	2007	2008	2009	2010
Beijing	157387	156092	159829	155137
Tianjin	106054	111048	118807	128608
Heibei	294659	310592	329224	339149
Shanxi	137639	147305	165407	180748
Inner Mongolia	93169	97846	109077	112546
Liaoning	224273	239475	237906	247451
Jilin	141031	147628	155915	151106
Heilongjiang	187198	197909	203361	192665
Shanghai	144577	143328	143497	144649
Jiangsu	409503	410705	429825	448562
Zhejiang	230687	245330	252503	253562
Anhui	236884	253183	267936	287585
Fujian	161481	179137	187311	198746
Jiangxi	227782	232140	238921	248494
Shandong	417544	465593	469097	475212
Henan	336481	396818	429910	457122
Hubei	325803	354335	373333	387612
Hunan	281350	292060	314422	302650
Guangdong	351841	384481	435870	437274
Guangxi	147907	157920	168942	182635
Hainan	38669	39735	46392	47573
Chongqing	128423	136747	149332	164137
Sichuan	278185	301786	299650	332104
Guizhou	75493	85712	95375	99320

Yunan	93550	110319	127287	140966
Tibet	8046	8520	9020	9213
Shanxi	237454	264951	264676	267108
Gansu	94328	105091	109452	114064
Qinghai	11142	13767	12605	12969
Ningxia	19213	21746	22402	25008
Xianjiang	61441	65313	67648	73576
Total	5659194	6076612	6394932	6617551

To examine the higher education opportunities in different provinces, an entry opportunity index was employed. The entry opportunity index was based on the number of higher school graduates in each province and the number of undergraduate entrants (see Table 2.5), to reflect different opportunities to access higher education. The specific calculation method is as follows: a province's entry opportunity index equals the province's proportion of total national entrants divided by the province's proportion of total national high school graduates. An entry opportunity index of 1 indicates that entry opportunities in the province are identical to the national average; a value greater than 1 indicates that the entry opportunities for the province are above the national average; a value less than 1 indicates that the province's entry opportunities are below the national average. Table 2.6 is derived using the calculation method on data from the Educational Statistic Yearbook of China. Data from 2000-2006 were calculated by Wang (2010).

Table 2.6 Entrance opportunity indexes 2000-2010

Region	2000	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Beijing	2.81	2.65	2.63	2.81	2.73	2.982	3.00
Tianjin	1.85	2.12	1.95	2.03	2.02	2.21	2.34
Hebei	0.84	0.91	0.84	0.87	0.89	0.92	0.95
Shanxi	0.86	0.80	0.85	0.83	0.78	0.86	0.84
Inner Mongolia	0.68	0.73	0.68	0.76	0.72	0.78	0.77
Liaoning	1.30	1.33	1.27	1.25	1.28	1.25	1.31
Jilin	1.32	1.22	1.19	1.20	1.21	1.21	1.19
Heilongjiang	1.20	1.31	1.31	1.35	1.34	1.29	1.18

Shanghai	1.53	1.73	1.80	1.96	2.07	2.67	2.77
Jiangsu	1.03	1.09	1.22	1.20	1.13	1.09	1.11
Zhejiang	0.76	1.04	1.07	1.10	1.14	1.15	1.11
Anhui	0.83	0.88	0.87	0.83	0.80	0.78	0.78
Fujian	0.93	0.92	0.98	0.96	1.01	0.98	0.99
Jiangxi	0.86	1.16	1.18	1.19	1.11	1.12	1.14
Shandong	0.67	1.84	0.90	0.90	0.99	1.04	1.04
Henan	0.96	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.73	0.80	0.78
Hubei	1.17	1.12	1.10	1.02	1.08	1.09	1.07
Hunan	0.99	0.87	0.92	0.96	0.94	0.99	1.00
Guangdong	0.92	1.02	1.05	1.02	0.99	1.00	0.92
Guangxi	0.82	0.77	0.87	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.92
Hainan	0.80	0.90	1.41	1.42	1.20	1.20	1.13
Chongqing	1.32	1.19	1.51	1.24	1.20	1.21	1.16
Sichuan	0.96	0.97	0.85	0.88	0.91	0.87	0.89
Guizhou	1.01	0.78	0.70	0.70	0.73	0.75	0.69
Yunan	0.82	0.92	0.98	0.85	0.87	0.90	0.92
Tibet	1.27	1.08	1.15	0.88	0.82	0.88	0.93
Shanxi	1.35	1.09	1.02	1.02	1.10	1.06	1.04
Gansu	0.82	0.72	0.70	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.70
Qinghai	0.59	0.56	0.54	0.50	0.55	0.49	0.47
Ningxia	0.56	0.52	0.65	0.63	0.69	0.66	0.68
Xianjiang	0.83	0.72	0.51	0.68	0.66	0.65	0.65

The data in the Table 2.6 are derived from the total enrolment numbers of all HEIs and total graduates of all high schools in a given province, reflecting the province's overall standard of education opportunities. As Table 2.6 shows, all provinces or municipalities directly under the central government may be divided into four levels in term of entrance opportunity index.

(1) First class: Entry opportunities in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai are particularly high. And with admission cut-off score line continuing to drop, the entry opportunities of the three municipalities are consistently increasing.

(2) Second class: Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Hainan, Zhejiang, Chongqing provinces/municipalities all had entry opportunity indexes greater than 1, indicating that the opportunities of access to higher education in these regions has been higher than the national average.

(3)Third class: The entry opportunity indexes in Hubei, Shanxi, Jiangxi, Guangdong, Shandong, Sichuan, Fujian, Hunan, Guangxi, Tibet, and Yunan remain around 1, indicating that the level of access to higher education in these regions has been around the national average.

(4)Fourth class: The entry opportunity indexes in Anhui, Henan, Guizhou, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang remain at a low level.

Taking these geographical inequalities into account, one must be aware of various influences or drivers on these geographical inequalities. There are three main drivers behind these geographical inequalities: preferential policy, distribution of HEIs, and different exam modes.

Preferential policy

In China, one's place of Hukou (household registration) is of vital importance. Hukou location defines the individual's rights to pursue eligibility for services and to gain access to benefits in a specific locality, which normally are not available to citizens whose location is elsewhere (Chan, 2009). In the admission process, HEIs have demonstrated their preferences for students with local hukou (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007).

As discussed earlier (section 2.4), all public regular higher education institutions in China can be classified according to three categories in terms of governance: Central HEIs, Ministry-affiliated HEIs and Provincial or Local HEIs. However, a central HEI or a ministry-affiliated HEI may still liaise with a local government. In order to strengthen the contributions of HEIs to the local economy, some central HEIs may be supported and partly administered by a local government. Yu et al (2012) explain that this was built on the goal of the central government ministry administration.

> *"When the central government ministry is "in charge," a primary goal is to strengthen the connection between the centrally-affiliated universities and the local community and economy"* (Yu et al, 2012, p.26).

For example, Nanjing University is a central HEI directly administered by the Ministry of Education, but also administered by the provincial government. The Ministry of Education provides general funding and administration to the university, while the provincial government provides supplemental funds and benefits, such as financial subsidies, favourable condition in city fees and land attainment.

Local governments usually require HEIs to offer more places to local students. As Davey, Lian and Higgins (2007) observe, in the admission process, local students are preferred in the recruitment, while a certain quota is set to enrol a limited number of students from other regions.

> *"Students who live in the same city as a prestigious university can enter it with lower scores than students from other regions. This means that students from outside certain cities are not admitted to prestigious universities even though their scores are higher than students that are admitted"* (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007, p.391).

For example, the top two HEIs in China, Peking University and Tsinghua University (both located in Beijing) enrolled 6860 undergraduate students in 2012, of which 822 (11.98%) were from Beijing (Peking University, 2013; Tsinghua University, 2013). The number of local entrants was higher than was the case in any other province. A similar observation is put forward by Yu et al (2012), who discuss the preferential policy.

> *"In many other central universities the enrolment quota for local residents may account for over 30% of their total enrolment plan, and in most provincial institutions this figure is above 50%"* (Yu et al, 2012, p.26).

The distribution of HEIs in China

The uneven distribution of higher education resources makes the rates of entering HEIs different between provinces (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007).

Table 2.7 The distribution of HEIs in China

	Region	Benke		'211'project HEIs		'985' project HEIs	
	Total (China)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
		719	100	115	100	39	100
Eastern	Guangdong	37	5.146	5	4.545	2	5.128
	Shandong	40	5.563	3	2.727	2	5.128
	Jiangsu	43	5.981	11	10.000	2	5.128
	Hebei	30	4.172	5	4.545	2	5.128
	Zhejiang	27	3.755	1	0.909	1	2.564
	Liaoning	40	5.563	4	3.636	2	5.128
	Fujian	17	2.364	2	1.818	1	2.564
	Shanghai	30	4.172	11	10.000	4	10.256
	Beijing	60	8.345	22	20.000	7	17.949
	Tianjin	18	2.503	3	2.727	2	5.128
	Hainan	5	0.695	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Total	347	48.261	68	61.818	25	64.103
Middle	Henan	28	3.894	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Hunan	26	3.616	4	3.636	2	5.128
	Anhui	27	3.755	3	2.727	1	2.564
	Hubei	33	4.590	7	6.343	2	5.128
	Jiangxi	20	2.782	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Heilongjiang	25	3.477	4	3.636	1	2.564
	Shanxi	16	2.225	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Jilin	24	3.338	3	2.727	1	2.564
	Total	199	27.677	24	21.818	7	17.949
Western	Sichuan	30	4.172	5	4.545	2	5.128
	Guangxi	19	2.643	1	0.909	0	0.000

	Yunnan	16	2.225	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Shanxi	37	5.146	7	6.364	3	7.692
	Guizhou	14	1.947	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Chongqing	15	2.086	1	0.909	1	2.564
	Gansu	13	1.808	1	0.909	1	2.564
	Inner Mongolia	10	1.391	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Xinjiang	11	1.530	2	1.818	0	0.000
	Ningxia	5	0.695	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Qinghai	3	0.417	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Xizang	3	0.417	1	0.909	0	0.000
	Total	176	24.478	23	20.909	7	17.949

(Ministry of Education, 2016)

('211' and '985' projects are two projects of 'National Key HEIs', with the intent of raising the research standards of high-level HEIs. The HEIs involved in '211' and '985' projects are generally recognized as high-level HEIs in China.)

As Table 2.7 shows, the three sets of figures illustrate a gradual decrease from the east to west of China, showing a significant gap in HEIs distribution between regions. There are 347 Benke HEIs in the eastern area, accounting for 48% of the total HEIs in China. And the top universities are mostly located in the eastern area. There are 68 '211' project HEIs, accounting for 61% of the total '211' project HEIs; and there are 25 '985'project HEIs, accounting for 64% of the total '985' project HEIs. The higher educational resources in the eastern area are abundant; however, there is still a gap between different provinces within the eastern area. For example, there are 60 benke HEIs in Beijing while only 5 HEIs in Hainan. HEIs are mostly located in big cities or well-developed areas such as Beijing and Shanghai. In the middle area, there are 199 Benke HEIs, accounting for 27% of the total Benke HEIs in China. There are 24 '211' project HEIs, accounting for 21%, and there are 7 '985' project HEIs, accounting for 17 %. The higher educational resources in the middle area are relatively poorer then in the eastern area. The data shows the number of HEIs in the western area is much less than in the eastern area and middle area. There are only 176 Benke HEIs in the western area, accounting for 24%.

Different exam modes and questions

Traditionally, students undertake 'arts' track or 'science' track in the NCEE. And a national uniform '3+X' exam mode has been conducted (see section 2.6). In this mode, '3' still refers to three compulsory subjects: Chinese, mathematics and foreign languages, and 'X' refers to one or more additional subjects that students can choose from the list of six (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011). In some provinces, 'X' also represents a combined subject exam that consists of several subjects (ibid). However, as the provincial proposition has been promoted since 1980s, provinces have been allowed to customize their own exams by deciding on subjects to be tested and test questions (Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011). In recent years, different provinces have included different subjects to be tested in the NCEE, resulting in a number of different exam modes. Table 2.8 gives a sense of the diversity of the exam mode.

Table 2.8 Different modes of the NCEE

Province	Test format	Subjects
Shandong	3+X+1	X: Integrated humanities include politics, geography, history, etc. Integrated science includes physics, chemistry, biology, etc. 1: Basic ability text in humanities/ science technology. Humanities include art, sports, comprehensive practice. Science and technology includes physics, chemistry, and biology.
Guangdong	3+humanitie/ science and technology +1	Humanities (70%) include politics, history, geography. Science and technology (30%) includes physics, chemistry, 30% biology. X: One of the following course: professional optional course, physics, chemistry, biology, politics, history, geography, music, art, sports
Hainan	3+3+basic examination (huikao)	3: Literature and History include politics, history, and geography. Science and technology includes physics, chemistry, and biology Basic examination: a test in the subjects listed under '3'. 10% of the college entrance exam score is based on the basic examination (huikao) score.

Jiangsu	3+academic proficiency tests +overall evaluation	Academic proficiency tests: politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, technology (including common technology and information technology). Two elective subjects will be tested, choose either history or science/ technology, choose one of the following four: politics, geography, chemistry, and biology: there are required four tested subjects. Overall evaluation: moral character, citizenship, learning, exchange and cooperation, sports and health, aesthetics and performance.
Liaoning	3+X	X: Humanities/ science and technology; humanities candidates must take tests in politics, history and geography; science and technology exam candidates must take tests in physics, chemistry, and biology.
Anhui	3+3+academic proficiency tests+ overall evaluation	Humanities include ideology and politics, history, geography Science and technology include physics, chemistry, and biology. Academic proficiency tests: language, mathematics, foreign languages, humanities and social infrastructure, basic scientific and technological literacy. (3) Comprehensive Examination: civil and moral quality of attitude and ability to learn, exchange and cooperation, practice and innovation, sports and health, aesthetics and performance.
Zhejiang	(1) 3+X+Optional module (for ordinary 'Benke') 3+X (for 'Sanben') (3) 3+technology (for vocational route)	(1) X: Humanities/ science and technology; optional modules, including language, mathematics, English, politics, history, etc. 9 of 18 independent elective subject modules. (2) X: Humanities/ science and technology (3) Technology includes information technology and general technology. Candidates may choose one subject.

(Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011, p.273)

Flexible systems have been used to select the subjects to be tested. Different provinces customize their own set of subjects and examination papers. In 2015, only 16 provinces or direct-controlled municipality used the national uniform set of

NCEE examination paper (Ministry of Education, 2016). The other provinces developed, administered, and scored their own set of subjects and examination papers independently within their judicial territories while adhering to the national and local curricular guidelines (ibid).

Table 2.9 Examination paper

Provincial proposition (15 provinces)	National uniform test (16 provinces)
Beijing, Shanghai, Hubei, Hunan, Shanxi, Guangdong, Hainan, Jiangsu, Tianjin, Zhejiang, Fujian, Anhui, Sichuan, Chongqing	Shandong, Liaoning, Jiangxi, Ningxia, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Henan, Xinjiang, Shanxi, Hebei, Yunnan, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Guizhou, Gansu, Qinghai, Tibet

(Ministry of Education of P.R. China, 2016)

Scholars argue that the difference in test subjects and evaluation standards makes the comparison of exam scores between provinces problematic, resulting in inequity in admission process (Yu et al, 2010; Hannum, An and Cherng, 2011; Ross and Wang, 2010; Liu, 2012).

2.5 Cultural value

The NCEE has only been in existence for 60 years. However, some scholars of the history of education track the roots of the NCEE back to the Imperial Examination (Keiju) (Zhang, Zhao and Lei, 2012; Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007; Liu and Wu, 2006). Ancient China was ruled by a rigid social hierarchy and established a feudal imperial exam system (Keiju) to select government officers (Zhang, Zhao and Lei, 2012). The concept of social class in ancient China divides people into four social stratifications: 'government officer, farmer, worker, and businessman' (ibid). A government officer was seen as a social superior. The only way for the public to be a government officer is to go through the Imperial Examination (Keiju). Confucianism (traditional Chinese philosophy) thus emphasises education beyond other values (ibid). People from all background wanted their sons to become educated and to succeed in the Imperial Examination someday. Education was highly valued in ancient China.

Davey, Lian and Higgins (2007) point out that the traditional culture of education strongly impacts on the existing philosophy of education in China:

> *"The traditional focus on learning continues to play a prominent role in society; a high standard of education is associated with social status, and it is customary for parents to hold high expectations with regards to education; failure in school is traditionally associated with individual, family and even national shame"* (Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007, p.38).

This is supported by other researchers, who state that the 1300 years of historical Imperial Examination system contributes to an emphasis on education and performance on tests in modern China (Zhang et al, 2012; Davey, Lian and Higgins, 2007; Liu and Wu, 2006). For example, in Liu and Wu's (2006) study on the NCEE, they discuss the fact that a student performing highly in the national college entrance examination (NCEE) will be admitted to a prestigious HEI, which may offer the student a better chance for a well-paid job in the future. Thus parents normally place extremely high expectations on their children's performance in the NCEE (Liu and Wu, 2006). They feel more anxious than the students themselves during the exam days, and some even sacrifice their career to help their children do well in the NCEE (Liu and Wu, 2006).

Chapter 3 Literature Review

Introduction

The first section of the literature review contributes to an exploration of the issues surrounding the concept of educational equity. The purpose of this study is to analyse Offsite NCEE policy, and with educational equity being the initial purpose of the Offsite NCEE policy, understanding the ideological ideas behind the concept of educational equity is important in this study. The focus of discussion is placed upon definitions of educational equity and factors that contribute to inequity in education.

The second section is concerned with geographical inequity in China's higher education admission. An historical and contextual perspective is adopted to discuss why there is geographical inequity in undergraduate admission in China.

The third section is concerned with the concept of policy analysis. It serves to underpin the analysis of Offsite NCEE policy, by providing a theoretical basis for analysing policy making, policy implementation and the outcome. Arguments surrounding policy definition are discussed, and Knoepfel et al's (2011) model is adopted so as to discuss agenda setting, policy programming, policy implementation and policy evaluation.

3.1 Educational Equity

3.1.1 Definitions

The right to education has been universally recognised and enshrined in various national policies in education. When referring to the right to education, there are two terms, 'equity' and 'equality', that are often interchanged and misused. However, there are important distinctions to be made between the two terms. 'Educational equality' implies that education should be equally accessible to all students, regardless of their initial characteristics, such as their ethnicity, race, gender, family background and geographic origin (Guition and Oakes, 1995). It refers to the fact that everyone is the same, and should achieve the same outcomes (ibid). The

principle of equality holds that students have the right to access education if they aspire to, regardless of their academic talents and motivation. However, there is generally agreement that it is impossible to achieve this (Levin, 2010; Espinoza, 2013). Rather, 'educational equity' is recognised as a more appropriate criterion for education.

In considering the ideological ideas behind the concept of educational equity, it is necessary to understand what is meant by educational equity. The Oxford Dictionary defined 'equity' as "the quality of being fair and impartial" (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). The traditional definition of equity in Western philosophy derives from Aristotle's concept of justice, namely "treating equals equally and unequal unequally" (Wagner and Simposon, 2009, p.111). It has long been seen as a significant criterion for the treatment of persons in a wide social context. If the word applies to the field of education, much more must be said. The term 'educational equity' is subject to a variety of definitions and interpretations. Most definitions agree that educational equity implies fairness and justice for all learners (Bull, 2008; Levin, 2003; Espinoza, 2013). Scholars identify educational equity by returning to the work of philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham, John Rawls, John Stuart Mill, and they made the important point that the concept of educational equity is based on utilitarian considerations (Bull, 2008; Levin, 2003; Espinoza, 2013). This idea of what it means to be educationally equitable, demands fair competition but tolerance and, indeed, can require unequal results. Equal treatment applies only when individuals have similar qualifications. In Levin's (2003, p.4) definition, the equity concept is associated with "fairness or justice in the provision of education or other benefits and it takes individual circumstances into consideration". In such definitions, education should be equally accessible to students by considering their taking advantage of the education offered, such as their academic talent and motivation, but not their other characteristics, such as their ethnicity, race, gender, family background and geographic origin.

Broad conceptions of educational equity emphasize the definition of educational equity both in terms of opportunities and educational outcome (Opheim, 2004; Cobbold, 2011; Levin, 2010). Traditionally, equal opportunity in education has been interpreted as the fact that everyone should have an equal opportunity to succeed and

have access to pursue their talents (Cobbold, 2011). Equity in education is not only concerned with the opportunities provided, but also questions the actual results of the educational system (Opheim, 2004). Educational outcomes refer to the success of individuals in achieving specific educational goals. (Levin, 2010).

More specifically, Guiton and Oakes (1995) proposed three core positions around equity: inputs, processes and outcomes. Equal input is tied to an equal distribution of educational resources, such as financial resources, highly experienced teachers, quality facilities, and so on (Bulkley, 2013). Equal distribution of resources is central to conceptions of equity (ibid). However, some researchers argue that equity in education does not simply question the provision of equal distribution of educational resources to all students, but believes a concern that students are different along several dimensions which have an impact on their needs in education (Opheim, 2004). Opheim (2004, p.8) gives a full explanation as "pupils and students are different both individually, and in the type and amount of resources they have obtained from their family and environment which they bring with them into the classroom, their individual need for training will vary." In terms of what Opheim (2004) notes, there are differences between individuals' need for educational resources. What the differences are and how they may be reduced by policy should be considered by researchers and policy makers.

Equity in education questions whether the input to all students is equitable and also whether the process by which it was distributed is equitable (Bulkley, 2013; Levin, 2010). The process is another important aspect that is relevant to the concept of equity, involving all the ways of delivering education, including educational practice and system, the formal governance structures and codified practices within these structures. Issues in the process are frequently discussed by researchers, such as instructional quality, course and curriculum, and stratification or segregation of students by socioeconomic and immigrant status (Levin, 2010).

Educational outcomes are arguably the ultimate focus of educational policy goals. "Inputs to education are a means to an end, namely, the education outcomes expected for all children in modern society" (Cobbold, 2011, p.1). According to Cobbold (2011), inputs and process are all means to achieve educational outcomes.

This is supported by Bulkley (2013), 'Outcomes' is defined by Bulkley (2013) as central to the concept of educational equity. However, as the concept of equity raises a concern that students are different both individually and their need for educational resources, some scholars assert that the true equalisation of outcomes is not realistic (Gutmann, 1987; Cobbold 2011). In Cobbold's (2011, P.2) study on school funding policy, he explains that:

> *"because the needs of students differ, equity in education is likely to require unequal resources applied to different students to obtain expected outcomes. To give priority to equity in education inputs for students is to pursue a goal of inequity in education outcomes."*

In Cobbold's (2011) discussion on education outcomes, as with inputs and processes, educational outcomes may not be simply expected to be equitable.

Horizontal equity, Vertical equity and Equal educational opportunity

Some researchers rely on three principles described by Berne and Stiefel (1984) to identify and discuss educational equity, which are horizontal equity, vertical equity, and equal educational opportunity. Horizontal equity is interpreted as the "equal treatment of equals" (Toutkoushian and Michael, 2007, p.396). It requires equal treatment of students who are equally situated, and ensures that students experience similar levels of educational resources and achieve similar outcomes (Toutkoushian and Michael, 2007). To some extent, horizontal equity can be seen as a kind of 'perfect' equity, as it require little or no variation in the dispersion of educational resources, opportunity, and outcomes (Toutkoushian and Michael, 2007). For example, it requires education institutions to have equal or equivalent inputs, such as teacher quality or funding.

Brown (2006) suggests that horizontal equity is a starting point in achieving vertical equity. Vertical equity is interpreted as "unequal treatment of unequals" (Toutkoushian and Michael, 2007, p396). It recognises that students are not all the same, and that their individual difference should be considered in educational treatment (ibid). In this case, different students should be treated differently according to their individual characteristics, including ethnicity, race, gender, family background, and academic talents (Brown, 2006). Vertical equity thus assumes that

'unequal' students require 'unequal' treatment to attain equal outcomes (ibid). Vertical equity also recognises that an equitable education system should provide unique resources for a specific region or education institution to achieve similar outcomes (ibid). For example, a school with higher costs to educate students should receive more funding than others. And a region with poor educational results should receive more investment in specialised supporting programmes.

The third principle, equal educational opportunity, requires the possibility for all students to access education (Toutkoushian and Michael, 2007). In this case, as Berne and Stiefel (1984) note, there is no difference in educational success based on students' individual characteristic such as motivation or place of residence, which means disadvantaged group should be put at a fair starting line. All students should have an equal chance to access education. The three principles have been further discussed and developed by Sherman and Poirier (2007) in their report of measuring the equity of 16 countries' education systems. Sherman and Poirier's report (2007) shows that the principles of vertical equity and equal educational opportunity are very interrelated. A linkage between a specific target group such as disadvantaged students and an object of equity such as enrolment is involved in both the two principles (ibid). However, Sherman and Poirier (2007) also point out that the main difference between the two principles is in terms of empirical analysis. Vertical equity and horizontal equity are determined by applying a measure of variation to the object of equity of interest with taking into account the incidence of children, while equal educational opportunity is determined through an analysis based on data, and relies on the relationship between the target of equity and the object of equity (ibid). For example, in an analysis of individuals where expenditure per child is the object of equity, equal educational opportunity might be based on examining the correlation between a child's family income the amount of money the state spends on the child's education by using a data analysis (ibid). Meanwhile, vertical equity might be based on a measure of expenditure that takes into account the additional cost of providing appropriate or extra services to children (ibid).

3.1.2 Factors that contribute to inequity in education

Regional differences

Some studies show that regional difference creates inequity in education (Ballas et al, 2012; Doring et al, 2007; OECD, 2008). Significant gaps can be found in education across countries or regions within a country. It is a widely recognized that students in richer regions are more likely to achieve better educational attainment (Doring et al, 2007; Ballas et al 2012; OECD, 2008). For example, in the Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD, 2008), data shows that students from poor backgrounds attain less well in all OCED (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) member countries. Researchers on regional educational inequity often associate political complexions and public investment. For example, Balla's research (2012) on educational inequity across EU regions exposes the fact that regions differ in the extent of their ability and attempts to deliver education, resulting in differences in public investment for education. This strongly influences the level of inequity in education. Some countries thus target more resources towards schools and other educational institutions in disadvantaged areas as a matter of regular mainstream allocation. This is supported by Chen (2005a) in his study of educational equity in China. Chen (2005a) shows that less-developed regions in China are facing a number of problems in education, including shortage of funding, and low school enrollment. At the primary and secondary education levels, as Yang (2000) demonstrates, the per-student expenditure in top-spending provinces was 8 times that of the bottom-spending province in China.

Economic status differences

Differences in economic status are also factors that impact equity in education. Opheim (2004) points out that economic status may include both public and private economic status. Public economic barriers refer to the allocation of public funding and resources to the education system, while private economic barriers refer to the economic cost of education for the individual (ibid).

Public economic status exerts a powerful influence on equity in education across countries (Wood et al, 2011). In Opheim's (2004) study on educational equity in

Norway, it is seen that the low economic cost of entry to higher education may promote equity of access to higher education. Public higher education in Norway is free, with no tuition fees, and students only pay a fee to the student welfare organization. The main cost for students is the loss of income during their studies. Therefore, the low private economic cost of higher education protects the rights of students with disadvantaged economic background enabling them to access higher education, securing equity in education. In China, to give another example, higher education is partly funded by the government, and students need to pay tuition fees to HEIs (Chen, 2005a). Chen (2005a) conducted a meta-analysis on funding of Higher education in China, in which revealed that high cost has been a barrier for people to enter higher education.

Wood et al (2011, p.19) note that private economic status impacts on education through the following factors:

> *"ability to pay school fees; the detrimental effects to a family's income of a child not being available to undertake paid work, due to school attendance (and more generally the proportion of an income that the cost of school attendance represents); the cultural resources available at home to support education; and the accessibility of the mode of delivery of education to children from a variety of backgrounds".*

Research assumes that students from disadvantaged private economic background do not achieve as highly as those from more advantaged backgrounds (Giroux and Schmidt, 2004; Hansen, 1996).

Parental education and cultural possessions differences

Parental education and cultural possessions at home have a strong influence on equity in education. The literature on educational inequity often associates equity to family background, in particular parental education (Ballarino, 2012; Picard and Wolff, 2005; PISA, 2009). Many studies have been conducted to investigate to what extent parental education influences children's educational attainment across countries (ibid). The literature indicates that children of parents with higher education are more likely to gain a better educational achievement and attainment (ibid).

For example, in Ballarino's (2012) comparative study on educational inequity in Europe, it may be seen that children of parents with only lower education are going on to complete lower secondary schooling, rather than some forms of higher secondary and tertiary education. Likewise, research was conducted by Picard and Wolff (2005) to explore whether educational inequalities in developing countries stem rather from differences between families or with families. It was found that "the probability to have more than the primary level is significantly improved when the parent has completed secondary school or higher" (Picard and Wolff, 2005, p.15).

Researchers also point out that parental education is likely to influence children through family culture. Picard and Wolff (2015) show that more educated parents have more ability than less educated parents, and more importantly, these abilities are likely to be transmitted through culture and then impact on their children's performance. This is supported by the results of PISA's (2009) report. This report indicates that having cultural possessions at home is also related to student performance, leading to differences in outcome. For example, it was found that the students whose parents discuss political or social issues once a week or more often performed higher than students whose parents do not do so, or do so rarely (PISA, 2009). Similar results are obtained for other kinds of activities such as "talking about things you had done", "talk about what you had read", and "write letters or words" (PISA, 2009, p.95).

3.2 Causes for geographical inequity in China's higher education (undergraduate) admission

The previous section (section 2.4) has demonstrated that students from different regions do not have equal access higher education. It raises the question of how such an unequal access is produced. The literature on higher education opportunity places the geographical inequity in access to higher education in the context of economic and social development in China. Researchers suggest that reforms in economy and education potentially cause regional inequity in education in China (Wu, 2010; Hannum and Wang, 2006; Ngok, 2007; Wang, 2011; Chan and Ngok, 2011).

3.2.1 Economic Reform

The general consensus from the literature suggests that the most significant reason behind the geographical issues in education are geographic economic disparities (Mok et al, 2009; Liu, 2009; Lee and Pang, 2011; Hannum and Wang, 2006; Wu, 2010). China's economic growth in the past four decades can be divided into two periods: the pre-reform era (before 1979) and the post-reform ear (after 1979). "The year 1979 represents a milestone in terms of economic performance, development strategy and the pattern and nature of growth" (Zhang, 1996, p.1). During the pre-reform era, China had a highly centralized planned economy system (ibid). Since the 1970s, China has been experiencing dramatic social change with its socioeconomic reform. The whole economic reform is often referred to in brief as the 'open door policy'. Economic development became the primary policy goal of the government (ibid). Replacing the previous planning economy, a socialist market economy has been introduced and promoted. The economic reforms sought to transform the highly centralized planning economy into a market-oriented and more dynamic economy (ibid). As a result, China has maintained a high growth rate since the economic reform in 1978. In the 30 years from 1979-2010, China averaged per capita growth of 9.91% (The Word Bank, 2015).

However, people in different regions have benefited to different extents. The central government was active in implementing policies to encourage economic development in prosperous area. It has established a series of special economic zones: Shenzhen, Zhuhai, shangtou in Guangdong province, and Xianmen in Fujian province. The government further opened 14 coastal cities to overseas investment: Dalian, Qinhuangdao, Tianjin, Yantai, Qingdao, Lianyungang, Nantong, Shanghai, Ningbo, Wenzhou, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Zhanjiang, and Beihai (GOV, 2015). These regions are all located in eastern and coastal areas, and became engines of growth for the national economy. These financial policies greatly promoted economic development in China. However, this also left the remaining regions less developed, resulting in geographic inequalities of social development (Hawkins et al, 2009).

Table 3.1 Gross Domestic Product by Region (2014)

Unit: 100 million yuan

	Region	Gross Domestic Product	Per Capita GDP
Eastern	Beijing	21330.83	99995
	Tianjin	15722.47	105202
	Shanghai	23560.94	97343
	Jiangsu	65088.32	81874
	Zhejiang	40153.50	72967
	Guangdong	67792.24	63452
	Heibei	29421.15	39984
	Shandong	59426.59	60879
	Hainan	3500.72	38924
	Liaoning	28626.58	65201
	Fujian	24055.76	63472
Middle	Shanxi	12759.44	35064
	Jinlin	13803.81	50162
	Heilongjiang	15039.38	39226
	Anhui	20848.75	34427
	Jiangxi	15708.59	34661
	Henan	34939.38	37073
	Hubei	27367.04	47124
	Hunan	27048.46	40287
Western	Guangxi	15672.97	33090
	Chongqing	14265.40	47859
	Sichuan	28536.66	35128
	Inner Mongolia	17769.51	71044
	Guizhou	9251.01	26393
	Yunan	12814.59	27264
	Tibet	920.83	29252
	Shanxi	17689.94	46929
	Gansu	6835.27	26427

	Qinghai	2301.12	39633
	Ningxia	2752.10	41834
	Xianjiang	9264.10	40607

(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015)

The three sets of figures illustrate a gradual decrease from east to west of China, showing a significant gap in economic development between regions. The Gini coefficient, an index reflecting the gap between rich and poor, increased from 0.31 at the beginning of economic reform to 0.469 in 2014 (The Word Bank, 2015) The increasing gaps in economic growth have resulted in uneven social development and economic situation between regions, leading to an unbalanced distribution of educational sources (Wu, 2010).

3.2.2 Educational reform

In China, educational reforms have gone hand in hand with economic reform. After the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, as a means of political indoctrination, education was under strict government control (Hao, 1998). A highly centralized educational system was developed. Under this centralized system of education, the central government takes responsibility for formulating educational policies, allocating educational resources, exerting administrative control, recruiting teaching staff, designing unified planning, and deciding on curriculum, etc. (Hao, 1998). The basic types of HEIs could be identified in terms of governance:

1. HEIs under the direct administration of the Ministry of Education;
2. HEIs under the non-educational central ministries;
3. HEIs under various local authorities (Hao, 1998).

However, with economic reform, the government realized the role of education in the new market economy context (Mok et al, 2009). In the early 1980s, a new principle of education policy: "education serves the economy" was established (ibid). The fundamental direction of China's education policy has been designed to meet the needs of China's modernizing economy and future development (ibid).

Thus, as with the economic policy, regions which have priority in economic development were also given the priority in educational development (Ministry of Education, 2016). The expansion of higher education depends on the extent of economic development among individual provinces. The general consensus from the literature is that the long-term regional differences in economic growth potentially cause uneven distribution of higher educational resources (Mok et al, 2009; Liu 2009; Lee and Pang, 2011; Hannum and Wang, 2006; Wu, 2010). The expansion of higher education in recent years mainly benefits the well-developed regions. The number of HEIs has been largely increasing in these regions. The data in section 2.7 shows the number of HEIs in the western area is much less than in the eastern and middle areas. The HEIs, particularly top universities, are mostly located in well-developed regions. Under the principle of 'education serves the economy', the new direction of the market economy has important implications for China's education policy making. This brings three salient features of China's education policy: decentralization, marketization and localization (Nogk, 2007; Chan and Ngok, 2011).

3.2.3 Decentralization

The strategies of decentralization, localization and marketization are embodied in two key government documents (Ministry of Education, 2016). The first document, 'the Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Reform of the Educational Structure' was published in 1985 by the party's Central Committee (ibid). This document is seen as the first step towards educational reform. Following this, the 'Programme for Education Reform and Development in China' was proposed in 1993 (ibid). It identified the reduction of centralization and government control in general as the long-term goals of reform, by providing more specific details on how it should work (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Ngok (2007, p.145) explains the decentralization policy as "relinquishing of central government control and assigning responsibility for the provision and management of education to the local levels". The central government was required to decentralize control of education to the provincial levels, while the central government, through its educational administration, would continue to monitor the process and provide basic guidelines to educational development, local authorities

were given the authority and power to administer elementary education (Ngok, 2007). Local governments were encouraged to play a greater role in the financing, administration, and planning of education. The new mode of educational governance changed the relationship between the central and local governments. The role of central government has changed from a state control model to the state supervision model, while the role of local governments (provincial level) in education has been largely increased (Liu, 2009).

In higher education, before the reforms, there were 367 HEIs under the directly control of the various non-educational central ministries, for example, Ministry of Coal Industry, Ministry of Machine-Building industry, and Ministry of Metallurgical Industry. (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015). After the reform, most HEIs which were previously administered by the central ministries, have been taken over by the provincial governments. Among the 367 HEIs, only 111 are now under the direct control of the various non-educational central ministries (ibid). The remaining HEIs are all under joint administration by the central and local governments, or the local government takes full responsibility. "Provincial governments were encouraged to cooperate with the central government via Ministry of Education to sponsor and administrate all MoE-led universities located in the provinces" (Ngok, 2007, p.146). Ngok (2007, p.146) further details how the local governments take responsibility of the HEIs: "Local governments will manage their state assets, and be responsible for the management of their staff establishment, labour and wage". Local governments have more authority in administrating and financing higher education, and take major responsibility for the management of the HEI.

3.2.4 Marketization

Under the new model of governance, policy in educational finance has also changed. Research indicates the huge gap between limited educational resources and the demand for educational services drove educational finance restructuring (Ngok, 2007; Wong, 2002). During the economic reform period, China spent less than 3% of the GDP (see Figure 3.1) on education.

Figure 3.1 Government Appropriation for Education 1978-2014

Unit 100 million Yuan
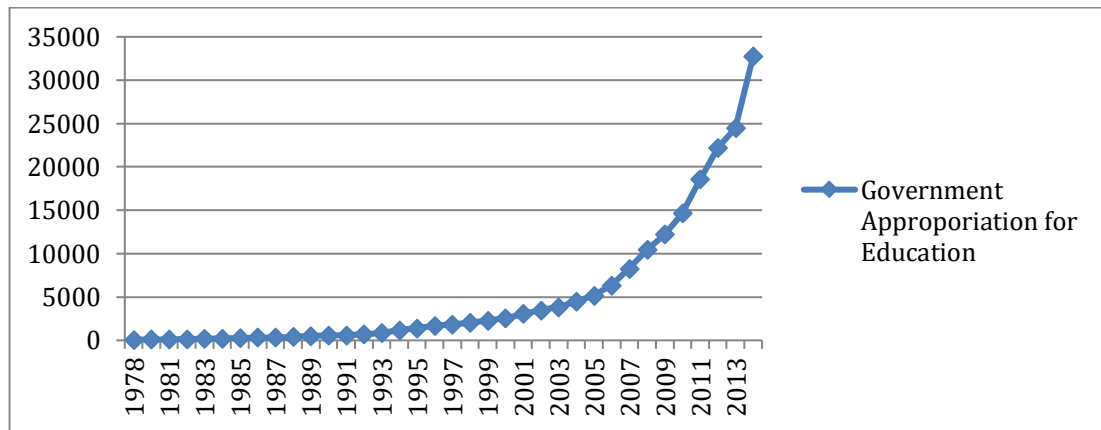
(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015)

Figure 3.2 Government Appropriation for Education Percentage of GDP 1978-2014
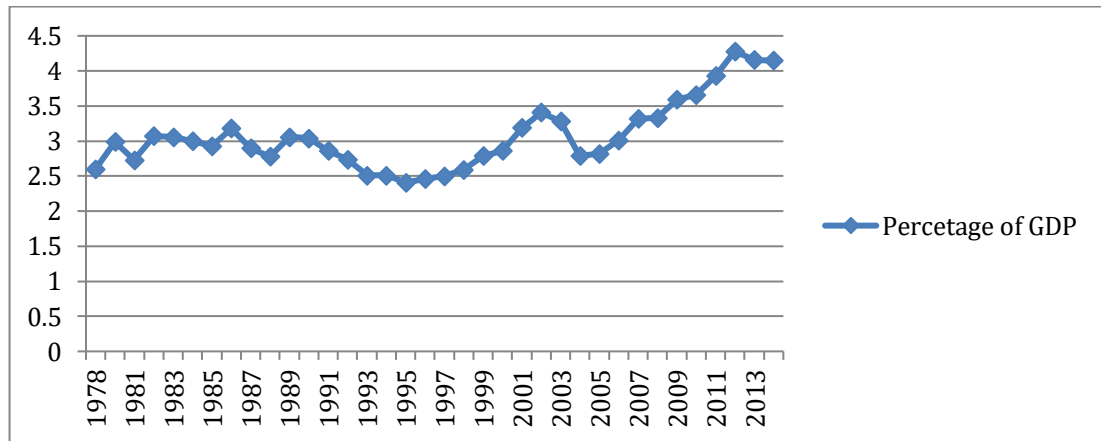
(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015)

Limited educational investment meant that it was hard to satisfy the demand for education among the population. In order to improve the financial situation, a new educational finance policy has been promoted (Tsang, 2000). The financial policy has shifted from a centralized to a decentralized system (Tsang, 2000; Wong, 2002). Tsang's (2000, p.256) research provides the following explanations:

> *"before [this reform], China had a centralized public-finance system, characterized by the practice of tong shou tong zhi (complete collection and complete distribution) according to which a lower-level government submitted all its tax revenues to a higher-level government and received all its expenditures from the higher-level government. In 1982, the practice of feng zou chi fang (eating from separate pots) was introduced, by which a government at each level was responsible for its own finances."*

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Here it can be seen that a decentralized policy not only allows local government to have a greater say in educational matters, but also provides them with a greater role in education finance. Local authorities are encouraged to be active in looking for funding sources (Ngok, 2007). Under the new financial arrangements, 'multiple channels' of educational financing were encouraged, instead of solely relying on the state's support (Ministry of Education, 2016).

As shown in Table 3.2, during the 1990s, the proportion of all educational expenditures from government budgets dropped from about 65% to about 53% (Hannum and Wang, 2006). An increasing proportion of the financial resources for education comes from plenty of sources including tuition fees, local taxes, donations, funds from enterprises. During the 1990s, the proportion of tuition and fees increased from about 4% to about 13% (Hannum and Wang, 2006).

Table 3.2 Composition of total educational expenditures by source 1990-1998

Year	Budgetary education expenditures	Levies and surcharges	Enterprise-run institutions	Institution-generated funds	Social contributions/ fundraising	Tuition	Other
1990	64.63	9.63	5.83	4.70	7.98	4.21	3.02
1991	62.85	10.27	5.83	5.09	8.59	4.42	2.95
1992	62.13	10.13	5.59	5.39	8.03	5.07	3.66
1993	60.80	9.49	6.14	4.68	6.62	8.22	4.05
1994	59.38	8.92	5.99	4.08	6.55	9.87	5.23
1995	54.76	10.07	5.99	4.09	8.67	10.72	6.10
1996	53.57	10.59	5.11	3.85	8.33	11.54	7.01
1997	53.63	10.58	4.72	3.91	6.74	12.88	7.54
1998	53.09	9.46	4.37	2.00	4.81	12.54	13.73

(Hannum and Wang, 2006)

During the 2000s and the 2010s, although the proportion of government budgetary education expenditure increased from 54.19% in 2000 to 68.96% in 2010, tuition and fees still remain a certain proportion of all education expenditures (15.42% in 2010). In higher education, tuition fees were introduced. Before the 1990s, the majority of students in higher education were financed by the state. HEIs in China charged no

tuition fee. However, since 1997, all students enrolling in higher education had to pay tuition fees. HEIs started to charge tuition and fees as one of the source of income (Chan and Ngok, 2011). In 2012, the national average tuition fee was about RMB 6,000 to RMB 7,000 per year depending on the course (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015). Meanwhile, the per capita deposit income of Chinese residents is about RMB 6,100 (ibid). That is to say, the higher education tuition fee is very close to the per capita income of Chinese residents. High tuition fees place pressure on families in poor regions.

Moreover, the decentralized funding system paves the way for non-state educational institutions (Ngok, 2007). The number of educational institutions run by non-state agents has greatly increased in China since the 1990s, including kindergartens, primary schools, junior secondary school, vocational schools, senior secondary schools, and higher educational institutions. Nogk (2007) argues that the involvement of private forces in education contributes to the marketization of education.

3.2.5 Inequity in decentralization and marketization of education

The decentralization and marketization of education have also led to further regional inequity in education (Hunnum and Wang, 2006; Ngok, 2007; Chan and Ngok, 2011). Children in less developed regions are unable to get equitably benefit from the basic education, leading to unequal opportunities to access higher education (Ngok, 2007; Chan and Ngok, 2011).

The selection of higher education in China is heavily based on performance in the College Entrance Examination, which tends to favour students who receive good basic education. (In China, 'basic education' is the general term for ordinary education that comprises preschool, primary school, and secondary school education.) As Xin and Kang (2012, p.45) state:

> *"Whether students ultimately decide to enter the workforce directly after high school or to pursue further education, each one deserves a high-quality academic education that lays the ground work for success in adulthood."*

Here we can see that basic education is an important driver in higher educational opportunity in China. In the context of the decentalization of educational finance, the responsibility for funding basic education has shifted to local governments. As the new decentralized and marketed system succeeded in mobilizing new non-budgets education resources, the funding for schools is more closely tied to local economic circumstances (Hannum and Wang, 2006). That is to say, basic education is heavily dependent on the local economic situations. The regional differences in economic development further differentiate a local governments' capacity to fund education (Wu, 2010). This is supported by Ngok (2007, p.146):

> *"Based on the varying local economic situations, educational disparity is tremendous from locality to locality in terms of school buildings, school facilities, teacher qualification, teachers' remunerations, educational opportunities, and teaching quality."*

Ngok's (2007) research suggests that the differences in financial resources between well-developed provinces and less-developed provinces make differences in the resources available to basic education.

Economically advantaged provinces have benefited from the decentralization policy, while less developed regions have suffered (Kanbur and Zhang, 2005; Hannum and Wang, 2006; Ngok, 2007). In the regions with a deficient government budget, basic education may operate under heavy financial constraints. In some cases, some schools in well-developed provinces spend a lot of money building experiment facilities and on teacher training, while some schools in less-developed areas cannot guarantee the basic teaching materials. Li et al's (2007) research exposes the fact that the highest provincial primary educational expenditures per student were several times greater than the lowest. For example, in 1995, the average per capita education expenditure for a junior high school student was 1535.83 yuan in Shanghai, while 311.86 yuan in Sichuan (Li et al, 2007).

Moreover, with the marketisation of education, the number of private educational institutions has increased. However, although educational opportunities have been expanded, not all people have benefited from the expansion of educational opportunities equally (Ngok, 2007). The expansion of private education, in particular the private higher education, depends greatly on the economic situation among

individual provinces (ibid). Thus, there is a significant difference across provinces according to their economic situation (see Table 3.3). People in the large cities and well-developed regions have benefited greatly from the expansion of private education, leading to inequity in educational opportunities.

Table 3.3 Number of Non-state/ Private HEIs by Region (including private Adult HEIs and Independent colleges)

Region	Non-state/ Private HEIs
Total	836
Beijing	62
Tianjin	30
Hebei	50
Shanxi	
Inner Mongolia	
Liaoning	76
Jilin	14
Heilongjiang	36
Shanghai	255
Jiangsu	
Zhejiang	22
Anhui	7
Fujian	
Jiangxi	23
Shandong	98
Henan	41
Hubei	4
Hunan	20
Guangdong	31
Guangxi	
Hainan	
Chongqing	8
Sichuan	15
Guizhou	3

Yunan	
Tibet	
Shanxi	10
Gansu	31
Qinghai	
Ningxia	
Xianjiang	

(Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2015)

3.2.6 Localization

Ngok (2006) points out that the increasing responsibility of local governments for educational investment has reduced the role of central government and increased the power of local governments in educational administration and planning. With the increasing role of local governments in education, a new trend of localization of higher education has emerged. According to decentralized and marketized policy, the administration and development of the HEIs are placed under the local social and economic development plans (Wang, 2011). HEIs are required to show responsibility in the local economic and social developments. Thus, the local government normally requires HEIs to offer more places to local students. Moreover, the principle "whoever invests will benefit" makes HEIs look for local investors for their financial sources, thus creating a tendency of regionalization of local HEI admission (Wang, 2011, p.230). In the admission process, students with local hukou are preferred in the recruitment while a certain quota is set to enrol a limited number of students with other region hukou (Davey et al, 2007). The local enrolment rates of HEIs are thus much higher. This is how the 'preferential policy' (see section 2.7) is produced.

With the uneven distribution of higher educational resources, the localization of higher education contributes to regional inequity in terms of access to higher education. Chan and Ngok (2011) conducted research on the regional disparity of higher education in different regions, using the three provinces of Zhejiang, Hunan and Guizhou as examples. The three provinces are selected as representatives of the eastern, central and western regions in China. It is found that due to the different

levels of economic growth and economic resources, the development of higher education in these three provinces is uneven:

> *"Among these three provinces, the past 15 years have witnessed the rapid development of higher education in Zhejiang, where the gross enrolment ratio reached 45% in 2010, 20% higher than the national average. While in Hunan and Guizhou, the figure was 17.7% and 18.4% respectively. In 2010, the higher education enrolment rate of senior high school graduates reached 83.8% in Zhejiang. This shows that students in different provinces do not share equal access to higher education."* (Chan and Ngok, 2011, p.302).

3.3 Policy Analysis

3.3.1 Defining policy

In considering policy analysis, it is necessary to understand what is meant by policy. There is a vast literature within a number of disciplines that attempts to define policy. Most definitions consider 'purposiveness' to be a key component of policy (Anderson, 1975; Harman, 1984; Knoepfel et al, 2011). For example, Anderson (1975, p.3) defines policy as "a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern". Here we see the idea that policy is identified as a course of action with a given purpose. This is supported by Harman's (1984) definition. In a rational introduction to policy, Harman (1984, p.13) defines policy as:

> *"The implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed or to be followed in dealing with a recognised problem or matter of concern, and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals, Policy also can be thought of as a position or stance developed in response to a problem or issue of conflict, and directed towards a particular objective."*

Harman (1984) presents policy as purposive actions with a particular objective, namely the response to recognised issues. Similar definitions can be found in various policy textbooks. However, Taylor et al (1997) argue that this view appears to give the impression that the various institutions involved in the policy share a value consensus and contribute to the ongoing stability of the whole. In Harman's (1984) definition, polices are generated and implemented in a straightforward and unproblematic way. In contrast, Taylor et al (1997) state that society should be seen

as consisting of competing groups having different values and access to power. Ball (1994) discusses a dual conceptualization of policy as text and policy as discourse in his definition of policy. Regarding policy as text, Ball (1994, p.16) defines policies as:

> *"representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context)."*

According to Ball (1994), policy texts are outcomes of struggle and compromise between the different individuals, groups and interests. The view of policy as text reflects that policy is the outcome of multiple influences and agendas. Ball (1994) also suggests that policy is not only a text, but also refers to discourses. In Ball's (1994) discussion of policy as discourse, he draws on Foucault's (1977, p.49) definition:

> *"Discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak…Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own intention".*

Expanding on Foucault (1977)'s definition, Ball further (1994, p.22) claims that discourses are only about "what can be said, and thought", but also about "who can speak, when, where and with what authority". Taylor et al (1997, p.24) support Balls' dual conceptualization of policy as text and policy as discourse in their definition of policy:

> *"Policy is much more than a specific policy document or text. Rather, policy is both process and product. In such a conceptualization, policy involves the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice".*

In their understanding of policy,Taylor et al (1997) propose eight brief general observations of complexity of education policy:

➢ Policy is more than text
➢ Policy is multi-dimensional
➢ Policy is value-laden
➢ Policies exist in context
➢ Policy making is a state activity

- ➢ Education policies interact with policies in other fields
- ➢ Policy implementation is never straightforward
- ➢ Policies result in unintended as well as intended consequences

In this view, policy is both a process and product, which involves the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice. Policy processes were seen as being more ongoing, dynamic, complex, interactive and multi-layered.

In the framework of policy analysis, Knoepfel et al (2011, p.24) identify the following elements in the use of the term 'public policy':

> *"A series of intentionally coherent decisions or activities taken or carried out by different public – and sometimes – private actors whose resources, institutional links and interest vary, with a view to resolving in a targeted manner a problem that is politically defined as collective in nature. This group of decisions and activities gives rise to formalised actions of a more or less restrictive nature that are often aimed at modifying the behaviour of social groups presumed to be at the root of, or able to solve, the collective problem to be resolved (target groups) in the interest of the social groups who suffer the negative effects of the problem in question (final beneficiaries)."*

Here, we can see that a public policy refers to a large number of legislative and administrative activities to resolve real problems. It involves a group of coherent decisions and activities that are taken by different actors. This analytical definition offers a view of all the different activities involved in policy processes, clarifying the distribution of the political and administrative functions at different levels. In this research, the research questions are designed to examine the policy development process of the Offsite NCEE policy, from the context, policy making to policy implementation and impact. When attempting to define what is meant by policy for the purpose of this study, a choice should be made to meet the research questions. Thus, for the purposes of this research, the simplified way of viewing policy is not sufficient. By bearing in mind these issues, this research needs a definition which clarifies the complexity of policy at all stages. From the available variety of definitions, this research uses Knoepfel et al's definition (2011).

This definition further introduces eight key constituent elements of a public policy:

1. *"A solution to a public problem: a policy aims to resolve a social problem that is politically acknowledged as public and necessitates the re-establishment of the communication between several social actors that has broken down or is under threat;*
2. *"The existence of target groups at the root of a public problem: all public policy aims to channel the behaviour of target groups, either directly or by affecting these actors' environment;*
3. *"Intentional coherence, at the very least: a public policy is created with a given direction;*
4. *"The existence of several decisions and activities: public policies are characterised by a group of actions that go beyond the level of the single or specific decision while remaining short of a "general social movement;*
5. *"Intervention programme: this group of decisions and actions should, moreover, contain decisions that are to a greater or lesser extent concrete and specific;*
6. *"The key role of public actors: this group of decisions and actions can only be considered as a public policy to the extent that those who take the decisions act in the capacity of public actors;*
7. *"Existence of formalised measures: a public policy assumes the production of acts or outputs intended to channel the behaviour of groups or individuals;*
8. *"Decisions and activities that impose constraints: traditionally, the majority of actors assume that the decisions made by political-administrative actors are often coercive in nature".*
(Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.26)

Based on the above, a number of key elements are identified and explained. Firstly, policy is purposive. A policy has a purpose or series of purposes with a given direction, which is often to resolve social problems or channel the behaviour of target groups. Secondly, policy involves a series of connected decisions and actions. Thirdly, the group of decisions and actions are made and driven by an actor or set of actors, both public and private, who play key role in the policy process. Fourthly, policy is socially and politically constructed, as it always depends on variations in different actor's resources interests and institutional links. Finally, decisions and activities are often coercively made by the legitimate authority with concrete measures.

These elements underlie the thinking in this research in relation to the Offsite NCEE policy analysis. In this research, the Offsite NCEE policy has been addressed to solve an educational equity problem, which has been widely recognised as a public issue for a long time. The target group in this policy is migrant students who have long been under threat in educational policies. The Offsite NCEE policy directly

affects the target group, as it aims to benefit migrant student by taking formalised measures. This policy is not a single decision, but consists of a group of concrete decisions and actions. These decisions and actions were addressed in the same direction and connected. They were all taken by the government authorities, such as the provincial educational department and municipal educational department. Some decisions and actions in this policy are coercive in nature. For example, all research places made their conditions for migrant students to take NCEE there. Therefore, Knoepfel et al's (2011) model and approach of policy definition and analysis is adopted in this study, allowing for a clear understanding of the Offsite NCEE policy analysis.

3.3.2 Policy cycle

Many writers have attempted to draw up models to convey the interrelated contexts and stages involved in a policy process (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984; Bowe et al, 1992; Hill and Hupe, 2002; Taylor et al, 1997). The consensus that emerges from the literature is the notion of 'policy cycle', which represents the models of the stages of the policy process (Anderson, 1978). The idea of policy cycle is proposed by Lasswell (1956) in his study of multidisciplinary and prescriptive policy science. Lasswell (1956) introduces a model of the policy process that comprises seven states: intelligence, promotion, prescription, invocation, application, termination and appraisal. This model serves the basic need to organize and systemize the literature and research on policy. However, critics have argued that Lasswell's (1956) model is more prescriptive and normative, rather than descriptive and analytical. Jann and Wegrich (2007, p.43) argue that it had been designed like "a problem-solving model and accords with other prescriptive rational models of planning and decision-making developed in organization theory and public administration." Subsequently, this model has been developed and expanded by many others, offering further differentiation of stages. Today, the policy cycle framework is conventionally interpreted by distinguishing five major stages, namely agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation and policy evaluation (Knoepfel et al, 2011). Each stage refers to a specific part of the context in a policy process.

However, the policy cycle framework has been criticized for offering an oversimplified and ideal view of the policy process (Jann and Wegrich, 2007; Langen, 2010). The linear sequence of the policy cycle framework presents an ideal-type model of the policy process, featuring clear-cut distinctions between each stage (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). However, in reality, as critics have argued, the policy process is not as clear-cut as the policy cycle framework suggests:

> *"Policies have always been constantly reviewed, controlled, modified, and sometimes even terminated; policies are perpetually reformulated, implemented, evaluated, and adapted. But these processes do not evolve in a pattern of clear-cut sequences; instead, the stages are constantly meshed and entangled in an ongoing process"* (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p.44).

As Jann and Wegrich (2007) explain, it is difficult to distinguish between stages, as policy process rarely features clear-cut beginnings and endings.

As long as the limitations of the policy cycle framework are acknowledged, the policy cycle can still be a useful tool for studying policy. The policy cycle represents generic features of the policy process, highlighting the significance of the policy domain or subsystem as the key level of analysis (Burstein, 1991; Howlett and Ramesh, 2003). The basic elements of the model can still be used to simplify the structure(Howlett and Ramesh, 2003). The policy cycle offers generic themes at each stage of the policy process to guide policy analysis. In this way, Knoepfel et al (2011, p.30) point out that the policy cycle framework can be an aid "in the quest to understand the decisions taken in the context of a policy". Knoepfel et al (2011) further interpret this framework, summarising five phases of sequences of public policy, and identifying the constituent elements, products and main dimensions and questions in the analysis of each stage.

1st phase

Emergence of problems

Constituent elements: Emergence of a problem; Problem perception, Definition of the problem and identification of possible causes; Representation of the problem; Request for public action.

Main dimensions and questions in analysis: The economic, political and social weight of target groups; Related issues about the power of target groups within the public policy delivery system; Variables referred to as 'situational', external events, such as changes in the economic and social context, disruptions of an economic nature etc. How is an awareness of the problem reached?

2nd phase

Agenda setting

Constituent elements: Selection (filtering) of emerging problems; Outline and formulation of causality model; Responses of public powers to problems recognised as being the necessary object of a policy; The existence of target groups at the root of a public problem.

Product: Political definition of the public problem (PD).

Main dimensions and questions in analysis: What are the factors that will make the government act in response to the problem?

3rd phase

Formulation and adoption of the policy programme

Constituent elements: Definition of the 'causality model'; Definition of suitable and acceptable solutions to the defined problem; Filtering between ideal solutions and available resources; Selection of instruments; A solution to a public problem; Intentional coherence; The existence of several decisions and activities; Decisions and activities that impose constraints; Intervention programme.

Product: political-administrative programme (PAP); Political-administrative arrangement (PAA).

Main dimensions and questions in analysis: The 'structure of programmes' to be implemented; What are the solutions proposed and accepted by the government and parliament? On the basis of which processes are these solutions formulated?

4th phase

Policy implementation

Constituent elements: Application of selected solutions; Action of administrative implementation agents; The key role of public actors; Existence of formalised measures.

Product: plans of action (APs); Implementation acts (outputs)

Main dimensions and questions in analysis: The 'implementation administrative system'; Have the decisions of legislature and the government been implemented?

5th phase

Policy evaluation

Content: Determination of eventual policy effects; Evaluation of extent of impacts, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, with respect to the original problem.

Product: evaluative statements on the policy effects (impacts and outcomes) (EE).

Main dimensions and questions in analysis: What are the direct and indirect effects of the policy?

This model of the policy process involves a logical order of policy development. Firstly, problems are defined and put on the agenda. Then, a policy programme is formulated and adopted and implemented. Finally the policy is evaluated to assess its impacts, effectiveness and efficiency.

Thus, according to Knoepfel et al (2011, p.120), based on the five phases, a policy process is interpreted in terms of the four main stages:

- ➢ 1st stage Agenda setting: "the placing of the problem to be resolved on the governmental agenda";
- ➢ 2nd stage Programming: "the legislative and regulatory programming of the public intervention";

> ➤ 3rd stage Implementation: "the implementation of the political-administrative programmes by means of action plans and formal acts";

> ➤ 4th stage Evaluation: "the evaluation of the resulting effects".

The policy cycle has been developed into the most widely applied framework for the field of policy studies. This research aims to analyse the development of Offsite NCEE policy, investigating it at each stage of policy process. For the purposes of this research, it is useful to employ the notion of policy cycle and Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach to structure and subject Offsite NCEE policy.

There is an issue the must be addressed in this study, that is, in which way is the Offsite NCEE policy to be analysed. A choice has to be made about the most suitable model of policy analysis to answer the research questions of this study. Knoepfel et al's (2011, p.118) model of policy analysis aims to "describe, understand and explain public policy in its entirety, from the initial perception of a social problem to its eventual resolution through public intervention". This study aims to capture the dynamic process of the Offsite NCEE policy from its inception to its implementation. Knoefel et al's framework provides a specific model for the Offsite NCEE policy analysis. Knoepfel et al (2011) summarises three main contributions of their analytical model. Firstly, it provides a whole picture of all the activities that prompt the policy implementation and administrative decisions, and also the activities that are considered often in isolation by the pubic agents concerned. Secondly, this analytical model enables to clarify the distribution of the responsibilities of political and administrative authorities at different state levels. Finally, it clarifies the distinction of the activities that addressed to a public problem through a specific policy from other activities associated with the management of the entire political-administrative system.

This research aims to investigate all the decisions and activities in the Offsite NCEE policy in the research places. The Knoepfel et al's (2011) analytical framework enables this research to observe all the decisions and activities at different stages of the Offsite NCEE policy. Moreover, the focus of this research is also largely on the responsibilities of different government authorities. For analysing the policy programming and the policy implementation, the research questions address "Who is

responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?" and "Who is responsible for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?" By using the Knoepfel et al's (2011) framework, this research addresses the distribution of political and administrative functions and responsibilities of government authorities at different state levels. Finally, this model enables this research to distinguish the Offsite NCEE policy from other activities that are associated with management of the entire political-administrative system. The offsite NCEE policy has been addressed to solve the educational equity problem for migrant children. By using Knoepfel et al's (2011) model, this research defines the public activities that are associated with the Offsite NCEE policy, and makes the distinction of those public activities from other public activities.

3.3.3 Agenda setting

The first stage of a policy process is agenda setting. Immergut (1992) points out that agenda setting is a crucial point in the policy process, as it determines if policy actions will be considered. In Birkland's (2011) understanding of agenda setting, he claims that the meaning of the term 'agenda' is central to understanding agenda setting. According to Birkland (2011), the term 'agenda' refers to collection of problems, understanding its causes, symbols, solutions and other elements of public problems that come to the attention of members of the public and their governmental officials. Likewise, Kingdon (2003) describes agenda as the list of issues or problems to which government officials, and those who are closely associated with policy making, pay serious attention. Birkland (2011, p.169) defines agenda setting as "the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention".

Kingdon (2003) conceptualises three streams for the process of agenda setting: problems, policies, and politics. Problems refer to the process of persuading policy makers to pay attention to one problem over others. Proposals refer to the process by which policy proposals are generated, debated and adopted. Politics refers to the political factors that influence agendas, such as changes in elected governments. Accoding to Kingdon's (2003) conceptualisation of agenda setting, a successful agenda setting requires that at least two streams come together at a critical time.

Jann and Wegrich (2007) suggest that there are two steps in the stage of agenda setting. The first step, policy recognition, requires that "a social problem has been defined as such and the necessity of state intervention has been expressed" (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p.45). The second step in the process of agenda setting is the move of a problem from its recognition up to the formal political agenda (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). According to Jann and Wegrich (2007), a policy presupposes the recognition of a policy problem or a series of problems. Before a problem can be put on the agenda, it is necessary to define its worthiness to be considered. Also, agenda setting is far more than deciding whether or not to consider a problem. It is crucial to put a recognized problem to the formal political agenda for consideration of public action (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). Anderson (1978) points out that a policy process is not a simple resolution of problems. It is on the basis of constitutions and definition of public problems, which influences the actor involved in the policy (Anderson, 1978).

Knoepfel et al (2011) further suggest that the product of agenda setting stage is a political definition of the public problem (PD). In their view, the political definition of the public problem not only includes decisions as to political intervention, but also: "the delimitation of the perimeter of the public problem to be resolved, the identification of its probable causes by the public actors and the kinds of public intervention envisaged" (Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.120).

Attention has been paid to social construction when defining a problem. Social construction refers to the process of defining a problem and the process of selling a broad population on this definition (Birkland, 2011). Jann and Wegrich (2007, p.47) refer social construction as "the ways in which we as a society and the various contending interests within it structure and tell the stories about how problems come to be the way they are". Literature mentions that the socially constructed nature of problems plays a key role in the agenda setting process. For example, Knoepfel et al (2011, p.132) suggest that:

> *"the definition of a problem always represents a collective construction directly linked to the perceptions, representations, interests and values of the actors concerned on an individual basis and/or as part of organised groups".*

Problems are defined in many different ways, and are influenced by a number of interacting variables. All problems should be understood in a historical and socially constructed way.

Garraud (1990) identifies three characterises of a public problem:

1. The constitution of a demand emanating from particular social groups
2. The development of a controversy or public debate
3. The existence of a conflict between organised social groups and political authorities

    (as cited in Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.121)

In this identification, a public problem can be a demand for a social group, a debate or a conflict between social groups and political authorities. It claims that a public problem needs to be recognised by public actors, for example, the government and the administration.

Jann and Wegrich (2007) point out that agenda setting results in a selection between diverse problems and issues. This is supported by Langen (2010). Langen (2010) assumes that not all existing problems are able to receive the same level of attention due to the limited resources, so that the agenda setting involves a competitive selection process. Langen (2010, p.50) explains that:

> *"Agenda-setting is a very competitive selection process where strong competition exists between (groups of) actors wanting to move issues up on the agenda in order to seek policy change, and with those aiming to keep issues off the agenda in order to prevent change – or at least the change promoted by another party."*

Langen (2010) also points out that the need and value of considering a solution to deal with the problem should be carefully evaluated. Thus questions of how to select problems arise.

Jann and Wegrich (2007, p.46) arise five questions of the mechanisms of agenda-setting:

"What is perceived as a policy problem? How and when does a policy problem get on the government's agenda? And why are other problems excluded from the agenda?"

Knoepfel et al (2011) propose four constituent elements that should be noted in the analysis of the agenda setting stage of a policy:

➢ The intensity of the problem
➢ The perimeter (or audience) of the problem
➢ The newness of the problem
➢ The urgency of the problem

The intensity of the problem refers to its consequences. In this context, the problem needs to be judged on whether it is worthy of consideration in view of its negative effects. The perimeter or audience of the problem refers to social groups that are affected by the negative effects of the problem, and their geographical location and the development of the problem over time. Likewise, Downs (1972) points out that a new public problem would succeed more easily in mobilising public opinion, and then in promoting public actors to intervene. Knoepfel et al (2011) suggest that most public intervention is likely to correct or re-orientate a previous failed policy. The urgency of the problem is considered as a determining factor to see if the problem is available to access the governmental agenda.

The agenda setting is characterized by different patterns in terms of definition of the actors and processes involved in the agenda setting. Knoepfel et al (2011) discuss five ideal types of agenda setting, each of which describes a particular process (Knoepfel et al, 2011). The 'media coverage' type highlights the role of the media in the stage of agenda setting (ibid). In this type, the media influence public opinion by emphasis on one social problem. Public actors normally give more attention to the problems that the media emphasises, according them priority on the agenda (Lodge and Hood, 2002). This type of 'exterior initiative' awards a crucial importance to the activities of pressure groups and social movement (Knoepfel et al, 2011). In this type, activities of pressure groups and social movements are seen as a determining factor in the agenda setting process. May (1991) suggests that social actors force public actors to launch a political debate on the agenda by way of gaining public support.

The 'policy supply' pattern is associated with 'public choice' theory (Knoepfel et al, 2011). It assumes that political parties take initiative action to deal with social demands. In this way, policy parties select and define public problems to make policy agenda. The 'internal anticipation' type concentrates on the administrative actors and public authorities in the policy agenda setting process (Knoepfel et al, 2011). Administrative actors and public authorities have direct access to the policy agenda and are capable of putting social problems on the agenda (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). The 'silent corporatist action' mode assumes that the role of interest groups is essential in the context of the policy agenda (Knoepfel et al, 2011). This model demonstrates the client-based relationships between various private or para-state actors (ibid).

In this research, by applying the four constituent elements proposed by Knoepfel et al (2011), the issue of educational equity has been defined as the public problem with regard to the Offsite NCEE policy. More concretely, the hukou system limited the equity and farness of the NCEE. In the previous policy, all students were required to attend the college entrance exam where their original household is registered, regardless of their current residence and school location, resulting in great inconvenience for the migrant students. The social group, migrant family has been under threat. Thus, there has long been a debate and demand for public intervention. Public actors also recognise the need to consider a possible solution to this problem.

3.3.4 Policy programming

Policy programming is considered as the second stage in a policy process. Once a problem has been put on the policy agenda, it can move further through the stage of policy programming. Jann and Wegrich (2007) reveal that a policy cannot always be formalized into separate programs, and there is no clear-cut separation between the two stages, policy formulation and policy decision making. Therefore, the stage of policy programming is considered to be a sub-stage that involves policy formulation and policy decision making. Langen (2010, p.59) provides an explicit explanation of the policy programming stage:

> *"In general terms, this stage revolves around the formulation and formal adoption of a set of regulatory acts and norms that parliaments, governments*

and the authorities charged with execution consider necessary for the implementation of a public policy."

Sidney (2007, p.79) highlights the policy formulation in this stage, as "designing the alternatives that decision makers will consider directly influences the ultimate policy choice". This is supported by Langen (2010) who argues that policy formulation is of particular importance at this stage, as it has great influence on the final decision-making. Writers discuss a variety of elements that contribute to the policy formulation stage. Janne and Wegrich (2007) suggest that policy formulation primarily provides a definition of policy objectives. It then considers policy actions to be taken to achieve these objectives before making a final policy decision (ibid). This is supported by Sidney (2007, p.80) who describes policy formulation as:

> *"It examines the factors that influence how actors craft alternatives, it prescribes means for such crafting, it examines how and why particular policy alternatives remain on or fall off of the decision agenda".*

Sidney (2007) further points out that the stage of policy formulation involves two main steps: identifying and/or crafting a set of policy alternatives to address a problem, and proposing a set of solutions in preparation for the final policy decision. Rein (1983) suggests that the stage of policy formulation includes three steps: problem setting, mobilization of the fine structure of government action, and achievement of settlements in the face of dilemmas and trade-offs among value.

After a problem has been recognised at the stage of agenda setting, the policy formulation stage then proposes solutions to address this problem. This involves approaches and specific policy tools that constitute each approach (Sidney, 2007). Once solutions have been decided, the final outcome of the policy programming stage, the policy decision, will then be adopted (ibid). The solutions will be selected and narrowed down by judging their acceptability, feasibility and benefits (Sidney, 2007). The policy decision step defines the objectives of a policy and also the instruments to be used to achieve these objectives.

Cochran and Malone (1999, p.46) propose five 'what' questions that contribute to the policy programming stage:

"What is the plan for dealing with the problem? What are the goals and priorities? What options are available to achieve those goals? What are the costs and benefits of each of the options? What externalities, positive or negative, are associated with each alternative?"

By proposing these five questions, they indicate that before the stage of policy process, a policy problem has been recognized and defined, and then moved onto the policy agenda. In the stage of policy programming, a range of broad approaches to this problem is then identified and followed by specific sets of policy tools that constitute each approach (Cochran and Malone, 1999).

Barkenbus (1998) claims that expertise serves both instrumental and enlightenment functions in the policy formulation. The instrumental value of expertise refers to the role of expertise in policy making (Barkenbus, 1998). Expertise is regarded as knowledge of decision-making tools. Expertise directly assists in the choice between prescribed policy alternatives (ibid). Decision makers may formulate policy options on the basis of ties to special interests. However, experts with no tie to special interest can provide a broader perspective on policy issues unconstrained by narrow interests (ibid). In this way, the enlightenment value of expertise enhances the potential of formulating win-win policies (ibid).

Dye (2002) also suggests that policy is associated with expertise. Policy formulation often takes place in government authorities, in legislative offices, and in meetings of special commissions. This is supported by Sidney (2007) who claims that policy formulation is often the realm of the experts and the hidden participants of Kingdon's (2003) policy stream.

Knoepfel et al (2011) highlight the fact that there are two products of policy formulation stage. The first product is the political-administrative programme (PAP), while the second product is the political-administrative arrangement (PAA). The first product, PAP, refers to all decisions involved in the policy process, which provides the legal bases for the objectives, intervention instruments and operational arrangements of public action (Knoepfel et al, 2011). The PAP takes all regulatory or legislative decisions taken by public authorities. It also decides on the majority of actions concerning the designation of the competent authorities and services, which refer to the second product PAA. The PAA refers to the decisions on the

administrative process and organisation of the policy implementation (Knoepfel et al, 2011). It defines the structured public group and actors who are responsible for policy implementation, and the competencies, responsibilities and resources of public actors (Knoepfel et al, 2011). More concretely, the PAA concerns:

> *"the distribution of formal competencies (that is, the attribution of responsibility for the new policy to existing or newly created administrative services), the allocation of various resources, that is, financial, human etc, which are at the disposal of the implementing authorities and also the intraorganisational and interorganisational management of the administrative units involved"* (Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.178).

The PAA defines the responsibilities, resources and competencies of public actors who are involved in the PAP.

To examine the political-administrative programming, Knoepfel et al (2011) propose a general rule, which comprises five complementary elements, including three substantive elements, the objectives, the evaluative elements and the operational elements, and two institutional elements, the political-administrative arrangement and the procedural elements. To examine the political-administrative arrangement, Knoepfel (2011) considers that there are five internal characteristics and two external characteristics of the political-administrative arrangement:

Internal characteristics

- ➢ The number and type of actors
- ➢ The degree of horizontal coordination
- ➢ The degree of vertical coordination
- ➢ The degree of centrality of key actors
- ➢ The degree of politicisation

External characteristics

- ➢ The context defined by other public policies
- ➢ The degree of openness

In this research, at the stage of policy programming, a political-administrative programme has been set. At the national level, the central government made the

superior programme outline of Offsite NCEE policy. It decided on the objectives, intervention instruments and operational arrangements of this policy, providing a legal base for the whole policy process. At the provincial level, the government made the programme outline of this policy within the province. The political-administrative arrangements were made at the provincial level. The two provincial governments defined the involved public actors and their responsibility for policy implementation.

3.3.5 Policy implementation

The literature reveals a number of definitions of the implementation of public policy. The initial definition is made by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), in which policy implementation is viewed as a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieve them. O'Toole (2000) refers policy implementation to the connection between the policy intention and actual result. O'Toole (2000, p.266) defines policy implementation as:

> *"what happens between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something, or to stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action".*

In this definition, as a significant part of policy cycle, policy implementation represents the relationship between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of government to do something or stop doing something and the ultimate impact of actions (O'Toole, 2000). Policy implementation concerns how the setting decision is to be put into effect. Knoepfel et al (2011, p.200) define policy implementation as the "set of processes after the programming phase that are aimed at the concrete realisation of the objectives of a public policy". According to Knoepfel et al (2011), policy implementation refers to a set of decisions and activities carried out by the actors involved in the PAA. Decisions and activities are framed by a PAP governing the specific institutional rules of the policy in question. Policy implementation is carried out with the intention of creating, influencing or controlling three dimensions: the constitution of a policy network, the conception of an implementation strategy, and the decisions and activities that are directly addressed by target groups (Knoepfel et al, 2011).

The literature on policy implementation focuses on the construction of models and on analysing strategies. Two visions of policy implementation are distinguished, 'top-down' vision and 'bottom-up' vision.

Table 3.4 Differences between top-down and bottom-up implementation version

Variables	Top-down version	Bottom-up version
Policy decision-maker	Policymakers	Street-level bureaucrats
Starting point	Statutory language	Social problems
Structure	Formal	Both formal and informal
Process	Purely administrative	Networking, including administrative
Authority	Centralization	Decentralization
Output/Outcomes	Prescriptive	Descriptive
Discretion	Top-level bureaucrats	Bottom-level bureaucrats

(Paudel, 2009, p.40)

As shown in Table 3.4, Paudel (2009) summarises the differences between the two visions. The top-down vision is 'policy-centred' (Paudel, 2009). Policy goals and decisions are generated by political and administrative authorities. It represents a 'top-down' process for identifying the main actors of the public policy, which is from the top and public sector down to the bottom sector (ibid). It emphasises formal structure, resulting in centralization control. The bottom-up vision starts with a social problem and then followed by the activities of actors of the implementation network at local level (ibid). It represents a 'bottom-up' process for identifying the main actors of the public policy, which is from street level to the top level with simultaneous consideration of actors.

The differences between the 'top-down' vision and 'bottom-up' vision that Paudel (2009) summarises are supported by Pulzl and Treib (2007). They define the two visions as:

> *"Top-down models put their main emphasis on the ability of decision makers' to produce unequivocal policy objectives and on controlling the implementation stage. Bottom-up critiques view local bureaucrats as the main actors in policy delivery and conceive of implementation as negotiation processes within networks of implementers."* (Pulzl and Treib, 2007, p.94)

According to Pulzl and Treib (2007), in a 'top-down' model, the implementation of a policy starts from the 'top' of the political system and delivery 'down' to the implementers. Pressman and Wildavsky's (1984) framework of 'top-down' model assumes that policy objectives are set out by central policy makers. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984, p.vx) describe implementation as an "interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieve them". According to Pressman and Wildavsky (1985), the focus of implementation research is placed on analyzing the difficulties in achieving these objectives.

In contrast, in a 'bottom-up' model, the implementation of a policy starts from the 'bottom' of the political administrative system (Pulzl and Treib, 2007). It primarily identifies the public actors who are involved in the policy delivery, then moves 'upwards' in order to identify the networks of implementing actors and approaches (ibid). Studies of 'bottom-up' model against the idea that policy objectives are set out at the central level. For example, Lipsky's (1980) framework starts from the bottom level by analyzing the behavior of public service workers, which he calls street-level bureaucrats. Hudson (1989) points out that street-level bureaucrats have considerable autonomy in policy implementation.

In addition to the two policy implementation models, a new model, that of hybrid theories, is presented by researchers to bridge the gap between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' models (Pulzl and Treib, 2007; Elmore, 1985). In order to avoid the weakness of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' models, hybrid theories incorporate elements of top-down, bottom-up and other theoretical models (Pulzl and Treib, 2007). Elmore (1985) combines the concept of bottom-up concept with the concept of top-down concept. He argues that policy makers should not only identify policy instruments and resources, but also the structure of implementers and target groups. In Goggin et al's (1990) understanding of policy implementation, in order to avoid the conceptual weaknesses of top-down and bottom-up models, they combine elements of both sides of top-down and bottom-up models. They accept the idea that policy decisions are defined at central level, and are delivered to lower level policy actors (Goggin et al, 1990). However, they also recognize the fact that lower level policy actors have autonomy and that the outcome of this complicated negotiation processes between implementers and central authorities (Goggin et al, 1990).

In order to analyse the stage of policy implementation, according to Elmore (1985), there are four main characteristics of an effective implementation:

- Clearly specified tasks and objectives that accurately reflect the intent of policy
- A management plan that allocates tasks and performance standards to subunits
- An objective means of measuring subunit performance
- A system of management controls and social sanctions sufficient to hold subordinates accountable for their performance

Pulzl and Treib (2007) declare that there are three core elements in an ideal process of policy implementation: specification of program details; allocation of resources; decisions. For analysing the process of policy implementation, questions around the three core elements arise (Pulzl and Treib, 2007). To look into the specifications of the program details, questions such as "how and by which agencies/organization should the program be executed? How should the law/program be interpreted? Specification of program details?" should be asked (Pulzl and Treib, 2007, p.52). To look into allocation of resources, questions such as "how are budgets distributed? Which personnel will execute the program? Which units of an organization will be in charge for the execution?" should be asked (ibid). Finally, question "how will decisions of single cases be carried out?" is associated with 'decisions' (ibid).

Knoepfel et al (2011) propose two products in the stage of policy implementation, action plans (APs) and implementation acts (outputs). Action plans refer to "the set of planning decisions considered as necessary for the coordinated and targeted production of administrative services" (Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.206). Action plans establish the priorities for policy implementation, defining the priorities for the production of concrete measures and for the allocation of resources necessary to implement administrative decisions and activities (Knoepfel et al, 2011). Implementation acts refer to "the set of end products of the political-administrative processes which, as part of the scope of its implementation, are individually aimed at the members of the defined affected groups" (Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.214). Implementation acts include all administrative decisions and activities involved in the measures application.

In this research, Offsite NCEE policy has been implemented in a 'top-down' way. The goals and decisions are generated by central government at the national level and the provincial government at local level. This policy is one of centralized control, and has a very strict formal structure. The implementation process is from the top and public sector down to the bottom sector, from the provincial authorities to the district authorities. Action plans and implementation acts are generated in this policy implementation. Provincial governments define the concrete actions to implement the policy. For example, detailed procedure of the Offsite NCEE application for migrant students has been settled by public actors.

3.3.6 Policy evaluation

After a policy has been programmed and implemented, the next step is that of policy evaluation. This is the final stage of the policy cycle. Jann and Wegrich (2007) define policy evaluation as a key policy management tool. It focuses on the outcomes of a policy, checking to what extent the objectives have been achieved. Knoepfel et al (2011) discuss the definition of policy effects by identifying two concepts 'impacts' and 'outcomes'. The impacts of a policy are defined as "all of the changes in the behaviour of target groups that are directly attributable to the entry into force of the political-administrative programmes (PAPs), political-administrative arrangements (PAAs), action plans (APs) and the formal implementation acts (outputs) that concretise them" (Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.230). Impacts demonstrate the real effects of the given policy on the target group. The impacts of a policy observes whether and to what extent the policy changes the behaviour of target groups and the acceptance of the public intervention by the target groups. The outcomes of a policy are defined as "all of the effects in relation to the public problem to be resolved that are attributable to the policy and triggered in turn by the implementation acts (outputs)" (Knoepfel et al, 2011, p.234). Outcomes refer to all effects that comes out from the activities. These effects may be direct or indirect, primary or secondary, desired or undesired.

Mair (1994, p.55) points out that there are two main types of policy evaluation, process or formative evaluation and outcome or summative evaluation.

> *"Process evaluation concentrates upon assessing how a policy is put into practice, what happens on the ground, and relating this to how the policy is meant to work. Outcome evaluation is more concerned with the final impact of the project-how far did it eventually achieve what it was initially intended to achieve."*

Process or formative evaluation places more emphasis on the policy process, while the outcome or summative evaluation places more focus on policy result (Mair, 1994).

Policy evaluation requires a specific designed study and research, conducting quantitative method and qualitative method (Mair, 1994). Generally, evaluation studies rely on a quantitative approach concern accurate measurement, reliability and reliability of results (Mair, 1994). Meanwhile, qualitative research methods focus more on the nature of phenomena, seeking a deep understanding of policy results and the reason behind the results (Mair, 1994).

Jann and Wegrich (2007) declare that feedback from policy evaluation has two main patterns of policy learning with distinct implications. One pattern would be that policies are evaluated as successful policies (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). These policies should be reinforced. Another pattern concerns the ideal of the pilot project. In this case, a particular measure can be extended.

According to Knoepfel et al (2011), the product of the policy evaluation stage is evaluative statement on the policy effects (EE). Evaluative statements represent the impacts and outcomes of a given policy (Knoepfel et al, 2011). That is to say, evaluative statements demonstrate the changes in the behaviour of target groups and the effects of the solution of the defined public problem. Evaluative statements also represent the efficacy, efficiency and relevance of the given policy (Knoepfel et al, 2011). More concretely, evaluative statements are interpreted on seven dimensions that are connected in terms of their substantive and institutional content (Knoepfel et al, 2011):

➢ Reference criteria of statements
➢ Scientific (causal nature) or political (ideological) statements
➢ Summary or formative statements

- Ex-ante, concomitant and ex-post readings
- Partial or global readings
- Formal statements
- Substantive or institutional statements

All evaluative statements need to have a clear assessment to deal with the relevance of the objectives of the PAP, impact, effectiveness and efficiency which is about the extent to which the outcomes reflect the invested resources. Some evaluative statements employ the scientific analysing approach to establish causal links between the outputs and impacts and outcomes. While some statements focus on the analyst's subjective assessments and employ the ideological approach. Evaluative statements may also have different aims. Some statements are summary statements, while some are formative, regarding the adaptation and improvement of the policy. Evaluative statements also differ on the basis of the time at which they are conducted. Ex-ante statements refer to the evaluation taken before the policy is implemented. Concomitant evaluation takes place with the execution of the policy, while ex-post evaluation takes place once the implementation is completed. A distinction is also made on the basis of assessment content: that is, whether the evaluative statements assess implementation instruments only or the entire policy. The weight of an evaluative statement largely depends on whether it is 'formal' or 'informal'. Literature assumes that a formal evaluative statement which is commissioned by public actors will provide greater credibility than an informal evaluative statement. In addition, some statements are substantive in nature while some are institutional. Substantive statements assess the concrete observed effects, while institutional statements primarily explore the rules during the policy process.

Although policy evaluation was defined as a key policy management tool, no evaluation has been conducted for the Offsite NCEE policy at national level and local level. The central government did not conduct any project or study to evaluate the Offsite NCEE policy at national level. In both the inbound province and the outbound province, there is also no formal evaluation commissioned by the provincial governments to examine the impacts and outcomes of the Offsite NCEE policy in the two provinces. That is to say, the process of Offsite NCEE policy does not include the stage of evaluation. Therefore, the stage of evaluation in Knoepfel et

al's (2011) approach is not used in this research for examining the Offsite NCEE policy.

Chapter 4 Methodology

Introduction

The first section of this chapter outlines the design of this research based on the case study approach. The second section describes the research instruments used in this research. Interviews, questionnaire survey, and documentary analysis in this research are discussed. The third section discusses the quality issues of this research. The focus of discussion is placed upon the limitations, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations in this research. The fourth section focuses on the two research provinces and describes the reasons of choosing the research places. The fifth section presents an overview of the fieldwork by describing the schedule for data collection, the pilot study and sampling. Last but not least, data analysis are discussed in the final section.

4.1 Case study

The case study approach was selected to study the Offsite NCEE policy in the two research places. Yin (2009) discusses five research strategies: experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case study. He suggests that the three conditions could determine the type of strategy used in a piece of research: "the type of research question posed, the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events, and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events" (Yin, 2009, p.7). Table 4.1 summarizes an outline of the relevant situations of different research strategies.

Table 4.1 Relevant situations for different research strategies

Strategy	Type of research question	Control over actual behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/no
Experiment study	How, why	Yes	Yes
History study	How, why	No	No
Case study	How, why	No	Yes

Firstly, defining the substance and form of research questions is the most important step to address the appropriate research strategy to be used. 'How' and 'why' research questions are likely to favour an experiment study, a history study or a case study. 'Who', 'what' 'where', 'how many' and 'how much' research questions are likely to favour the use of survey and archival analysis as the preferred research strategies (ibid).

This study aims to explore 'why' the Offsite NCEE policy is conducted, 'who' is responsible for the policy development, 'how' the Offsite NCEE policy is developed, and 'what' are the factors affecting the development of Offsite NCEE policy, 'What' is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy and 'What' are the views of stakeholders. The focus of this research is to explore and explain motivations and phenomena, rather than to simply describe frequency questions, such as how many people involved in the Offsite NCEE policy. Therefore, according to Yin (2009), experiment, history and case study are potential research strategies.

Yin (2009) states that a further distinction among experiment, history and case study is the extent of the researcher's control over actual behavioural events and access to contemporary events. In an experimental study, the research is able to manipulate behaviour directly, precisely and systematically (Yin, 2009). And a historical strategy is used to deal with the past events by relying on primary documents, secondary documents, and cultural and physical artefacts as the main sources of evidence, rather direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events (ibid). The unique strength of a case study is that it allows the researcher to examine contemporary events by using a full variety of evidence such as interviews, observations, documents, and artefacts (ibid).

This study seeks to investigate the development of Offsite NCEE policy on natural conditions outside the investigator's control. Experiment thus was not considered as the research strategy in this study. This study aims to examine an ongoing educational policy and focuses on the contemporary situation. Therefore, the historical method was not an appropriate research strategy to be used in this study. While the use of case study strategy allows this study to explore a contemporary set of events regarding to the Offsite NCEE policy through interviews of the stakeholders, documentary analysis, and questionnaire survey. For this reason, a case study is seen as an appropriate method to be used in this study.

Simon (2009, p.21) defines case study as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real life' context". In this definition, Simon (2009) suggests that a case study explores the complexity that is involved in real situations. It helps readers to understand a complex situation. This is the situation for the exploration of the Offsite NCEE policy. This research aims to looks at the Offsite NCEE policy from multiple perspectives in the two research places. It investigates different stages of the development of the Offsite NCEE, from the context, policy programming, policy implementation and the impact. It also explores the views of different groups of stakeholders with regard to multiple perspectives of the Offsite NCEE policy. In this study, the case study approach is helpful in creating a path through the complexity caused by the diversity of variables generated from multiple perspectives of the Offsite NCEE policy in the two different regions.

This study also seeks to address the purposes of case study defined by Yin (2009) and Cohen et al (2011). Yin (2009) states that case study method aims to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events-such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries. This is supported by Cohen et al (2011) who argue that a case study is to clearly present real people in real situation, rather simply by providing readers with abstract theories or principles. It strongly relates to the real lived experience of individuals, small groups, or organizations. The case study approach is strong on reality, providing a basis for reliability (Cohen et al, 2011). This is exactly the purpose of this study. By using the case study approach, this study investigates the real lived experience of stakeholders, providing an in-depth exploration of the Offsite NCEE policy in real situations.

4.1.1 Types of case study

According to the specific purpose of the study, researchers classify different types of case study in different ways. For example, Sturman (1999) identifies four main types of case study: an ethnographic case study – single in-depth study; action research case study; evaluative case study; educational case study. Robson (2002) suggests that there are six kinds of case study: an individual case study; a set of individual case studies; a social group study; studies of organizations and institutions; studies of events and roles and relationships. Yin (2009) points out that a primary distinction to be drawn in designing case studies is between a single case approach and a multiple case approach.

A single case study focuses on a single site. Yin (2009) identifies five conditions for using a single case design:

1. when representing a critical test of existing theory;
2. when the case is extreme or unique;
3. when the case is revelatory;
4. when the case is representative or typical;
5. when the case is longitudinal.

This research involved an investigation of the Offsite NCEE policy in two provinces. Indeed, each province was unique. And the development of Offsite NCEE policy in

each province was longitudinal. However, it was also important for this research to investigate different features across different cases, and a multiple case design could help with this. According to Yin (2009), in a multiple case study, every case should serve a specific purpose within the overall purpose. "Each case must be carefully selected so that it either predicts similar results (a literal replication) or predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)" (Yin, 2009, p.47). The multiple case design often involves comparative case studies within an overall piece of research, or replication case studies (ibid). This is supported by Zainal (2007, p.2) who suggests that the multiple case design shows numerous sources of evidences though replication, while a single case study is not available for replication.

> *"In case where there are no other cases available for replication, the researcher can adopt the single-case design…The multiple case design can be adopted with real-life events that show numerous sources of evidence though replication rather than sampling logical".*

In this study, a multiple case design was adopted to explore the development of the Offsite NCEE policy in two provinces through theoretical replication. Provinces stand at different positions with regard to the Offsite NCEE policy. As introduced in section 1.1, some provinces have a large number of migrant children to move in, while some provinces have a large number of migrant children that move out. In this way, the provinces with a large number of inbound migrant children are recognized as inbound provinces, while the provinces with a large number of outbound migrant children are recognized as outbound province. It was important for this study to investigate the Offsite NCEE policy from the two sides. Therefore, the multiple case design seemed to be the most appropriate strategy for this study. Two provinces, one inbound province and one outbound province, were chosen as the two research places. Each province is the subject of an individual case study, but the study as a whole covers the two provinces. Two single cases are compared and discussed to constitute the whole case study.

4.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages

Many researchers have demonstrated the advantages of using a case study in research. Punch (2009) describes that a case study can understand events and

situations in depth in a complex setting. Cohen et al (2011, p.289) point out that a case study "provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles". Yin (2009) suggests that case studies can provide close-up investigation. Case studies allow for direct observation and interviews with participants, looking at participants' lived experiences, thoughts and feelings. Events and situations are allowed to speak for themselves, rather than to be largely interpreted by the researchers (Cohen et al, 2011). By using questionnaire survey and interviews, this study explores the Offsite NCEE policy through looking at participants' lived experiences, thoughts and feelings. It allows for a closer and clearer sense of what happened and why rather than interpret the situation through secondary data analysis.

Case studies allow for both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data through variations instrumental and collective approaches (Zainal, 2007). Cohen et al (2011) state that case studies recognize the diversity of variables in a single case. Thus, case studies usually require more than one data collection approaches and rich sources of evidences in order to catch the implications of these variables (ibid). A case study can give access to not only the statistical information, but also qualitative evidence of subjects. This enables a case study not only to explore or describe real-life events, but also to explain the complexity of real-life events, which may not be obtained through an experiment study or a survey (Zainal, 2007). In this study, both qualitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed through interviews, questionnaire survey and documentary analysis. It helps this study to report the development of Offsite NCEE policy in a complex situation rather than just describe phenomena.

A main criticism of case studies is its inability to provide generalisation (Zainal, 2007). Generalisation refers to whether research findings can be applied to wider settings than the research setting they were originally produced (Bickman et al, 2009). Yin (2009) points out that case studies provide very little basis for generalisation since they depend on limited sampling cases. However, Stake (1995) argues that a case study is not usually used to provide generalisation. Bryman (2008) also suggests that the reliability and validity of a case study does not depend on

generalisation of the findings. This research did not seek to provide generalised findings of the development of Offsite NCEE policy across the country. Instead, it aims to investigate the two provinces by using a multiple case study. It understands the features within and across the two individual cases.

4.2 Research methods

4.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is widely used to "collect survey information, provide structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researchers, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.377). In this study, in order to explore students' experiences and views with regard to the context and the Offsite NCEE policy, a semi-structured questionnaire was conducted in each case.

Cohen et al (2011) distinguish different types of questionnaire according to the degree of structure: structured questionnaire, semi-structured questionnaire and unstructured questionnaire. According to Cohen et al (2011), a structured questionnaire is composed of closed questions. It needs to be piloted and refined so that contains as many possible responses as can be reasonably foreseen. While an unstructured questionnaire is composed of open ended questions, which enables respondents to answer the questions in their own terms (Cohen et al, 2011). Semi-structured questionnaire involves both open ended questions and closed questions. "There is a clear structure, sequence, focus, but the format is open-ended, enabling respondents to reply in their own terms" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.382). A semi-structured questionnaire sets the agenda, but also enables respondents to express their own perceptions. This study investigates the students' personal experiences, and open ended questions were necessary in the questionnaires. While closed questions were designed to explore the participants' views and attitudes.

The categories used in the questionnaire were mainly based on

1. The literature regarding the Offsite NCEE policy that I had reviewed;
2. Views obtained from pilot interviews and pilot questionnaire.

The questionnaire was first designed in English and the translated into Chinese for data collection purposes. As participants were junior high school students and senior high school students who were not able to complete the questionnaire in English, Chinese was supposed to be more convenient for them to read and write. Given the specific situation in the two research provinces, there were two versions of student questionnaire, one version for the inbound province and one version for the outbound province. The two versions of student questionnaire were basically similar, but slightly different in the section regarding students' personal experience (See Appendix 3 and 4).

Inbound province student questionnaire

In the inbound province, there were two main purposes of the questionnaire survey. One was to investigate the proportion of migrant students in the school, to confirm whether the school was suitable for this study. Another purpose was to explore students' experience and views with regard to 'educational equity', the context in China and the Offsite NCEE policy.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section was designed to collect background information on the participant, including gender, age, school year, parents' education, and household registration. Then, local students were asked to answer questions in section II, while migrant students were asked to answer questions in section III. Both section II and III focused on students' personal experiences and views.

In section II, Q2.1 was a multiple choice question to explore local students' personal experiences. Q2.1 and Q2.2 were open questions to explore local students' perceptions regarding the place of studying and taking the NCEE. Q2.3 and Q2.4 were regard to their parents' expectations. In section III, Q3.1, Q3.2, and Q3.3 concerned migrant student's personal experience. Q3.4 and Q3.5 were open questions to explore students' perceptions regarding the place of studying and taking the NCEE. Q3.5 and Q3.6 concerned their parents' expectations. Section IV explored student's views of undergraduate admission and the Offsite NCEE policy.

Most questions in section II, III and IV were designed in the form of a 5-point Likert scale. A Likert scale question is device to "discover strength of feeling or attitude towards a given statement or series of statements" (Bell, 2010, p.186). It is described as the most straightforward attitude scale (ibid). Eemploying the Likert scale questions in the questionnaire aimed to discover the participants' views and attitudes. Their responses were coded using numerical values from 1 representing 'strongly disagree' to 5 for 'strongly agree'. The ten rating scaling questions (questions Q4.1-Q4.10) were designed to address participants' views with regard to HE admission (Q4.1-Q4.3), the Offsite NCEE policy (Q4.4-Q4.10).

Outbound province student questionnaire

There were two main purposes of the questionnaire survey in the outbound province. One was to investigate the proportion of 'potential' outbound students. Another purpose was exactly same as the purpose of the questionnaire survey in the inbound province, which was to explore students' experience and views with regard to 'educational equity', the context in China and the Offsite NCEE policy.

The outbound province student questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section was intended to elicit basic information about the students' background. Section II sought to explore students' personal experience. Section III, meanwhile, concerned students' views of undergraduate admission and the Offsite NCEE policy. Questions in section I and III were designed exactly the same as questions in the inbound province student questionnaire. In section II, Q2.1 was a multiple choice question to explore students' personal experiences. Q2.2 and Q2.3 were Likert scale questions to explore parents' expectations. Q2.4, Q2.5, Q2.6, and Q2.7 concerned the place for studying and taking the NCEE.

4.2.2 Interview

In case study, interview is one of the most prominent approaches to collect information about human affairs or behaviours (Yin, 2009). It is an excellent way to access participants and explore their experiences, perceptions, opinions, feeling and knowledge about a situation (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000; Punch, 2009). In Fraenkel and Wallen (2000)'s definitions, the purpose of the interview is to explore what is on

the participants' mind and how they feel. Punch (2009) suggests that the interview is often superior to other data collection methods of understanding people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality. This study aims to investigate the development of the Offsite NCEE policy. It explores the stakeholders' experiences and views with regard to the Offsite NCEE policy. Thus, interview was considered as one of the most appropriate approaches for collecting the data for this study. Cohen et al (2011) suggests that interviews may enable participants, both interviewees and researchers, to discuss their interpretations of their world, and to express how they regard situations from their own perspectives. In this study, the purpose of interviews was to have the participants construct their experiences and express their views of the Offsite NCEE policy. The interviews enable the participants to talk their own experiences and their knowledge about the Offsite NCEE policy or the NCEE, their views of the higher education admission, educational equity or the Offsite NCEE policy.

Interviews enable the interviewer to establish a friendly and secure relationship with interviewees (Best and Kahn, 1989). People are usually more willing to talk when the relationship is friendly and secure relationship (ibid). The interview can explain more explicitly the purpose of the research and enable the researcher to get more information (ibid). This is exactly what I did in the interviews with officers and students. During the interviews, I build a friendly relationship with the interviewees. The interviewees were more confidential and encouraged to discuss what they knew or felt. Cohen et al (2011, p.409) suggests that interview gives space for spontaneity: "interviewer can press not only for complete answers but for responses about complex and deep issues". The interviewer can not only get answers for interview questions, but also get information on complex and deep issues. This is exactly what I did in the interviews with officers and students. During the interviews, the participants were encouraged not only to answer the interview questions, but also to provide more information and insights. This allowed me to get more evidences for this study.

Merriam (1998) suggests three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. According to Merriam (1998), the structured interview is one in which the questions and procedures are determined in advance. A structured interview may

not help the interviewer to access participant's perspectives (Merriam, 1998). In contrast, an unstructured interview gives the interviewer greater flexibility to make modifications with opened questions (ibid). It is particularly useful when the researcher does not have enough information about the case being studied (ibid). A semi-structured interview is usually guided by a list of topics or questions (ibid). It may involve a mix of open ended and structured questions (ibid). Having considered the features of the different types of interviews, semi-structured interviews were deemed to serve the purpose of this study best. All the interviews were deigned based on the research questions, literature review, my personal experiences and the results of the pilot study. A list of open ended interview questions were deigned to guide the interviews. But the interviews were not limited by the list of questions. Other relevant topics and information outside the questions were also discussed with the interviewees based on their responses.

However, the interview method is also critical for being time-consuming (Cohen et al, 2011). In order to avoid being time-consuming, group interviews were also used in this study. "Group interviews are often quicker than individual interviews and hence are time-saving" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.432). As there were 20 migrant students and 20 local students in each case, it would have been too time-consuming to interview every student individually. Therefore, all the officers and migrant students were interviewed individually, while the local students were interviewed in groups. The 40 local students were interviewed in 8 groups.

Government officers' interview

Interviews with government officers aimed to examine the policy development process, including the context, policy making, policy implementation and the impact. Interviews also aimed to identify participants' views regarding to educational equity, undergraduate admission, and the Offsite NCEE policy. The interview schedule with government officers included three sections. The first section was about the background of the interviewee, including their position, responsibility, education. The second section was to answer the first group of research questions (RQ1.1, RQ1.2, RQ4.3, RQ4.4), which addresses the context for the Offsite NCEE policy.

Two questions were discussed in this section:

How do you understand 'educational equity'?

How do you think the current higher education admission?

The third section aimed to investigate the participants' experience of the policy development process, including policy programming which relates to the second group of research questions (RQ2.1-2.4 and RQ4.5), policy implementation which relates to the third group of research questions (RQ3.1-3.5 and RQ4.6), and the impact which relates to the fourth group of research questions (RQ4.1 and RQ4.2).

Officers were asked to answer the following questions about the purpose of this policy:

What would you say is the purpose of this policy?

Why do we need this policy?

Then, different questions were designed for government officers according to their roles in this policy. The officers who involved in policy programming were asked:

Do you participate in this new policy? How?

Can you explain in detail the process of policy-making?

What affects your decision in the process of policy-making? (Why did you design the policy in this way?)

What are the difficulties and challenges in the policy-making? Why? Are there any measures taken to address the issue? What are they? Why?

To what extend do you think the design of this policy is reasonable?

The officers who involved in policy implementation were asked:

Do you participate in this new policy? How?

To what extend do you think the design of this policy is reasonable?

Can you explain in detail the process of policy implementation?

What are the difficulties and challenges in the policy implementation? Are there any measure is taken to address the issue? What are they?

Regarding the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy, officers were asked:

How does this policy affect HE admission in your province? The outcomes of this policy?

Does anyone benefit and suffer? Why?

The officers were then asked to express their views:

What are your expectations of this policy and HE admission?

Are there any new plans or tends?

Finally, the officers were asked if anything they want to add by asking an ending question.

Please evaluate this policy. It's strengths and weakness? (Design, implementation, affects)

Student interview

The student interviews aimed to explore their personal experience and views of the Offsite NCEE policy. It consisted of three sections. The first section was about background information, including their Household registration, parents' occupation and education, the place of taking NCEE, when did them move to the inbound province, etc.

The second section was about their personal views:

Do you think education is important? Why?

Are parents strict on students' study? Do parents have any expectations for students?

What do you think of the current higher education admission in China? Is it fair? Do you satisfied with it?

The third section was about the Offsite NCEE policy. Different questions were designed for migrant students who would take or had taken the Offsite NCEE and local students who did not take part in the Offsite NCEE.

Migrant students who would take or had taken the Offsite NCEE were asked:

Why did you choose to take the Offsite NCEE?

To what extent do you think the design of this policy is reasonable? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Is it difficult to apply to take the Offsite NCEE? What happened?

What were the certificates required when students applied for the Offsite NCEE? What do you think of these certificate requirements?

How this policy affects you? Do you think this policy benefits you? In what way?

Please evaluate this policy. What are its strengths and weakness? (Design, implementation, affects)

What are your expectations of this policy and HE admission?

Local students who did not take part in the Offsite NCEE were asked:

In your opinion, do we need this policy? Why or Why not?

Do you think this policy benefits/suffers you? In what way?

Would you like to move to other province to take NCEE? Where? Why?

Please evaluate this policy. What are its strengths and weakness? (Design, implementation, affects)

What are your expectations of this policy and HE admission?

4.2.3 Documentary analysis

According to Cohen et al (2011), a document may be defined as a record of an event process produced by individuals or groups. Documents are presented in many ways or styles based on particular assumptions (Grix, 2001). Documentary Research refers

to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon or event one wishes to study (Bailey, 1994). In Payne and Payne's (2004) definition, documentary research is a technique used to categorise, investigate, interpret and identify the content or the context of the document.

In the field of policy study, documentary analysis has been recognised as a suitable technique for providing a picture of the policy agenda.

> *"Using policy texts as research resources is one of the most accessible forms of research on education policy, and is to be commended not just for its accessibility, but because close reading of policy texts helps to generate critical, informed and independent responses to policy. Reading and interpreting texts can be an act of engagement with policy, for the researcher and those with whom she or he works"* (Ozga, 2000, p.27).

Here we can see that documentary analysis allows the researcher to get close to the policy texts. Through reading and interpreting policy texts, it tends to explore the themes and trends from the policy documents and discover the intentions and motivations behind the documents.

For the Offsite NCEE policy, documents were announced by the government in textual format. They provide information as to what is stipulated in the Offsite NCEE policy. As the purpose of this research is to explore the Offsite NCEE policy, it requires an analysis of the documentary evidence of this policy. Moreover, documentary analysis assisted interview and questions in triangulating the research findings, strengthening the arguments. Considering the contributions of documentary research, as detailed above, it has been selected as a research method for this study.

Document choice

The documents were chosen by employing a purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is an informant technique that is intended to identify and select data resources (Palinkas et al, 2015). In purposive sampling, the samples are not chosen randomly, but instead are chosen with specific purposes (ibid). "Researcher hand pick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.156). In employing purposive sampling, the researcher decides what to look at, and builds up a sample that is needed by the research (ibid).

In terms of documentary analysis, a purposive sampling technique aims at "selecting all textual units that contribute to answering the research questions" (Krippendorff, 2004, p.119). When considering the sampling for the documentary analysis in this study, there are a number of documents related to the Offsite NCEE policy.

Document choice in this research included three stages. The first stage in the process of purposive document choice involved the collection of all documents relating to the Offsite NCEE policy. The second stage involved consideration of the document to be analysed. The purpose of this stage was to select documents which more clearly fitted the research questions. Ten documents were selected as shown in the below list. The final stage was to select the contents of the ten documents, which will be discussed in later section (section 4.6).

Document 1:

Notice of General Office of the State of Council

-Opinion on migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in the local place after received compulsory education

Forwarded document from the Ministry of Education and other Departments

Document 2:

Notice of General Office of the Ministry of Education to Carry Out the Special Inspection of Migrant Workers' Children Entrance Examination Program Policy Making

Document 3:

Notice of the Ministry of Education on the issuance of 'primary and secondary school student status management measures'

Document 4:

Notice of the Ministry of Education to fully apply national student status information management system

Document 5:

Notice of General Office Zhejiang Provincial People's Government

-Implement Opinion on other provinces migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in our province after received compulsory education

Forwarded document from Zhejiang Provincial Educational Department and Four other Departments

Document 6:

Guidance opinion of General Office of Zhejiang Provincial Educational Department on other provinces migrant worker's children take the senior high school entrance examination in our province after received compulsory education

Document 7:

Compulsory School Student Status Management Measure of Zhejiang Province

Document 8:

Ordinary Full-time Senior High School Student Status Management Measure of Zhejiang Province

Document 9:

Notice of General Office Jiangxi Provincial People's Government

-Implement Opinion on other provinces migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in the local place

Forwarded document from Jiangxi Provincial Educational Department and other Departments

Document 10:

Notice of General Office of Jiangxi Provincial Educational Department on the issuance of 'primary and secondary school student status management measures in Jiangxi Province (trial)'

Document 1 was published by the State of Council. It was considered as the leading document of Offsite policy, as it announced the dominant principles of the policy

and general structure of the policy making and policy implementation. Document 5 is the leading document of Offsite policy in the inbound province, while Document 9 is the leading document of Offsite policy in the outbound province. Document 3 and 4 are about student status management at national level. Document 7 and 8 cover matters relating to student status management in the inbound province. Document 10 concerns student status management in the outbound province.

4.3 Quality issues

4.3.1 Limitations

It is always possible that some bias exists within this study. The bias in this study mainly occurs in the sampling. However, measures have been taken at every step of the sampling process to mitigate the bias. As China is a vast country with a large number of students, the study of the Offsite NCEE policy cannot be fulfilled by merely employing this case study. Realistically, random sampling is almost an impossible task in this case, as the stakeholders are from different authorities in different regions of the country. Taking hundreds and thousands of participants in this case study is unfeasible. Therefore, as a multiple case study, this research does not attempt to offer generalisations regarding the 'Offsite NCEE' policy.

This case study was conducted in two provinces. However, the two research provinces are not 'perfect' for conducting this research. Some other provinces were also suitable for this research. For example, Beijing and Shanghai have good educational resources, a high admission rate and a large number of migrant families. Henan and Sichuan, for another example, have a large number of outbound migrants and relatively poor educational resources, are recognised as outbound provinces regarding Offsite NCEE policy. However, the choice of research places in this study mainly relied on whether I could access first-hand data. Considering the availability of data, the two provinces were chosen for this research.

In the outbound province, I visited two cities and interviewed senior high school and junior high school students whose parents were working in other provinces. The students have the opportunity to move to another place to study and take the Offsite

NCEE. But it was found that there were very few students who would surely take the Offsite NCEE. Therefore, the left-behind students in the outbound province who participated in this research were not 'true' participants of the Offsite NCEE policy but 'potential' migrant students.

In the inbound province, I visited some schools in City 2. Because City 2 did not allow migrant students to take the senior high school entrance exam until 2013, thus I found it hard to identify any suitable final year senior high school migrant students. The first year senior high school migrant students did not know much about the Offsite NCEE policy as they had not started their application at that point. Therefore, the 20 migrant students I interviewed all came from City 1 in the inbound province.

4.3.2 Reliability and Validity

In general, research is mostly concerned with two requirements, reliability and validity (Cohen et al, 2011). They are important keys to effective research. Validity refers to the integrity of the conclusions generated from the research (Bryman, 2008). It means the accuracy of the research findings, and to what extent the research findings accurately represent facts (ibid).

Reliability refers to the consistency of research findings (Cohen et al, 2011). Cohen et al (2011, p.199) suggests that reliability concerns the degree of repeatability of the research results:

> *"For research to be reliable it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context (however defined), then similar results would be found."*

Cohen et al (2011) points out that reliability concerns whether similar results would be found with different samples or different methods in a similar context.

In this study, regarding the stage of data collection through semi-structured interviews and questionnaire surveys, the key issue was to ensure the honesty of the participants. The participants were encouraged to provide true information. This was particularly important when I was interviewing the government officers. The officers might think that some of the topics are sensitive, and feel uncertain about the consequences of telling the truth. They might feel insecure in providing information

to a researcher studying abroad and might be afraid that the interviews would harm their political career. For this reason, government officers were likely to use 'official lines' when they were talking. If they used a lot of 'official lines' and avoided telling the truth, the officers might provide very little substantial content in the interview. In this case, the validity of the data would be undermined.

Moreover, the participants, either government officers or students, may have wanted to present themselves in the best light, either consciously or unconsciously. This was the main reason for students distorting facts in the interviews and questionnaire. This could harm the validity of the data.

In order to ensure validity and reliability, three measures have been taken. The first measure was to inform the participants that the data would be used for academic purpose only and not for any other purpose. None of the participants' personal information was revealed to the public and it was confirmed that the participants' identities would be kept anonymous if the research was published. This was to dispel any fear or doubt that participants might have and to improve the probability of the participants presenting the truth. It is believed that the anonymous questionnaire survey and interview encouraged the honesty of the participants.

The second measure was to build a friendly relationship with the interviewees. During the course of government officer interviews, I talked with the participants about some facts that interviewers already knew from other officers, especially the facts known from their superiors. This was to convey such a signal to the interviewees that I was aware of the facts and obtained permission from their superiors to ask them questions. Thus, interviews were more confidential and encouraged the interviewees to discuss what they genuinely knew. During the course of the student interview, the interviews were started in a flexible chatting way. I kept encouraging students to present the truth in a friendly way. For example, "Just say what you want to say, it does not matter if it was wrong or right". This was effective in encouraging students to be honest in the interviews.

The third measure was to ask for the teacher's help. During the course of the student questionnaire survey and student interview, I asked the teacher to help me to invite the students to take part in the research. Before each questionnaire survey, the

teacher asked the students to carefully answer the questionnaire and be faithful in all questions. The students who took part in the student interviews were asked by their teachers to answer the questions as honestly as possible.

Regarding the data analysis in this research, triangulation was used to improve validity and reliability of the research. According to Cohen et al (2011), triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating validity, and triangulation refers to the use of two or more methods of data collection within a research. The validity of the research findings can be improved by presenting more evidence with other methods to support them. Firstly, triangulation of data sources was used. The findings based on qualitative data were triangulated with findings based on quantitative data. For example, in terms of the educational equity issue in undergraduate admission, the data from interviews was triangulated with statistical data. Secondly, triangulation of interviewees was used. For a specific claim or point, the number of interviewees who mentioned the claim or point was counted. More interviewees mentioned, stronger the claim or point was. For example, I asked the government officers and students about the application procedure of 'Offsite NCEE'. This enabled me to cross check their answers and ensure the validity of the data.

4.3.3 Ethical Considerations

Cohen et al (2011, p.84) suggests that social researchers must take responsibility for participants:

> *"Social researchers must take into account the effects of the research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings: this is their responsibility to participants".*

A number of ethical issues were carefully considered in this research: informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and possible risks for participants. Informed consent is particularly important for ethical behaviour. It has been defined by Diener and Crandall (1978, p.57) as "the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions". It requires that participants are given information on everything and fully understand the nature of the research. And participants have the right to choose to take part or not in the research and make decisions on their own.

In this research, participants were free to choose to take part or not in the interviews. Before taking each interview, I introduced myself and this research. A brief written introduction of the research and an interview question list were given to each interviewee. Interviewees had been given full information about the research, and asked everything they wanted to know. It was explained to the interviewees that the interviews were to be used for academic purpose only, and the interviewees would be anonymous if the research was to be published. After the interviewees confirmed their willingness to be interviewed, the interviews formally started. The interviewees were asked if the interviews could be recorded by digital recorder. In the course of the interviews, the interviewees had the right to stop talking and withdraw at any time if they wanted to. After finishing all questions, the interviewees were asked whether they wished to add anything else. If not, I announced that the interviews were finished.

The informed consent of children in the research was given particular attention. To protect children from risk of significant harm, researchers are required to obtain informed consent from their adult gatekeepers, such as parents, school teachers, school governors, local educational authority officers, etc. (Morrow and Richards, 1996). During the course of data collection, I did not contact the students directly, but asked the local educational authority to contact the schools. Teachers or head teachers were given an explanation and full information about the research. After the schools confirmed their willingness to take part in the research, the questionnaire survey and student interviews were taken into the schools. Students were invited by the schools to take part in the research. Before taking each student interview and questionnaire, I introduced myself and explained the purposes of this research. The students were asked whether they would be willing to be take part to ensure the informed consent of student.

It is important that data remains anonymous and confidential at all stages in the research process (Cohen et al, 2011). This is to protect the participants from any possible risks. At the data collection stage, anonymity and confidentiality is a part of the procedure to gain informed consent. This is a particular issue when I conducted interviews with officers. As explained earlier (section 4.3), this research was to collect information of a public policy, the officers might think some of the optics are

sensitive, thus felling uncertain about the consequences of discussing the topics. "The more sensitive, intimate or discrediting the information, the greater is the obligation on the researcher's part to make sure that guarantees of confidentiality are carried out in spirit and letter"(Cohen et al, 2011, p.92). Particular attention was required when I was conducting interviews with officers. All the officers were assured that their identities would not be disclosed in order to protect their privacy. Their personal information was kept confidential in this research. The confidentiality of the data encouraged the officers to take part in the research, and also protected them from any possible risks. All the students were assured that the interviews and questionnaires would be anonymous. Students were not asked to write down their names in the anonymous questionnaires. Anonymity was also strictly ensured at the stage of data analysis. Each city involved in this research was assigned a code, for example, City 1 and City 2. Each interviewee was assigned with a code in the course of data analysis and findings, rather than being asked to report their names. No names of schools or private information about any student or officer have been reported in the findings. Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality at all stages in this research ensures that this research would not bring any adverse impacts for the participants.

4.4 Research Places

4.4.1 Background

Table 4.2 Background of Jiangxi and Zhejiang (2012)

	Zhejiang (Inbound province)	Jiangxi (Outbound province)
Area	101,800 km2	166,900 km2
Population	54,426,891	44,567,475
GDP	3,4606.445 million RMB (4th)	9753.432 million RMB (20th)
GDP per capita	63,266 RMB (6th) 10,022 USD	28,799 RMB (25th) 4,561 USD
HDI	0.744	0.662

(China Statistical Yearbook, 2012)

Zhejiang Province is located in the eastern coastal of China. The name of the province is often abbreviated to its first character 'Zhe', with Hangzhou as its provincial capital. It covers an area of 101, 800 square kilometres. Zhejiang is divided in to 11 city/prefecture-level divisions. The 11 divisions are subdivided into 90 county-level divisions (32 districts, 22 county-level cities, 36 counties, and one autonomous county). The 90 county-level divisions are subdivided into 1570 township-level divisions (761 towns, 505 townships, 14 ethnic townships and 290 subdistricts). By the end of 2012, the number of resident population of the province was 54.77 million (The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016).

Jiangxi is located in the southeast of China. The name of the province is often abbreviated as 'Gan'. Nanchang is the provincial capital, and covers an area of 167,000 square kilometres. Jiangxi is divided in to 11 city/prefecture-level divisions. The 11 divisions are subdivided into 99 county-level divisions (19 districts, 10 county-level cities and 70 counties). The 99 county-level divisions are subdivided into 1548 township-level division (770 towns, 651 townships, 7 ethnic townships and 120 subdistricts). By the end of 2012, the number of resident population of the province was 45.03 million (The people's Government of Jiangxi Province, 2016).

4.4.2 Intra-province migration

In China, in general, intra-province migrants are people who are household registered in their original provinces, but have resided in the destination provinces for at least six months.

Zhejiang (Inbound province)

Zhejiang is one of the largest inflow provinces in China. Economic prosperity in Zhejiang attracts many people from other regions to move there for working and living. Since the 1990s, the inbound migrants to Zhejiang have increased. According to the 2010 national population census of China, there are 11.82 million migrants from other provinces now living in Zhejiang, ranked 3rd in China. The inbound migrant population accounts for 21.72% of the whole population in Zhejiang (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). When compared to the data from

the 2000 national population census of China, the inbound population increased 81.4 thousand, an average annual increase of 12.4%. Meanwhile, the whole population increased 7.65 million during the same period, with an average annual increase of 1.53% (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The new population inflow rate in Zhejiang was more than 12 times greater than the rate of the population increase.

According to the 2010 census of China, there were 8.44 million inbound migrants between age 20-44, taking 71.4% of the whole migrants (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). It should also be noted that the number of migrant children has been increased. There were 1.13 million migrant children in 2010, more than 5.8 times greater than in 2000 (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Migrant children account for 9.5% of the whole migrant population. In primary schools, there are 17.2% of students from other provinces. In secondary schools, there are 9.3% students from other provinces (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

Jiangxi (Outbound province)

Jiangxi is one of the largest outflow provinces in China. Since 1990s, the number of outflow migrants in Jiangxi has increased considerably. According to the 2010 national population census of China, there are 5.79 million outbound migrants with Jiangxi household, ranked 6th in China (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). The net outflow population throughout the decade was equivalent to 12.99% of its whole population. When compared to the data from 2000 national population census of China, the net outbound population increased to 2.11 million, an average annual increase of 4.63%. Meanwhile, the whole population increased 3.17 million between 2000 and 2010, with an average annual increase of 0.74%. The net population outflow rate in Jiangxi was more than 6 times greater than the rate of population increase.

Table 4.3 Ages of outflow population of Jiangxi

Unit: 10 thousand

Ages	2000		2010	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
	368.03	100%	578.74	100%
0-14	18.45	5.01	49.32	8.52
15-60	347.13	94.32	522.38	90.26
Over 60	2.46	0.67	7.04	1.22

(Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016)

As shown in Table 4.3, most of the outbound migrants are between ages 15-60. According to the 2010 census of China, there were 4.35 million outbound migrants between ages 18-42, taking 75.08% of the whole migrants. Most of the outflow population are of child bearing age. As the 2010 census shows, there were 4.71 million migrants that moved out from Jiangxi to work, accounting for 81.39% of all migrants. Other reasons, such as for marriage, studying or training account for less than 3%. Working is the main cause of outbound migration in Jiangxi.

As a large number of migrant workers are of child bearing age, their families account for 8.83% of all migrants. According to the 2010 census of China, there were 455200 outbound migrant children aged 7-18, which means a large number of outbound migrant children are of school age (Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016). Thus, the education of school-age migrant children has become a significant issue.

4.4.3 Drivers behind intra-province migration

The literature normally places the internal migration in the context of economic and social development in China. The general consensus in the literature suggests that there are three main relevant elements of intra-province migration in China: regional economic disparities, rural-urban income gap, and labour surplus in rural areas (UNDP, 2011; Li, 2008; Liu et al 2003; Zhao, 2005).

Regional economic disparities

Firstly, the rates of intra-province migration are very closely associated with the provincial economic situation or even provincial levels of per capita GDP (Fischer,

2012). As discussed earlier, the reforms in the economy after 1979 left some regions less developed, resulting in geographic inequalities of economic and social development. For example, compared to its neighbouring provinces, Jiangxi is a rather poor province. As shown in Table 4.2, in 2012, Jiangxi's GDP was 1,294.8 billion Yuan (205 billion USD) with an increase of 10.6%, and ranked 20th in the list of China's province level divisions by GDP (Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2013). GDP per capita in 2012 was 26,150 Yuan (4.143 USD) with an increase of 10.1%, ranked 25th in the list of China's province level divisions by GDP per capita (Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016). Meanwhile, Zhejiang is one of the most commercial and richest provinces in China. In the past five years, Zhejiang had an average growth rate of GDP of 9.6% (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). As shown in Table 4.2, its GDP reached 3,460.6 billion yuan (501 billion USD) in 2012, ranked 4th in the list of China's province level divisions by GDP, with an increase of 8% compared with the same period last year. GDP per capita in 2012 was 63,266 yuan (10,022 USD) with an increase of 7.7%, ranked 6th in the list of China's province level divisions by GDP per capita (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Sta.tistics, 2016).

Moreover, Zhejiang is traditionally known as the 'Land of Fish and Rice', as it is the centre of agriculture and aquaculture in China. With economic reform, secondary industry and tertiary industry have become the main industries in Zhejiang. Zhejiang's main industries now are secondary the tertiary industries (The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016). In 2012, Zhejiang's primary, secondary, and tertiary industries were worth 166.8 billion yuan, 1731.6 billion yuan, and 1568.1 billion yuan (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The structure of the three industries is shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 The proportion of three industries of GDP in Zhejiang 2012

The proportion of three industries of GDP in Zhejiang 2012

- Primary Industry
- Secondary Industry
- Tertiary Industry

(The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016)

In 2012, Jiangxi's primary, secondary, and tertiary industries were worth 152 billion yuan, 696.7 billion yuan and 446 billion yuan. The structure of the three industries is shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 The proportion of three industries of the GDP in Jiangxi 2012

The proportion of three industries of GDP in Jiangxi 2012

- Primary Industry
- Secondary Industry
- Tertiary Industry
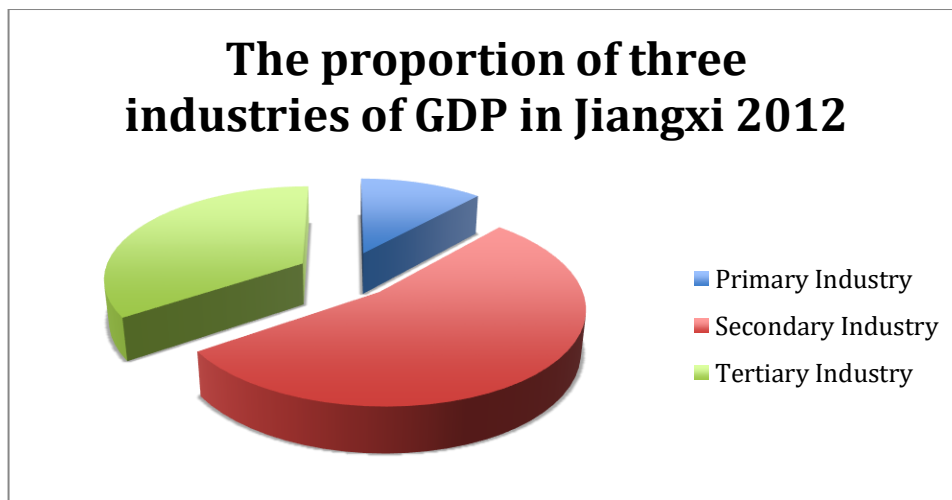
(The people's Government of Jiangxi Province, 2016)

The level of economic development is very closely associated with employment (Fischer, 2012). According to the survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (2012), the top 5 industries that employ migrant workers are manufacturing,

construction, social services, hotels and restaurants, which belong to secondary industry and tertiary industry.

As can be seen see in Figure 4.2, the proportion of secondary and tertiary industries in Zhejiang is more than 95%. According to 'China Enterprise Data Report 2013', there are 1826432 enterprises in Zhejiang, ranked 2nd in China in terms of number of enterprises. While there are 285297 enterprises in Jiangxi, ranked 16th in China in terms of number of enterprises. The number of enterprises in Zhejiang is more than 6 times than in Jiangxi. Secondary and tertiary industry prosperity in Zhejiang offers job vacancies, attracting many people from other regions to move in to work and live. However, the lesser development of economy in Jiangxi may push people to move to developed regions.

Urban-rural income gap

China's long-adopted social policies have been based on a concept that divides urban and rural areas (UNDP, 2011). Although the government has developed many policies and measures to narrow the income gap between urban and rural residents, the current problem lies in the fact that such a gap is still huge (UNDP, 2011).

The per capita disposable income of urbanites in Jiangxi was 19860 yuan in 2012, with an annual real growth of 13.5% (Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016). The per capita pure income of rural residents was 7828 yuan, with an annual real growth of 13.6% (Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016). The income of urbanites in Jiangxi is more than 2.5 times that of the income of rural residents. In Zhejiang, the per capita disposable income of urbanites in Zhejiang reached 34,550 yuan in 2012, with an annual real growth of 9.2%. The per capita pure income of rural residents was 14,552 yuan, with an annual real growth of 8.8% (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The income of urbanites in Zhejiang is more than 2 times the income of rural residents.

The great urban-rural income gap leads to people moving from rural areas to urban areas and from less-developed regions to developed regions. Rural to urban migration thus became the most important form of migration in China (Zhao, 2005). According to 2000 census, there were around 12.47 million migrants, of which 73.6%

are intra-province migrants. Of the 12.47 million migrants, rural to urban migrants account for 78 percent (Li, 2008). The number of rural migrants has continued to increase. According to China Statistical Yearbook 2013, there are around 23.6 million migrants, of which 75% are rural to urban migrants (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016).

Labour surplus in rural areas

Another main relevant element of intra-province migration in China is labour surplus in rural areas (Li, 2008; Liu et al, 2003; Zhao, 2005). Improvement in labour productivity with economic reforms and the baby boom of 1950s and 1960s result in an increasing labour surplus in rural areas in 1980s (Li, 2008). "Improvement in labour productivity resulting from agricultural reforms, together with the baby-boom of the 1950s and 1960s, lead to an increasing labour surplus in rural areas in the 1980s"(Li, 2008, p.3). As a consequence, the government encouraged the development of rural industry as a solution to absorb the labour surplus (Zhao, 2005). However, with the economic reforms in 1990s, the urban industry has been developed, placing the rural industry in a disadvantaged market position. As Li (2008, p.3) observes:

> *"in the early 1990s, the growth of employment in township-village enterprises slowed down due to strong competition from foreign-funded enterprises and the reformed state-owned enterprises".*

The rapid development of the private sector and of self-employment in urban areas brings great demand for rural migrant workers, attracting rural labourers to migrate to cities. And with the great urban-rural income gap, as a consequence, there was a large increase in the number of rural migrant workers since the early 1990s, and then reached over 260 million in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013).

A survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics indicates that the number of rural migrant workers from each province is largely proportional to the size of its rural population (Zhao, 2005). Provinces with large rural populations may provide more rural migrant workers. According to Jiangxi Statistical Yearbook 2013, there are 32.89 million people with rural household registration, taking 73.04% of the

whole population (Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016). Thus, Jiangxi is one of the largest outflow provinces in China.

4.4.4 Education

Basic education

Table 4.4 Data on basic education

		Jiangxi	Zhejiang
Primary schools			
	Number of primary schools	12772	3989
	Graduates	678534	541309
	Entrants	748368	602117
	Enrolment	4260215	3333274
Junior secondary schools	Total	2107	1745
	Junior secondary schools	1622	1377
	9-Year compulsory schools	485	368
	Graduates	536759	585993
	Students Admitted	683676	532022
	Enrolment	1999946	1671286
Senior secondary schools	Total	452	569
	Senior secondary schools	141	439
	Compete second schools	311	130
	Graduates	262464	273680
	Students Admitted	256536	300841
	Enrolment	739649	880194

(Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2010)

According to data from Educational Statistics Yearbook of China 2010, there were 12772 primary schools, 2107 junior secondary schools, and 452 senior secondary schools in Jiangxi (See Table 4.4). The total number of students enrolled in primary schools was 4260215, and the total number of students enrolled by junior secondary schools was 1999946 (Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2010). Nearly all primary graduates go on to secondary school in Jiangxi. This is an important mark of universalization of 9-years compulsory education. The total number of students enrolled by regular senior secondary schools was 739649 (Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2010).

In Zhejiang, there are 3989 primary schools, 1745 junior secondary schools, and 569 senior secondary schools (see Table 4.4). The total number of students enrolled by primary schools was 3333274, and the total number of students enrolled by junior secondary schools was 1671286 (Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2010). The rate of primary graduates enrolled in junior secondary schools was 97.8%. Similar to Jiangxi, Zhejiang has achieved the universalization of 9-years compulsory education. The total number of students enrolled by regular senior secondary schools was 880194 (Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2010).

The State Admission Bureau decides on the higher education admission quotas for each province by considering the number of candidates in each province (Wang, 2010). The admission score line of one province may be higher than others if it have a large number of students. As we can see in Table 4.4, both Jiangxi and Zhejiang have a large number of students. According to the statistics published by the Ministry of Education, there were 274 thousand candidates in Jiangxi, ranked 15th in China in terms of number of candidates, while there were 313 thousand candidates in Zhejiang, ranked 12th in China in terms of number of candidates. In terms of number of candidates, there is intense competition in the college entrance examination in both Jiangxi and Zhejiang.

Higher Education

Table 4.5 Data on Higher Education

		Jiangxi	Zhejiang
Regular HEIs	Total	85	101
	Of which: HEIs under Central Ministries & Agencies	0	2
	HEIs providing degree level	35	55
	Short-cycle HEIs (vocational)	50	46
HEIs for Adults	Total	10	10
	Of which: HEIs under Central Ministries & Agencies	0	0
	Non-state / private HEIs	23	22
Graduates	Total	262999	350749
	Normal Course	97596	150044
	Short-cycle Course (vocational)	165403	200705
Degrees Awarded	Total	79796	108987
Entrants	Total	290408	360143
	Normal Course	135135	174353
	Short-cycle Course (vocational)	155273	185790
Enrolment	Total	936832	1135865
	Normal Course	453001	603380
	Short-cycle Course (vocational)	483831	532485

Anticipated Graduates for Next Year	Total	266291	343056
	Normal Course	100705	151670
	Short-cycle Course (vocational)	165586	191386

(Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2010)

There were 85 regular HEIs in Jiangxi by the end of 2009. In 2013, there were 274300 secondary graduates admitted by HEIs in Jiangxi. The admission rate of the national college entrance examination was 83.96% in 2013 (Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016). There were 101 regular HEIs in Zhejiang by the end of 2009 (see Table 4.5). In 2013, there were 313000 secondary graduates admitted by HEIs in Zhejiang (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The admission rate of the national college entrance examination was 85.9% in 2013.

It seems that the admission rates of the national college entrance examination in Jiangxi and Zhejiang are very close. However, it was found that there are 106.7 thousand students admitted by 'Zhuangke' (vocational) course in Jiangxi, and only 28.7 thousand students in Zhejiang. The admission rate of 'Benke' (academic course) in Zhejiang is higher than Jiangxi. In other words, a student can access 'Benke' if he or she takes the examination in Zhejiang.

Educational investment

Table 4.6 Sources of Educational Fund and Expenditure for Education by Region (2011)

Unit: million yuan

	Jiangxi	Zhejiang
Total	63169.73	126374.37
Government Appropriation for Education	50445.46	90579.43
Budgetary Educational Funds	47248.06	73868.05
School funding for private schools	896.62	208.10
Donor funding for the community	190.65	1653.69
Income from Teaching Research and other Auxiliary	10582.83	27939.40

Activity		
Tuition	8796.43	21488.09
Other Educational Funds	1054.15	5993.74

(China Educational Finance Statistical Yearbook 2011)

According to data from Educational Statistics Yearbook of China 2010, in 2011, the government investment for education in Jiangxi was 50.44 billion yuan, with an increase of 58.1%, accounting for 4.35% of Jiangxi's GDP. In 2011, the government investment in education in Zhejiang was 90.5 billion yuan, accounting for 21% of the whole provincial financial expenditure (Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, 2010). The total educational investment of Zhejiang is much more than Jiangxi.

4.4.5 Migrant children's education and 'Offsite College Entrance Examination' policy

Zhejiang (Inbound Province)

As there are a large number of migrant children in Zhejiang, education for migrant children has become a public concern. Some academic researches and media reports reveal that migrant children have not enjoyed equal education (Department of Education of Zhejiang Province, 2016). For example, in Zhejiang, in order to apply for a school place for their children, migrant parents need to get temporary residence permits, work permits, proof of residence, certificates from their place of origin, and household registration booklets (ibid). Moreover, although the central government states that public schools must not charge 'temporary student fees' for migrant families, some schools still charge extra fees by labeling fees differently (Hu, 2012). Thus, migrant families who cannot afford the extra fees and cannot get the documents are excluded from public schools (ibid). They have to send their children to private schools established exclusively for migrant children, which are known as migrant schools (ibid). However, in general, the standard of education is much lower than that of public school (Hu, 2012). Another main issue is the national college entrance examination for migrant children. Before the offsite NCEE policy is published, migrant children have to take the exam in where their household is registered. As each province sets its own curriculum and test, migrant students may have trouble in adapting to the new environment if they return home to study.

By the end of 2012, Zhejiang published details of its 'Offsite College Entrance Examination'. Migrant Students who have student status and had complete senior secondary school study without any gap have the opportunity to take the college entrance examination in Zhejiang (The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016).). Students can have gap years only if the schools have approved. The admission policy applies equally to the migrant students and local students (The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016). Since 2013, all migrant students who have student status and have completed senior secondary school study may take the college entrance exam in Zhejiang (The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016). There is no restriction for students with Zhejiang household registration form taking the exam in other provinces (The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016).

Jiangxi (Outbound Province)

By the end of 2012, Jiangxi published details of its 'Offsite College Entrance Examination'. There is only one condition for migrant students (students without Jiangxi household registration) to take the college entrance examination in Jiangxi and to experience the same admission procedures with local students. Students are required to complete a minimum of 1 year senior secondary school study in Jiangxi and to have student status (The people's Government of Jiangxi Province, 2016). Since 2014, all migrant students with student status and who had complete min 1 year secondary school study may take the college entrance exam in Jiangxi (The people's Government of Jiangxi Province, 2016). There is no restriction for students with Jiangxi household registration to take the exam in other provinces (The people's Government of Jiangxi Province, 2016).

4.4.6 Reasons for choosing research places

As previously stated, migrant children's education has been a contentious issue in many regions. For example, in some developed regions such as Beijing and Shanghai, there are a large number of migrant families, and as they have good educational resources and high admission rates, migrant students desire to take the NCEE there. The implementation of Offsite NCEE policy thus becomes a significant issue in these regions. Henan and Sichuan, for example also, have a large number of

outbound migrants and relatively poor educational resources, and are recognised as outbound provinces regarding to the Offsite NCEE policy. Theoretically, these provinces are suitable for this research. As research contexts, Zhejiang and Jiangxi are not 'perfect' for this research. However, there were three reasons for choosing these two provinces as the locations for this research.

The first reason was data availability. As this research aims to investigate the development and implementation of Offsite NCEE policy, it can only be conducted in regions which have already implemented the Offsite NCEE policy. Thus, the three regions, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong, which have not implemented the Offsite NCEE policy yet, cannot be chosen as locations for this study. Moreover, access to first-hand data is a major challenge to researchers in particular to the researchers in the field of policy (Hu, 2012). It is difficult for researchers who want to collect data regarding the public sector in China. Research can be conducted only if the potential participants are willing to work with the researcher. Local governments in Zhejiang and Jiangxi were willing to participate in the research, and also provided valuable local information to the researcher.

The second reason relates to the relevance of the research. As stated earlier, Zhejiang is one of the largest inflow provinces in China with a large number of migrant families move in. While Jiangxi is one of the largest outflow provinces in China. A large number of outbound migrant children move out with their parents. Migrant children's education policy is a significant issue in the two provinces.

Finally, collecting data in two provinces not only ensures a larger sample, but also facilitates comparative analysis. The two provinces are entirely different with regard to their economic and social development. In terms of the Offsite NCEE policy, Zhejiang is a typical 'Inbound' province, and Jiangxi is a typical 'Outbound' province. This enables the researcher to compare the two provinces in terms of their development and implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. Having considered such factors, Zhejiang and Jiangxi were chosen as the two locations for this research.

4.5 Overview of fieldwork

Table 4.7 Schedule for Data collection

Piloting Study (Case Study Outbound province) Jiangxi Province (one city) From April 2014 to May 2014	Documents Collection	• National and local policy and strategy documents
	Questionnaire Survey	• Student questionnaire (local schools)
	Interviews	• Identifying the policy actors to be interviewed • Interviews with provincial government officers who involved in policy programming • Interviews with local government officers who involved in policy implementation • Identifying the students to be interviewed in accordance with the questionnaires
Case Study Outbound province Jiangxi Province (two cities) From September 2014 to October 2014	Documents Collection	• National and local policy and strategy documents
	Questionnaire Survey	• Student questionnaire (local schools)
	Interviews	• Identifying the policy actors to be interviewed • Interviews with local government officers who involved in policy implementation • Interviews with students
Case Study Inbound province Zhejiang	Documents Collection	• National and local policy and strategy documents
	Questionnaire Survey	• Student questionnaire (local schools)

province		• Identifying the policy actors to be interviewed
(two cities)		
From October 2014 to November 2014	Interviews	• Interviews with provincial government officers who involved in policy programming
		• Interviews with local government officers who involved in policy implementation
		• Identifying the students to be interviewed in accordance with the questionnaires

I spent four months in China for collecting data. The purpose was to collect qualitative and quantitative data for this research. The fieldwork consisted of two stages. The first stage, spanning April and May 2014, focused on a pilot study in the outbound province. Due to the exam term during June to August, students and government officers were not willing to be disturbed during the exam season, and because of the seasonality of the data collection, it had to be paused for three months. The second stage of the fieldwork started at September 2014 and finished in November 2014. This is the major source of data reported in this research. In this study, each case was conducted in one province. Two cities within each province were selected to conduct local government officer interviews, student questionnaire survey and student interviews.

4.5.1 Pilot study

Prior to the data collection, a pilot study was conducted in the outbound province of Jiangxi. One specific city, City 3, was chosen for piloting the study.

The purpose of the pilot study was

1. To identify the sampling
2. To evaluate and finalise the research methods
3. To test the language and patterns of the questions

Table 4.8 Instruments in the pilot study

Instrument			Piloting	Changes on the instrument
Interview	Government officer interview	officers in policy programming	YES	YES
		officers in policy implementation (student status management)	YES	YES
	Student interview	outbound student interview	YES	No change on questions, but change on sampling
		local student interview	YES	NO
Questionnaire	Student questionnaire	Student questionnaire	YES	No change on questions, but change on sampling

In the pilot study, I contacted the participants and decided which stakeholder groups would be used for data collection. In order to examine the efficiency of the research methods and whether the language used was appropriate, all methods were tested though the pilot study, including student questionnaire survey, student interview, government officers interview. The response of the participants was evaluated.

At first, this study was designed to interview three groups of stakeholders, including government officers, students and parents. They were considered to be the most relevant stakeholders in this research. However, in the pilot study, it was found that it was very difficult to interview parents. In the outbound province, the potential outbound students' parents usually work in other places. It was difficult to contact them. Hence, only two groups of stakeholders were interviewed. However, with regard to the inaccessibility of urban parents, remedial measures were taken. When I

was interviewing students, I asked them about their parents' views and indirectly obtained information from their parents.

Government officer interview

Four government officers were interviewed in the pilot study, including two officers from the provincial educational department who involved in policy programming and two officers from local educational department of City 3 who involved in policy implementation. Having reviewed the pilot officer interview results, some changes to the officer interview questions were made.

Firstly, with regard to the interview question list which was given to the interviewee before the interview, sensitive questions or words were avoided. For example, the questions 'Is it fair?'; 'Is there any problem?' 'What is the weakness?' 'Does anyone suffer through this policy?' might have made the interviewees feel insecure in the interview, and reluctant to answer the questions. However, with the interviews being based on a friendly and secure relationship, they answered such questions and gave the information the researcher needed.

Secondly, some questions were rephrased. For example, questions 'What do you think of *the current higher education admission in China?' and 'What do you think of HE admission in your provinces?'* were merged into one question: 'What do you think of the current higher education admission?' The reason for rephrasing this question was that officers provided repetitive information when answering the two questions. When they were talking about higher education admission across the country, they also mentioned their province. When asking this question, I guided them to talk about higher education admission across the country, and also in their province. Changes were also made in other questions for the same reason. When asking the questions 'Can you explain in the detail the process of policy-making?' and 'Can you explain your role in the process of policy making?', officers gave very short answers for their roles or repeated what they had said in the question of the process of policy making. Thus, the two questions merged into 'Can you explain in the detail the process of policy-making?'

Thirdly, it was found that the 'Offsite NCEE' application procedure in the outbound province was exactly same with a regular student transferring procedure. The officers in policy implementation are the officers who involved in the student transferring procedure. When asking them to explain the detailed process of policy implementation, the questions '*Can you explain in detail the process of policy implementation?*' *and 'Can you explain your role in the process of policy implementation?*' were changed to one question, 'Can you explain in detail the process of student transferring?'

Student questionnaire and interview

At first, final year senior high school students in the outbound province were considered to be the target group for the student questionnaire survey and student interview. I visited some senior high schools in the outbound province and did the research with final year senior high school students. I distributed 200 questionnaires to final year senior high school students, and then I interviewed some final year senior high school students, including two groups of local students (5 students in each group) and 10 students whose parents were working in other provinces. However, throughout the pilot study, I hardly found any final year senior high school students who would move out to other province and take Offsite NCEE. I discussed with the government officers and they suggested that there was no suitable outbound student in final year due to the super condition of the Offsite NCEE policy made by the central government: 'the student must have completed 1-3 year (min to 1 year) high school study in the inbound place.' This means students must study in an inbound place for 1-3 years to take the exam. Thus, final year senior high students have no opportunity to take the exam in other provinces. The target group in the outbound province thus changed to the first year student or junior school students.

Then, the student questionnaire survey and interview were conducted with first year senior high school student in the pilot study. The questionnaire survey was taken with 200 students and 15 students were interviewed. However, I still did not find any students who would take the offsite NCEE.

In order to test whether the student were able to understand the questionnaire questions and whether the language used in the interviews was appropriate, the

results of questionnaire and interviews were reviewed. It was found that the questionnaire seemed to work well in the pilot study, so the questions in the questionnaire were not changed. Moreover, it was found that flexible and unstructured conversations released the students' sense of tension. Thus, questions were not asked in a structured order, but instead in a flexible way.

All government officer interviews and the two group local student interviews with 10 final year senior high school students were included in final data analysis of this research. The student questionnaire survey and outbound student interviews were not included.

4.5.2 Sampling

Table 4.9 Sampling

Methods		Inbound province		Outbound province		Total
		City 1	City 2	City 3	City 4	
Interview	Government officers in policy programming	4		4		8
	Government officers in policy implementation	5	4	4	3	16
	Migrant students	20	0	10	10	40
	Local students	5X2	5X2	5X2	5X2	40
Questionnaire	Students	200	200	200	200	800
Documentary analysis	Documents published by the central government	4		4		8
	Documents published by the	4		2		6

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	provincial government			

The list of participants in this research consisted of four groups of stakeholders, including government officers in policy programming, government officers in policy implementation, migrant (inbound or outbound) students, and local students. They were considered to be the most relevant stakeholders to the Offsite NCEE policy.

- Government officers in policy programming refer to the officers who participated in policy programming. Those officers came from provincial educational departments of the two provinces.
- Government officers in policy implementation refer to the officers who participated in policy implementation. These officers came from local (prefectural level or county level) educational departments of the four regions.
- Migrant students (inbound students) in the inbound province refer to students who wished to take 'Offsite NCEE' or who had taken 'Offsite NCEE'. Left-behind students (outbound students) in the outbound province refer to the students who potentially have the opportunity to move to other province and might take 'Offsite NCEE'.
- Local students refer to the students who with local household registration and would not participate in 'Offsite NCEE'.

Inbound province, Zhejiang

Two prefectural level cities were selected to investigate the policy implementation in the inbound province, City 1 and City 2.

In the inbound province, 53 people were interviewed. I first had interviews with government officers. 13 government officers were interviewed in two cities, including 4 government officers involved in policy programming and 9 government officers involved in policy implementation. The 'Offsite NCEE' policy in Zhejiang was published by the provincial government of Zhejiang. The department charged with programming the 'Offsite NCEE' policy is Zhejiang Provincial Education Examinations Authority, which locate in City 1. The four government officers I interviewed directly participated in the process of policy programming.

The five local government officers interviewed in City 1 came from two government departments, including Municipal Education Examination Authority of City 1 and Municipal Education Bureau of City 1, which were most relevant to the policy implementation. The four local government officers interviewed in City 2 came from two government departments, including Municipal Education Examination Authority of City 2 and Municipal Education Bureau of City 2, which were most relevant to policy implementation.

After interviewing the government officers, the researcher conducted interviews with students. However, it was hard to find any final year senior high school migrant student in City 2, as it did not allow migrant student to take senior high school entrance exam until last year. Thus, all 20 migrant students who participated in the interviews came from City 1. Ten of them were final year senior high school students and ten of them were first year undergraduate students. Two group interviews with local students were taken in each city. There were five students in one group, and all of them were final year senior high school students. They came from two public schools in each city.

A sample of 400 final year senior high school student was used in the inbound province student questionnaire survey, with 200 students in each city. The 200 students from City 1 were final year senior high school students, while the 200 students of City 2 were first year senior high school students.

In terms of documentary analysis, eight documents which were most relevant to the 'Offsite NCEE' policy in Zhejiang were chosen, , including four documents published by the central government and four documents published by Zhejiang provincial government. The detailed process of document choice will be explained in a later section (section 3.5).

Outbound province, Jiangxi

Two prefectural level cities were chosen to conduct this research in the outbound province, City 3 and City 4.

In the outbound province, 51 people were interviewed. 11 government officers were interviewed in two cities, including 4 government officers involved in policy

programming and 7 government officers involved in policy implementation. The 'Offsite NCEE' policy in Jiangxi was programmed and published by the Jiangxi Provincial Education Examinations Authority, which is located in City 3. The 4 government officers I interviewed came from Jiangxi Provincial Education Examinations Authority and directly participated in the process of policy programming.

In City 3, the 4 local government officers interviewed who involved in policy implementation came from three government departments, namely education Examinations Authority of City 3, Higher Education Admission Office of City 3, and Education Bureau of City 3. The most relevant government department to the policy implementation in City 4 is Higher Education Admission Office of City 4. In City 4, the e local government officers interviewed came from Higher Education Admission Office of City 4.

40 students were interviewed in the two cities, including 20 outbound students and 20 local students. As explained before, the target group in the inbound province was changed to final year junior high school students. All the 20 outbound students were final year junior high school students. Ten of them came from two public schools in City 3 and ten of them came from three public schools in City 4. All the 20 local students participated in group interviews were final year senior high school students. They came from two public schools in each city.

A sample of 400 final year junior high school students was used in the outbound province student questionnaire survey, with 200 students in City 3 and 200 students in City 4.

In terms of documentary analysis, six documents which were most relevant to the 'Offsite NCEE' policy in Zhejiang were chosen, including four documents published by the central government and two documents published by Jiangxi provincial government. The detailed process of document choice will be explained in the later section.

4.6 Data analysis

Yin (2009) points out that the most difficult stage of doing a case study is data analysis, as it usually involves both qualitative data and qualitative data analysis. In this study, the data gives a broad base of research evidence to explore the Offsite NCEE policy. The quantitative data in this study was collected from the questionnaires. The qualitative data in this study was collected from the interviews and documentary analysis. This multiple case study involves two single cases. Each province was the subject of an individual case study, but the study as a whole covered two provinces. Therefore, there are two stages of data analysis in this study. The data for this study within each case was first analysed separately, and then the two individual cases were cross analysed and discussed.

4.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data in this study were students' answers to the questionnaires in both inbound province case and outbound province case. Descriptive and comparative statistical analyses were conducted based on the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires in the two cases. The quantitative analysis aimed to gain a better understanding of students' backgrounds and experiences, and also to explore their views with regard to the notion of 'educational equity', the context in China and the Offsite NCEE policy. The data was first analysed within one case, and the figures produced by SPSS were presented for each case. Then the figures for the two cases were compared.

The quantitative data was explored and analyzed through the statistical software SPSS. SPSS provides a simple descriptive way to present the data for this study. It was used to produce simple descriptions, including percentages and means. Each statement in the questionnaire was coded as a variable. Frequencies and percentages provide an overall picture of both samples of inbound province and outbound province. The background characteristics includes gender, age, school year, parent' workplaces, hukou, education. Descriptive analysis was conducted to explore students' preferences with regard to the places they would like to take the NCEE and study. A list of places and reasons was reported with percentages. For the inbound

province questionnaire, cross-tables were used to identify differences between local students and migrant students with regard to their parents' occupation, education and attitudes.

Both the last sections of inbound province questionnaires and outbound questionnaires were Likert questions. For the inbound province questionnaire, each of the five point scale were given a number, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither disagree nor agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree. I use SPSS to calculate the means of each question. The t-test was used to compare the views of local students and migrant students regarding HE admission and the Offsite NCEE. For the outbound province questionnaire, I use SPSS to calculate the percentages of strongly disagreement, disagreement, agreement, and strongly agreement to each item of the Likert questions. These were collected manually into tables to present the students' views.

4.6.2 Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data analysis of this study involves interview analysis and documentary analysis. Content analysis approach was employed in qualitative data analysis of this research. Cohen et al (2011, p.564) suggest that content analysis: "takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to generate or test a theory". Ezzy (2002) explains the process of data analysis in content analysis. According to Ezzy (2002), content analysis starts with a sample of texts. The researcher is expected to define the units of analysis (e.g. words, sentences) and the categories to be used for analysis. The texts are needed to be reviewed in order to code them and place them in to categories (ibid). The occurrences of words, codes and categories are then noted (ibid). Cohen et al (2011) summarize the process of content analysis as four basic stages: coding, categorizing, comparing and concluding. 'Categorizing' refers to creation of meaningful categories into which the unites of analysis can be placed; 'comparing' refers to comparison between categories and making links between them; 'concluding' refers to theoretical conclusions from the text (Cohen et al , 2011). The interivnew analysis and

documentary analysis of this study were conducted based on Cohen et al (2011)'s process of content analysis.

Interviews

Some of the interviews in this study were recorded while some of them were not recoded according to the interviewees' preferences. According to Cohen et al (2011), the first stage of content analysis is coding. In the interview analysis of this study, the first stage was to transcribe and code the recordings and field notes of interviews. Recordings and field notes of the interviews were transcribed as written texts. The interviews were conducted in Chinese. The transcriptions were made in Chinese as well. I did not translate all the Chinese transcriptions into English due to time constraints. The Chinese transcriptions were first read through carefully. The key words and sentences were marked and coded. The coding of texts was carried out using Nvivo software. The translation was then conducted after the above procedures were completed. Only the units of analysis in this study were translated.

The second stage was to construct the categories. As explained earlier (section 4.2), the interviews were designed based on the research questions. That is to say, the interviews contained different information corresponding to different research questions. Therefore, the interview responses were categorised according to the research questions and sub research questions. For interviews with officers, the responses were categorised as:

- Policy programming: responsibilities and procedures; factors affecting the policy programming.
- Policy implementation: responsibilities; procedures; factors and issues.
- Personal views: educational equity; context; policy programming; policy implementation; impact.

For interviews with students, the responses were categorised into three main categories: 'context', 'policy implementation', and 'personal views'.

The third stage was to review the categories and making links between them. As Cohen et al (2011) suggests, in a qualitative content analysis, one can establish linkages and relationships between categories. I did this in the interview analysis.

For example, in the analysis of officer interviews, their personal views were carefully analysed and linked to the policy programming. It is assumed that the policy makers' personal views were significant factors that affect the policy programming.

The final stage was to draw conclusions. Patton (1980) points out that the final stage of a qualitative content analysis is to find a focus for the research and analysis, and to identify further where clarification and cross-clarification are needed. In this stage, I narrowed this study and pinpointed the major themes that needed to be further focused on. For example, some factors affecting the policy implementation in the inbound province were revealed through the data analysis. But only one of them was identified as a focus for further clarification. In discussion of the findings, the results of two cases from the content analysis were compared and contrasted to highlight similarities and differences.

Documentary analysis

Content analysis was also used in the documentary analysis. As explained earlier (section 4.2), ten documents were selected to be analysed. However, the ten documents still had too much content. Thus the next stage was to select the content of the ten documents, aligning them more clearly to the needs of the research questions. The categories for the documentary analysis emerged from the data through careful reading the documents. The process of constructing categories involves two steps. The first step in this process was to read the documents in general, and to take basic notes. The contents which relate to the research questions were then identified and noted.

Table 4.10 The distribution of documents

	Context	Policy making	Policy implementation	Student status management
Central government	Document 1	Document 1 Document 2	Document 1	Document 3 Document 4
Inbound province	Document 5	Document 5	Document 5 Document 7 Document 8	Document 7 Document 8
Outbound province	Document 9	Document 9	Document 9 Document 10	Document 10

The second step was then to further identify the contents, and attempt to group them by identifying similarities. Following the two steps, three distinct categories emerged: Context; Policy programming; Policy implementation (see Table 4.10). These categories came from a close reading of the documents, and an addressing of the research question. It needs to be clear which category a sentence should be included when coding the documents. Thus, categories were defined.

- Context: purpose of the Offsite NCEE policy.
- Policy programming: Who are responsible for the policy programming; How was the policy programmed; Factors, issues and solutions in the process of policy programming.
- Policy implementation: Who are responsible for the policy implementation; How was the policy implemented; Factors, issues and solutions in the process of policy implementation.

This definition makes a clear understanding of the categories. It clearly expresses whether a sentence should be coded and which category should be included. The translation was then conducted after the above procedures were completed. In discussion of the findings, the results from the content analysis of documents were discussed with the results from other research methods of this study.

Chapter 5 Results of the inbound province case

Introduction

This chapter reports the research results of inbound province case. On the basis of Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach of policy analysis, the findings of inbound province case are structured by the research questions. The first section presents the contexts of the inbound province. The second section focuses on the policy programming stage, while the third section focuses on the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. The final section discovers the views of stakeholders. The findings reported in this chapter are based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected through student questionnaire survey, student interviews, officer interviews, and documentary analysis.

5.1 Context

This section represents the context of the inbound province. This section aims to answer the first group of the research sub-questions.

Q1.1 What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q1.2 What are the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy?

The focus is placed upon documentary evidence of the context for the Offsite NCEE policy, and student background and student preferences collected through student interviews and questionnaire survey.

5.1.1 Context in documents

When looking at the context of the Offsite NCEE policy, Document 1, published by the central government, begins with a paragraph that referred to the context and drivers for the Offsite NCEE policy. The leading document of the inbound province, Document 5 quotes the paragraph.

> *"With expanding proportion of rural to urban migrant workers, the number of migrant children who completed compulsory education has been*

increasing, the issue of migrant children entrance examination has become increasingly prominent." (Document 1, p.1; Document 5, p.1)

In describing the context for the Offsite NCEE policy, the documents concern intra-province rural-urban migration. The documents mention that the number of migrant workers has been increasing, resulting in the issue of migrant children's entrance examination.

Document 5 further quote the sentences from Document 1.

> *"Further working on migrant children entrance examination is the objective requirement of insisting on 'people-oriented' concept, protecting migrant children's right to education, and promoting educational equity. It is significant important to protect and improve people's livelihood, to strengthen and innovate social management, and to promote social stability."* (Document 1, p.1; Document 5, p.1).

Content analysis is applied to this paragraph, and it was found that these sentences contain the seven purposes of the Offsite NCEE policy.

1. To solve the entrance exam problem for migrant children.

2. To insist on 'people-oriented' concept

3. To protect migrant children's right to education

4. To promote educational equity

5. To protect and improve people's livelihood

6. To strengthen and innovate social management

7. To promote social stability

(Document 1; Document 5).

5.1.2 Student background

Table 5.1 Background characteristics of students in the questionnaire (N=400)

Variable	Frequency	Percent %	Valid Percent %
Gender			
Valid Male	148	37.0	37.0
Female	252	63.0	63.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0
Age in years			
Valid 14	4	1.0	1.0
15	52	13.0	13.0
16	164	41.0	41.0
17	108	27.0	27.0
18	48	12.0	12.0
19	24	6.0	6.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0
School year			
Valid			
First year senior high school	200	50.0	50.0
Final year junior high school	200	50.0	50.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0
Father's workplace			
Valid Zhejiang	280	70.0	93.3
Other province	20	5.0	6.7
Total	300	75.0	100.0
Missing System	100	25.0	
Total	400	100.0	
Mother's workplace			
Valid Zhejiang	228	57.0	95.0
Other province	12	3.0	5.0
Total	240	60.0	100.0
Missing System	160	40.0	

Total		400	100.0		
Household registration place					
Valid	Zhejiang	324	81.0	82.7	
	Other province	68	17.0	17.3	
	Total	392	98.0	100.0	
Missing System		8	2.0		
Total		400	100.0		
Household registration type					
Valid	Agricultural	80	20.0	48.8	
	Non-agricultural	84	21.0	51.2	
	Total	164	41.0	100.0	
Missing System		236	59.0		
Total		400	100.0		

As Table 5.1 shows, female students took a large percentage (63%) of the whole population, while 37% were male. Most of them were 16 (41%) or 17 (27%) years old and below. Half of the participants were first year senior high school students, and half of the participants were final year senior high school students.

Most of the parents (70% father; 57% mother) were working in Zhejiang. A small number of parents (5% father; 3% mother) were working in another province. The evidence suggests that the majority of students were staying with their parents in the inbound province. This result also supports the fact that Zhejiang is an inbound province, and that migrants rarely move out from Zhejiang.

Among the 400 students, most of them (81%) are local students with Zhejiang hukou, while 17% of the participants were migrant students who come from other provinces. This evidence suggests that the number of migrant students in the inbound province is correspondingly large.

The participants were almost equally distributed in Household registered type. However, it should be noted that more than half of the students (59%) did not provide their Household registered type. Thus the result of this is based on the valid data.

Background of local students

Figure 5.1Education received in Zhejiang for local students
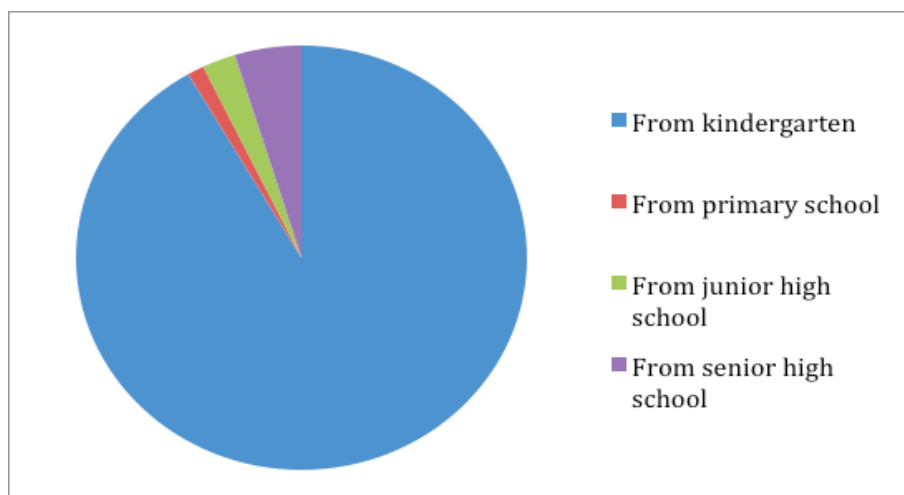
As shown in Figure 5.1, 91.6% of local students have been in Zhejiang from Kindergarten level. Here, we can see that most of the local students have always studied in Zhejiang. There is evidence that students in Zhejiang rarely studied in other province.

Local student's preference

Table 5.2 Local student's preference

Questionnaire item	YES	NO	Missing	Total
Q2.2 Do you like to study in other provinces rather in Zhejiang?	31.7%	68.7%	0%	100.0%
Q2.3 Do you like to take NCEE in other provinces rather in Zhejiang?	27.7%	69.9%	2.4%	100.0%

Local students were asked whether they want to move to other province to study or take NCEE. It was found that most of local students preferred to stay in Zhejiang, but not move out for studying (68%) or taking NCEE (69.9%).

Figure 5.2 Places local students want to go
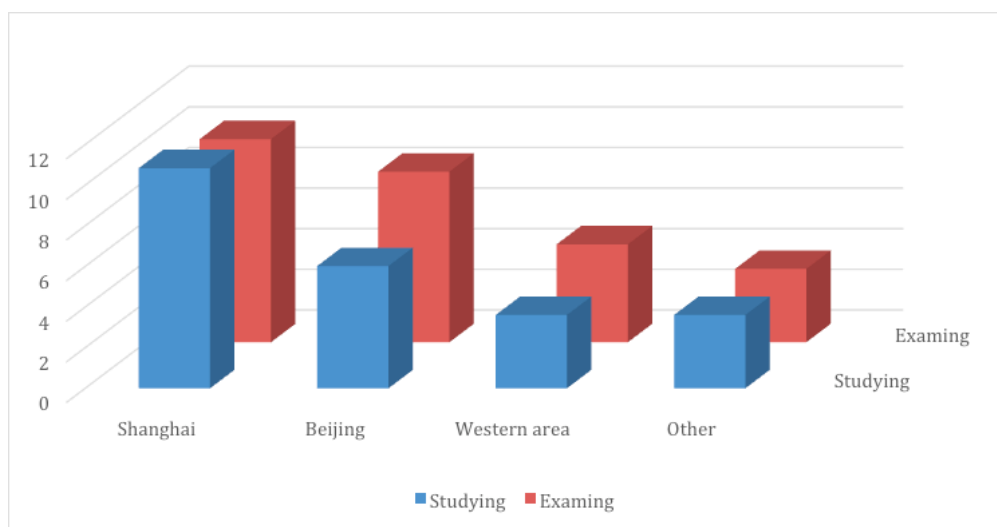
Some local students (23%) preferred to move to another province for studying (26%) and taking the exam. In the open-ended questions, local students were asked where exactly they wanted to move to, the most frequently mentioned places in their answers being: Shanghai (ranked 1st), Beijing (ranked 2nd) and western area (ranked 3rd).

It was found that Shanghai and Beijing were the two most attractive places for local students. There were two main reasons behind the preference. Firstly, students desired high quality education in Shanghai and Beijing. The students mentioned that they were attracted by teaching quality and educational facilities in the two places. The second reason refers to HEI admission rate. Students pointed out that Shanghai and Beijing have lower admission score lines. It would be much easier to get into HEIs if they took the NCEE in the two places, especially to gain entry to top HEIs.

Moreover, the western area also attracts local students, such as Xinjiang, Tibet. The reason is the low admission score lines in the western areas. Students wanted to take the NCEE in places with low admission score lines for getting better examination results.

The interviews with local students confirmed that all the local students wanted to move to places with low score lines. The most mentioned places in the interviews also were Beijing, Shanghai, and the Western area.

Background of migrant students

Figure 5.3 Hukou of Migrant students
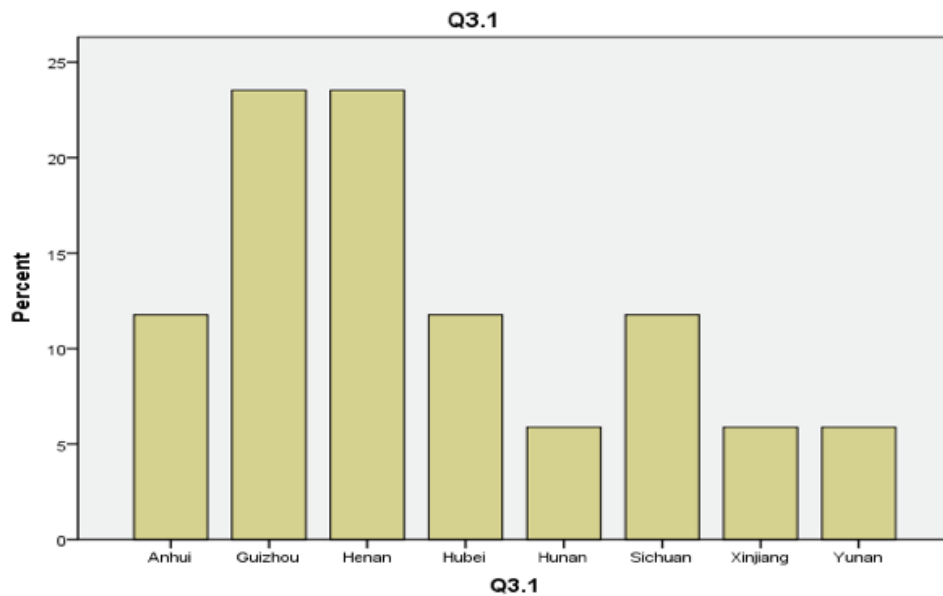
Among the 400 students, there were 68 migrant students. The migrant students came from eight different provinces: Guizhou, Henan, Anhui, Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan, Xinjiang, Yunan. Nearly half of migrant students came from Guizhou and Henan, widely recognized as an outflow province in China.

Figure 5.4 Years of migrant students staying in Zhejiang
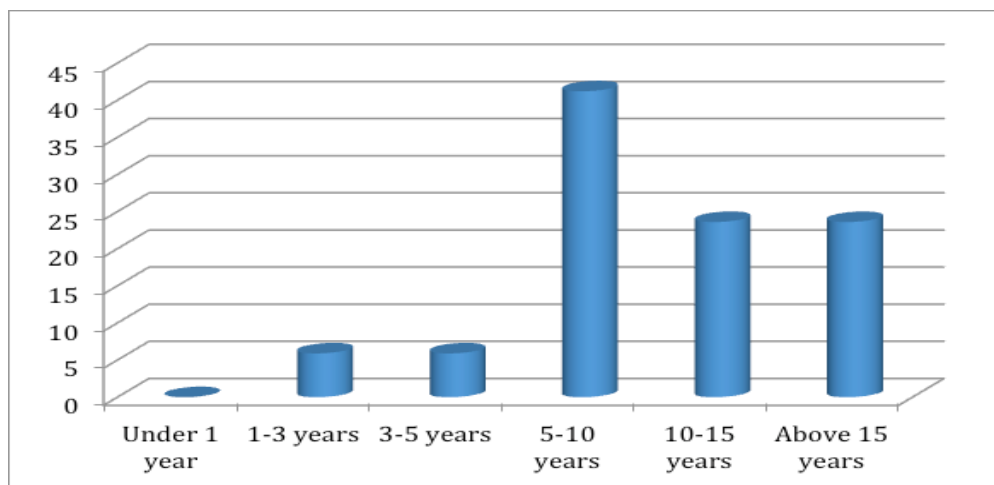
It was found that the majority of migrant students have been in Zhejiang for a long time. 47.2% of migrant students have been in Zhejiang for more than 10 years, and 41.2% of migrant students have been in Zhejiang for 5-10 years. Only 11.8% of

migrant students have stayed in Zhejiang for less than 5 years. This result is supported by exploring migrant students' education received in Zhejiang.

Figure 5.5 Migrant student education
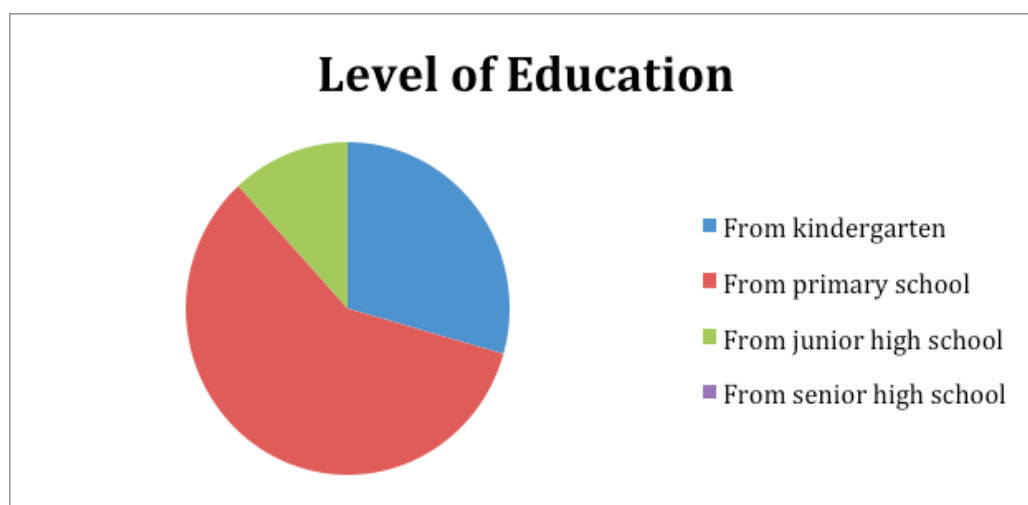
As shown in Figure 5.5, 29.4% of migrant students have studied in Zhejiang from Kindergarten level, and 58.8% of migrant students have studied in Zhejiang from primary school. Here we can see that the majority of migrant students had received education in Zhejiang for a long time.

Table 5.3 Migrant students' preferences

Questionnaire item	Zhejiang	Original hukou place	Missing	Total
Q3.4 Would you like to study in Zhejiang or your hukou registration place?	88.2%	5.9%	5.9%	100.0%
Q3.5 Would you like to take NCEE in Zhejiang or your hukou registration place?	76.5%	11.8%	11.8%	100.0%

Migrant students were asked whether they liked to study or take NCEE in Zhejiang. It was found that majority of migrant students preferred to study (88.2%) and take NCEE (76.5%) in Zhejiang, but not go back to their original household registration places.

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When asked why they prefer to stay in Zhejiang, the most frequently mentioned reason is that Zhejiang has high quality education. Migrant students pointed out that Zhejiang has higher quality education and better educational resources than their original household registration places. Moreover, migrant students said they liked to stay in Zhejiang because they have been in Zhejiang for a long time and are very familiar with Zhejiang. It is not easy for them to get familiar with a new place, new teaching models, and new examining formats. Also, migrant students stated that their parents were staying in Zhejiang and they did not wish to be apart from their parents. It was not convenient for them to return to their original Hukou places. In addition, some migrant students expressed the fact that they preferred to take the NCEE in Zhejiang because the admission score line in Zhejiang is lower than in their original Hukou places.

Comparison of local students and migrant students

Table 5.4 Occupations of Parents

Local students				Migrant students			
Father occupation	%	Mother occupation	%	Father occupation	%	Mother occupation	%
Valid	69.8	Valid	57.8	Valid	76.5	Valid	52.9
Self-employed	26.5	Self-employed	25.3	Worker	58.8	Worker	35.2
Worker	20.5	Worker	14.5	Self-employed	5.9	Self-employed	11.8
Company employee	6.0	Unemployed	3.6	Company employee	5.9	Unemployed	5.9
Manager	4.8	Teacher	3.6	Driver	5.9		
Farmer	3.6	Farmer	3.6				
Officer	3.6	Company employee	2.4				
Doctor	1.2	Manager	1.2				
Driver	1.2	Sales	1.2				

Teacher	1.2	Bank staff	1.2	
University staff	1.2	Accounting	1.2	

Students were asked about both of their parents' occupations. It should be noted that Table 5.4 only lists valid data. It was found that some students did not answer the question about their parents' occupations. As shown in Table 5.4, more than one quarter of local parents were self-employed (father 26.5%, mother 25.3%). Most of them opened up factories, companies or shops. Factory worker and company employee were also common forms of employment among local parents. Meanwhile, Table 5.4 shows that more than half of migrant parents were doing factory working (father 58.8%, mother 35.2%). Some migrant parents were self-employed (father 5.9%, mother 11.8%). Company employee and driver were also common forms of employment among migrant fathers.

Table 5.5 Education Background of Parents

Highest Degree Obtained	Local		Migrant	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
	%	%	%	%
Primary school and below	3.9	4.3	18.8	27.3
Junior high school or equivalent	50.0	50.7	62.5	63.6
Senior high school or equivalent	26.3	31.9	12.5	9.1
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	19.7	13.0	6.3	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In the questionnaire, students were asked about their parents' educational levels. As shown in Table 5.5, 18% of migrant fathers and 27.3% of migrant mothers had not completed compulsory education, and a small number of local parents had dropped out of school before completing primary school (father 3.9%, mother 4.3%). Two thirds of migrant parents had finished junior secondary education. A small number of

them continued to study after they had finished compulsory education. Less than one fifth of migrant fathers and one tenth of migrant mothers finished senior secondary education, while 6.3% of migrant fathers and no migrant mothers had completed higher education. In comparison, the majority of local parents had completed compulsory education. Nearly half of them had finished senior secondary education (father 46%, mother 44.9%), while 19.7 of local fathers and 13.0 of local mothers had completed higher education. The data collected shows that the majority of migrant parents had not completed senior secondary education, and had even dropped out of school before completing junior secondary education. Evidence suggests that migrant parents were not well-educated, and received less education than local parents.

Parents' attitudes towards education

In the questionnaire, students were asked about their parents' expectations for their educational achievement. It was found that both local and migrant parents held great expectations for their children. The majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that their parents hoped they gained access to higher education (76.5% of migrant students, 91.6% of local students). When asked whether their parents were strict in their studies, more than half agreed or strongly agreed that their parents were strict on their studies (58.5% of migrant students, 50.6% of local students). However, none of local students and migrant students disagreed or strongly disagreed that their parents were strict in regards to their studies.

The student interviews confirm that both local and migrant parents consider education to be a very important issue. The student interviews support the point that parents cared strongly about their children's education.

> *"My parents think they cannot get better jobs because of their lack of higher education, so they want me to go to university."*

> *"My parents said they will do everything they can to support my study"*

> *"My parents care about my examination results. They always ask me. If I did not do well in last examination, they would talk about again and again."*

> *"They do not allow me to go out and play during weekends or holidays. They force me to go to supplementary schools."*

"I think they are not too strict in daily life. They only care about my examination results. If I can get on well, they do not care about the way I do my work"

"They are busy, so they cannot pay attention to my study every day. But if they know something, such as the fact that I did not do well in an examination, or the teacher said I am not doing well at school, they will reprimand me."

"They always said that I cannot follow their own path. I must study hard to live a better life."

"My parents take my study very seriously. They think the only way to change our family conditions is through education. I must fulfil the dream which they were not able to fulfil."

The interviews suggested that many parents pushed their children hard with their studies. Of the 20 migrant students interviewed, 14 students (70%) reported that their parents were very strict on their studies. Only 4 students (20%) thought that their parents were fairly strict and 2 students (10%) students reported that their parents were not strict. Meanwhile, the interviews with local students found that the local parents are also strict on their children's studies.

5.1.3 Education in Zhejiang

The public financial budget funds for education in Zhejiang

According to the data from the Announcements on National Education Finance Implementation 2010-2015, the public budget funds for education in Zhejiang has been increasing year by year (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). In 2014, the public budget funds for education in Zhejiang reached 10.18 billion yuan, 59.33% higher than the 6.39 billion yuan of 2010 (ibid). The ratio of fiscal expenditure on education to the total fiscal expenditure in Zhejiang has remained relatively constant from 2010 to 2014. In 2010, the ratio of fiscal expenditure on education to the total fiscal expenditure was 19.93% (ibid). In 2014, the ratio was 19.74% (ibid). All the data of government investment in education indicates that the financial ability of the provincial government to support education has been steadily improving. Evidence shows that increasing investment in education has not provided more study places for children both in compulsory schools and ordinary senior high schools.

Figure 5.6 Public financial budget funds for education in Zhejiang 2010-2015

Public financial budget funds for education
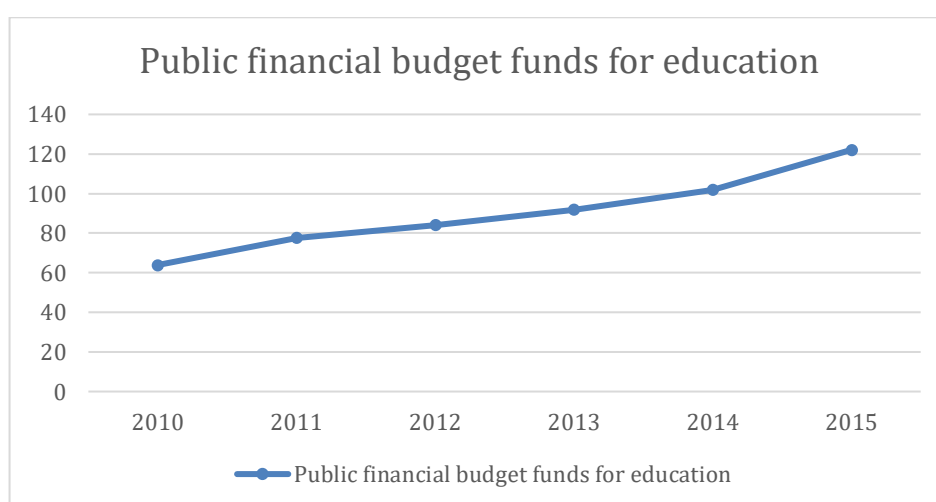
(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016)

School places for children

Compulsory schools in Zhejiang 2010-2015

2010

There were 5734 compulsory schools, 184 less than the previous year.

➢ 3989 primary schools, 158 less than last year, 602100 students enrolled, an increase of 63000 students and 4.15% higher than the previous year;

➢ 1745 junior high schools, 26 less than the previous year, 532000 students enrolled, with a decrease of 4.1%.

There are 1168000 migrant students studying in compulsory schools, 13.4% higher than the previous year, including 946300 migrant students in primary schools, with an increase of 11510 students and 13.4 % higher than the previous year; 221700 migrant students in junior high schools, with an increase of 22600 students and 11.4 % higher than the previous year.

2011

There were 5563 compulsory schools, a reduction of 171 on the previous year.

➢ 3818 primary schools, 171 less than last year, enrolling 628800 students, an increase of 26700 students and 4.4% higher than the previous year;

> 1745 junior high schools, the same as the previous year, enrolling 499800 students, 32200 students less and 6% less than the previous year.

There are 1209100 migrant students studying in compulsory schools, 3.5% higher than the previous year. Of these 897200 migrant students studying in public schools, accounted for 74.2%. There were 988900 migrant students in primary schools, an increase of 42600 students and 4.5 % higher than the previous year; 220300 migrant students in junior high schools, a reduction of 1400 and 0.6% less than the previous year.

2012

There were 5433 compulsory schools, 130 less than the previous year.

> 3698 primary schools, 120 less than the previous year, enrolling 607200 students, a reduction of 2.16 thousand students and 3.4% less than the previous year;

> 1735 junior high schools, a reduction of 10 on the previous year, enrolling 510600 students, an increase of 10800 students and 2.2% higher than the previous year.

There were 1307900 migrant students studying in compulsory schools, 8.2% higher than the previous year. Of these 988700 migrant students studied in public schools, accounting for 75.6%. There were 1061900 migrant students in primary schools, an increase of 73000 students and 7.4% higher than the previous year; there were 246000 migrant students in junior high schools, an increase of 25700 students and 11.7% higher than the previous year.

2013

There were 5127 compulsory schools, a reduction of 306 on the previous year.

> 3400 primary schools, a reduction of 298 on the previous year, enrolling 607500 students, an increase of 300 students and 0.5% higher than the previous year;

> 1727 junior high schools, 8 less than the previous year, enrolling 512400 students, an increase of 1800 students and 0.35% higher than the previous year.

There were 1397600 migrant students studying in compulsory schools, which was 6.9% higher than the previous year. Of these 1044500 migrant students were

studying in public schools, accounting for 74.7%. There were 1118900 migrant students in primary schools, increasing to 57000 students and 5.4 % higher than the previous year; 278700 migrant students in junior high schools, increasing 32700 students and 13.3% higher than the previous year.

2014

There were 5063 compulsory schools, 64 less than the previous year.

➢ 3344 primary schools, 56 less than the previous year, 598100 students enrolled, a reduction of 9400 students, and 1.55% less than the previous year.
➢ 1719 junior high schools, 8 less than the previous year, 504300 students enrolled, a reduction of 8100 students and 1.58% less than the previous year.

There were 1439000 migrant students studying in compulsory schools, which was 2.9% higher than the previous year. Of these, 1030000 migrant students were studying in public schools, accounting for 71.6%. There were 1145000 migrant students in primary schools, an increase of 26000 students and 2.3 % higher than the previous year; there were 294000 migrant students in junior high schools, an increase of 15000 students, and 5.4% higher than the previous year.

2015

There were 5015 compulsory schools, 48 less than the previous year.

➢ 3303 primary schools, a reduction of 41 on the previous year, 599000 students were enrolled, I an increase of 0.9 thousand students;
➢ 1712 junior high schools, a reduction of 7 on the previous year, 489000 students enrolled, a reduction of 15.3 thousand students.

There were 1461000 migrant students studying in compulsory schools, which was 1.5% higher than the previous year. Of these, 1059000 migrant students studying in public schools, account for 72.5%. There were 1156000 migrant students in primary schools, 1% higher than the previous year, and 305000 migrant students in junior high schools, 3.7% higher than the previous year.

(All Data collected from the Statistical Communiqués on Zhejiang Provincial Educational Development 2010-2015, Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics)

The number of compulsory schools from 2010 to 2015 is shown in Figure 5.7. There were 5734 compulsory schools in 2010, including 3989 primary schools and 1745 junior high schools. However, the number of compulsory schools reduced to 3303 in 2015, including 3303 primary schools and 1712 junior high schools. Between 2010 and 2015, the number of schools declined significantly, indicating that the study places available for children in compulsory schools also reduced.

Figure 5.7 The number of compulsory schools in Zhejiang 2010-2015
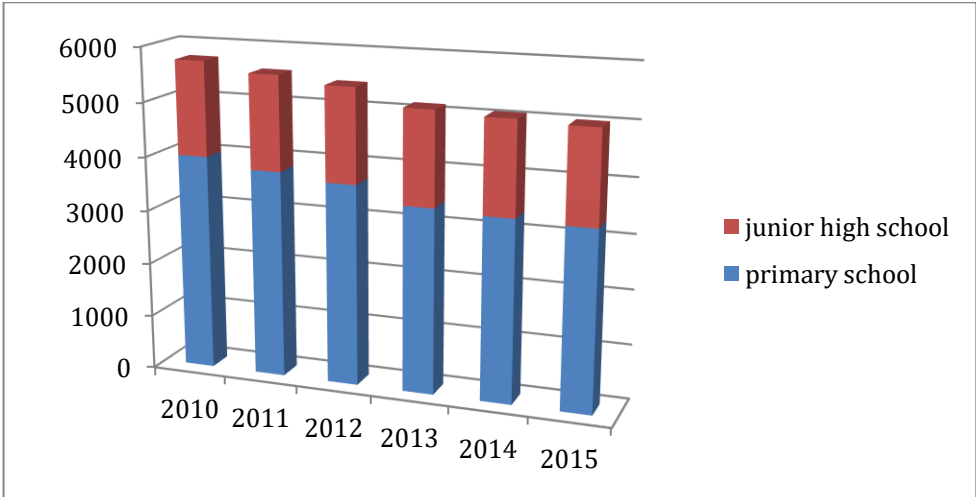
(Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

This is supported by the evidence of the number of students enrolled in compulsory schools from 2010-2015. Figure 5.8 shows a slightly decrease of the number of students enrolled in compulsory schools from 2010 to 2015. In 2010, there were 602100 students enrolled in primary schools and 532000 students enrolled in junior high schools. Meanwhile, in 2015, the number of students enrolled in primary schools reduced to 599000, and the number of students enrolled in junior high schools reduced to 489000. The decreasing number of compulsory schools and study places available suggest that the supply for compulsory education deteriorated.

Figure 5.8 The number of students enrolled in compulsory schools 2010-2015
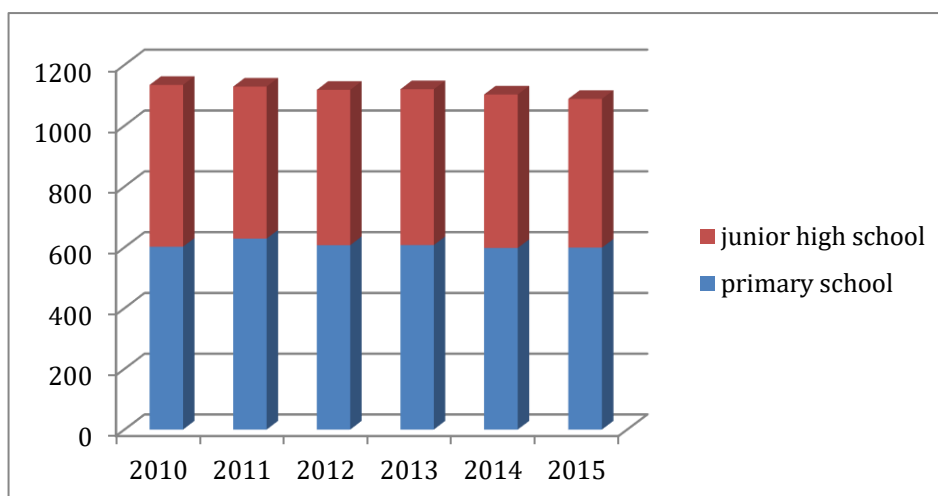
(Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

Ordinary senior high schools in Zhejiang 2010-2015

2010

There were 569 ordinary senior high schools, 13 less than the previous year; 300900 students enrolled, an increase of 700 students and 4.15% higher than the previous year;

2011

There were 569 ordinary senior high schools, the same as the previous year; 300500 students were enrolled, 400 students less and 0.1% less than the previous year;

2012

There were 571 ordinary senior high schools, an increase of 2 on the previous year; 277900 students enrolled, a reduction of 22600 students and 7.5% less than the previous year;

2013

There were 569 ordinary senior high schools, 2 less than the previous year; 265200 students enrolled, reducing 12700 fewer students and 4.6% less than the previous year.

2014

There were 561 ordinary senior high schools, 8 less than the previous year; 251700 students enrolled, 13500 students less and 5.1% less than the previous year.

2015

There were 563 ordinary senior high schools, an increase of 2 on the previous year; 260000 students enrolled, increasing 8.3 thousand students.

(All Data collected from the Statistical Communiqué on Zhejiang Provincial Educational Development 2010-2015, Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics)

The number of ordinary senior high schools in Zhejiang from 2010 to 2015 is shown in Figure 5.8. Here we can see that the number of ordinary senior high schools in Zhejiang slightly decreased from 569 to 563. Meanwhile, the number of students enrolled has decreased.

Figure 5.8 The number of ordinary senior high schools in Zhejiang 2010-2015
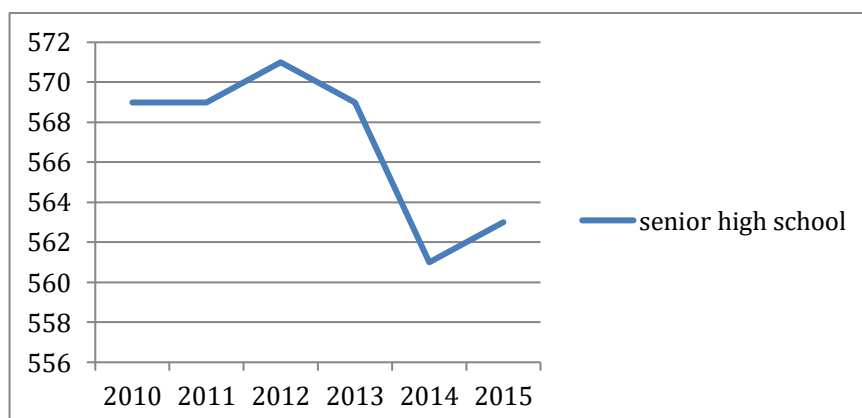
(Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

Figure 5.9 shows a decrease in the number of students enrolled in ordinary senior high schools from 2010 to 2015. In 2010, there were 300900 students enrolled. Meanwhile, in 2015, the number of students enrolled reduced to 260000.

Figure 5.9 The number of students enrolled in ordinary senior high schools 2010-2015
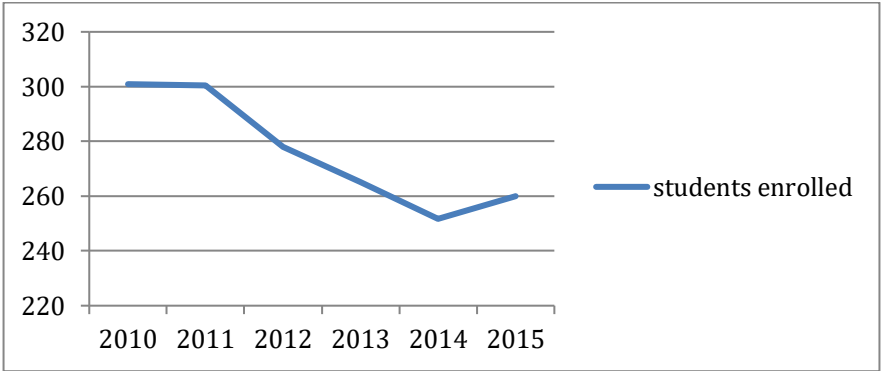
(Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

According to the data from Statistical Communiqué on Zhejiang provincial education development 2011-2015, the number of migrant students has been increasing year on year.

Figure 5.10 The number of migrant students in compulsory schools 2011-2015
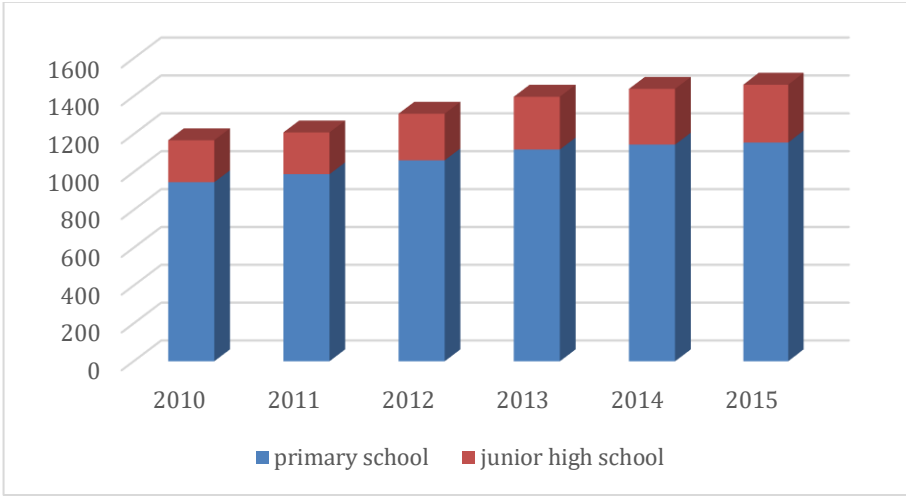
(Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

As shown in Figure 5.10, in 2010, there were 1168 thousand migrant children studying in compulsory schools. In 2015, the number of migrant children reached 1461 thousand, with an increase of 25%.

5.2 Policy programming

This section addresses the stage of policy programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. It aims to answer the second group of sub-questions of the research.

Q2.1 Who is responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q2.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed?

Q2.3 What are the factors affecting the decisions of policy makers?

Q2.4 What is the impact of these factors on the decisions of policy makers?

This section firstly addresses the first two sub-questions. It identifies the responsibilities of government departments in policy programming and describes the detailed procedures of policy programming. Then this section answers the last two sub-questions. It identifies the factors that affect the decisions of policy makers and represents the way how they impact on the policy programming. The data presented in this section was gathered from documents and officer interviews.

5.2.1 Responsibilities

In describing policy programming, the central government documents provide general ideas about the responsibilities of government departments for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. In terms of policy programming at national level, documents do not directly reference who or which department was responsible for the policy programming. However, the authorities involved in the policy programming can be identified through the content and context analysis of Document 1.

As noted in section 4.2, Document 1 'Notice of General Office of the State of Council -Opinion on migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in the local place after received compulsory education' is considered to be the national leading document of Offsite policy. Document 1 was published by the State of Council, and it was forwarded from four authorities: the Ministry of Education, Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

This was exemplified in the following paragraph from the foreword in Document 1:

> *"The people's governments of all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central government, all ministries and commissions of the departments directly under the State Council:*

> *'Opinion on migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in the local place after received compulsory education' drafted by the Ministry of Education, , Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, which has been approved by the State of Council, is hereby issued to you for your complicate and implementation*

> *State of Council"* (Document 1, p.1).

Although this paragraph does not directly claim who was responsible for the policy programming at national level, it mentions four authorities who drafted Document 1. This provides clues as to who was responsible for the policy programming. Here we can see that Document 1 was published by the State of Council, and drafted by four authorities: the Ministry of Education, Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

This was generally matched with what was found in Document 2. In Document 2, the Ministry of Education claims that

> *"the Ministry of Education, the Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, and the National Education and Examination Steering Committee discuss the plan progress of some provinces....."* (Document 2, p.1).

It should be noted that the National Education and Examination Steering Committee is a department of the Ministry of Education. The findings of the central government documents analysis showed that the four authorities were responsible for the policy programming at the national level: the Ministry of Education, Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

In terms of policy programming at the local level, Document 1 further claims:

> *"The people's governments of all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government formulate and issue*

plan concerning migrant children entrance examination according to…….."
(Document 1, p1).

This is matched with Document 2. It requires that:

"Provincial Educational Department of all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government report the policy making progress to the Ministry of Education" (Document 2, p.1).

Here we can see that the central documents offer a general idea about the responsibilities of the policy programming. The central government assigned that the provincial governments formulate and issued a plan for the Offsite NCEE policy.

In the inbound province, the documents also do not directly reference who or which department is responsible for the policy programming. However, the departments involved in policy programming can be identified through the context and the content analysis of the document.

Having identified Documents 5 'Notice of General Office Zhejiang Provincial People's Government - Implement Opinion on other provinces migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in our province after received compulsory education' is the leading document of Offsite policy in the inbound province, the further application of document analysis procedures leads to an understanding of the author. Document 5 was published by The People's Governments of Zhejiang Province, and was forwarded from Provincial Educational Department, Development and Reform Commission, Provincial Public Security Department, and Provincial Human Resources and Social Security Department. This was exemplified in the sentences at the very beginning of Document 5:

"The people's governments of all municipalities, counties (cities, districts), all the institutions directly under the Provincial People's Government:

"Implement Opinion on other provinces migrant workers' children taking the entrance examination in our province after receiving compulsory education', drafted by Provincial Educational Department, Development and Reform Commission, Provincial Public Security Department, and Provincial Human Resources and Social Security Department, which has been approved by the provincial government, is hereby issued to you for your compliance and implementation.

People's Government of Zhejiang Province" (Document 5, p.1).

This sentence was coded as an indirect reference to the coding category of policy programming, because although it does not directly state who is responsible for the policy programming, it mentioned the four departments which drafted the Document 5. Here we can see that Document 5 was drafted by Provincial Educational Department, Development and Reform Commission, Provincial Public Security Department, and Provincial Human Resources and Social Security Department. This finding shows that the four authorities were responsible for policy programming in the inbound province.

The findings of the documentary analysis were generally consistent with officer interview responses. In the course of officer interviews, when asking who was responsible for the policy programming in the inbound province, all officers claimed that the department responsible for drafting the policy was the Policy Development Division, supervised by the provincial Education Examinations Authority. Two officers also mentioned that there were some other departments involved in the policy programming process as well.

> *"The authority responsible for policy making is Education Examination Authority - all policies are made in our department. We took the lead, made this policy with some relative departments"* (Officer B, City 1).

> *"...besides our department, there were some department that also participated in the meeting to discuss how to formulate this policy. Public security, Development and reform commission. They also gave some opinions....."* (Officer D, City 1).

Officers mentioned that the Provincial Public Security Department and Development and Reform Commission also participated in the process of drafting the Offsite NCEE policy plan by giving some opinions.

5.2.2 Procedures

From the content analysis of the central government Document 2, the scheme that settled by the Ministry of Education was:

> ➢ Step 1: All provinces report their policy programming progress to the Ministry of Education before 16/11/2012. The provinces which have already formulated the plans should report their plans to the Ministry of Education,

while the provinces which have not formulated the plans should report their progress to the Ministry of Education.

➢ Step 2: Around 20/11/2013, the Ministry of Education, the Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, and the Examination Steering Committee discuss the planned progress of some provinces, and share experiences.

➢ Step 3: An inspection team will be established by the Ministry of Education, Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, and National Education and Examination Steering Committee. It will visit the local governments and assess the implementation of 'Opinions' (Document 1) in late November.

➢ Step 4: The assessment result will be reported to the State of Council.

➢ Step 5: Theoretically all provinces should publish the plans of the Offsite NCEE policy by the end of 2012.

Here we can see that the Ministry of Education offered a general outline of the policy programming procedures across the country. However, no document describes the detailed procedures of policy programming in the inbound province.

In the officer interviews, when asking the detailed procedure of the policy programming, the responses from the four officers involved in the policy programming were generally consistent, but also with some slight differences. Only one officer mentioned that they had one research before drafting the policy.

> "*We did some research before we drafted this policy. We did intra-province research and inter-province research. Intra-province research asks opinions from students, parents, educational departments, HEIs, schools and media. We had questionnaires. We held symposiums to discuss. We reported to National People's Congress. Inter-province research aims to learn from other provinces*" (Officer A, City 1).

Officer A claimed that they had done some research to investigate the context and stakeholders' views through questionnaires and interviews. However, other officers said they 'asked public opinions' rather than did research. For example, as Officer C in City 1 described:

> "*This policy has been designed from Oct 2012. The detailed plan came out in Novmber 2012, then it has been send to provincial government, and then got*

essentially approved. Then we asked public opinions. Finally it was published. The whole process took about half one year, but the real process of policy making took less than one month" (Officer C, City 1).

Officer D described the procedure of policy programming in a similar way:

"This policy has been conducted in 2013. We started to design this policy from second half year of 2012, from Oct 2012. Firstly our department had meetings to discuss the plan and all of us expressed our opinions. The whole plan came out in November, and we asked for public opinions about the plan. Then we sent it to the provincial government, and got approved. Then we asked for opinions again from all field. Then it was published" (Officer D, City 1).

When asking what 'ask public opinions' exactly meant, officers explained that it referred to meetings with other departments to ask their opinions, such as the Provincial Public Security Department.

To sum up, from the officer interview analysis, in the case of the inbound province, the procedure of the policy programming contains eight steps:

1. Department meeting
2. Doing research (intra-province, inter-province)
3. Drafting the plan
4. Formatting the plan
5. Asking public's opinions
6. Reporting to provincial government
7. Approved by provincial government
8. Published the plan

5.2.3 Factors

In referring to the policy programming, the central government Document 1 proposes five essential principles of the Offsite NCEE policy.

➢ Insist on the good of protecting migrant children's right to education and the opportunity access further education equally.

➢ Insist on the good of promoting proper population flow.

➢ Comprehensively considering the needs of migrant children taking the entrance exam.

- ➢ Comprehensively considering the educational resource carrying capacity of the inbound places.
- ➢ Promoting the work of migrant children and the entrance exam actively and steadily.

The five principles are considered as dominant principles of the Offsite NCEE that all provinces must comply with when they formulating their own Offsite NCEE policy plans. Moreover, Document 1 lists some factors that need to be considered in the policy programming.

> *"Making the specific migrant children entrance examination policy according to local conditions. The governments of all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central government should decide the specific conditions for migrant children to take the entrance examination in the inbound place according to city function, industrial layout, city resource carrying capacity, and according to migrant workers' legal stable occupation and accommodation (including renting), migrant workers' social insurance record, and migrant children's study record"* (Document 1, p2).

Here, we see that within this document, the central government proposes seven factors that need to be considered by provincial governments in the policy programming.

Three factors focus on the local situation:

- ➢ City function
- ➢ Industrial layout
- ➢ City resource carrying capacity

Four factors focus on migrant families:

- ➢ Migrant workers' occupation
- ➢ Migrant workers' accommodation
- ➢ Migrant workers' social insurance record
- ➢ Migrant children's study record

In the inbound province, when referring to the policy programming, Document 5 firstly proposes the "general requirements" of the Offsite NCEE.

"Adhering to the scientific view of development, sticking to transform the mode of economic development and industrial optimization and upgrading, guiding proper population flow, solving the issue of migrant children entrance examination actively and conditionally" (Document 5, p2).

The requirements are considered as the guiding principle for the development of Offsite NCEE policy. This must be complied with in the stage of policy programming. Based on the general requirements, Document 5 further propose the factors that need to be fully considered in the policy programming.

"It is necessary to actively study the need of migrant children education, and also fully consider the educational resource carrying capacity of the inbound places. It is necessary to solve the issue of migrant children education, and also ensure the local educational quality standard and truly guarantee that local students' educational opportunity and resources would not be affected, giving full room to municipalities and counties (cities, districts) for discretion and initiative, according to the local situations, based on the current situation, following the trend, solving the issue of migrant children entrance examination actively and conditionally according to local situations" (Document 5, p.2).

This paragraph proposes four factors that needed to be considered in the policy programming.

➢ The need of migrant children
➢ Educational resource carrying capacity of the inbound places
➢ Local educational quality standard
➢ Local students' interests

Local governments were given full discretion, enabling them to make their own conditions according to local situations. The results of policy programming thus heavily depend upon local interests.

The interview responses were generally consistent with the findings of the documentary analysis. In officer interviews, four factors were illustrated.

➢ Local carrying capacity
➢ Local residents' interests
➢ Educational equity
➢ Media reports and public opinions

Officers involved in the policy programming stated that local carrying capacity was the main factor that affects their decisions. For example, Officer C described:

"In the meeting, the strongest response was from the basic education department. They are afraid there will be a lot of students who move in, and they cannot afford too many migrant students. Educational resources in our province are limited, schools, teachers, educational investment, all of these have a certain quota. More students mean more school places, more teachers, more educational investment. This is about our capacity if we can afford migrant students." (Officer C, City 1)

The local educational resources carrying capacity was regarded as a key factor affecting the decisions of policy programming. Officers had to carefully evaluate the local educational resources and facilities to predict how many migrant students they could afford.

This was supported by officer A's view in describing the meeting officers had before drafting the plan. As he described, in the meeting, different departments expressed their concerns about the consequences of the Offsite NCEE policy:

"The financial department is concerned about educational investment, they have great financial pressure on this issue if there are a lot of migrant students that move in. And the Public Security department is also concerned about the issue of population management. A large number of migrants would create extra work for population management" (Officer A, City 1)

Here we can see that the local government was concerned about local capacity for those coming into the province. Officers were worried about the financial pressure on educational investment and issues of population management.

Meanwhile, officers worried about NCEE migration:

"NCEE migration is also something we need to consider. We need to take this issue seriously. If we are open, will there be too many migrant students moving in? That's something we cannot afford" (Officer D, City 1).

This implies that the local government was uncertain as to whether the Offsite NCEE policy would attract NCEE migrants to move in. Officers pointed out that the local government could not provide education for a large scale migrant students.

Local residents' interests

Another significant factor affecting the officers' decisions was local residents' interests. All four officers involved in the policy programming claimed that the biggest difficulty for them was to find the way to protect local residents' interests.

> *"Our mission is try to make the policy acceptable for everyone. On the one hand, we must ensure that we are open to migrant students to take the NCEE, which is required by the central government. We must conduct this policy. But on the other hand, we must also ensure that this policy will not harm local interests. We need find a balance point between all aspects"* (Officer A, City 1).

> *"There is one thing we are really worried about. This policy cannot lead to suffering for local residents. We really worried about our local students' reflections"* (Officer B, City 1).

> *"Of course we also worry about local opinions about this policy, their attitudes about migrant students. Inevitably, some locals may disagree with this policy, they do not want too many migrant students to move in to take their educational resources"* (Officer C, City 1).

> *"There must be balance between migrants' interest and local residents"* (Officer D, City 1).

There appears to be a general view that local residents' interests must be carefully considered and protected. This shows that officers were concerned about how to balance the relationship between local residents and migrants when drafting the policy plan. The welfare of local residents was a significant factor that local government was not willing to ignore.

Educational equity

Two officers also referred to the concept of educational equity in their descriptions of policy programming:

> *"We consider that the main goal of this policy is about educational equity…"* (Officer A, City 1)

> *"Migrants need to be educated equally"* (Officer B, City 1).

Officers recognized that the primary goal of the Offsite NCEE policy is to offer equal education for migrant children. This primary goal is required to be achieved by the central government.

Media reports and public opinions

In addition, one officer pointed out that they were concerned about media reports and public opinions:

> *"We are really worried that our work leads to strong online public opinions. Now online public opinion is so harsh. We have a specific department to deal with this issue. They look at the online opinions everyday, to see if there is any news, if there is any negative reflection"* (Officer B, City 1).

The officer considered the media reports and public opinions as important factors in deciding on the way they design the policy. They were concerned about the acceptance of this policy and did not want to be criticized.

In the course of officer interviews, there appears to be a general view that the Offsite NCEE policy should be conducted conditionally in the inbound province.

> *"What we are concerned is about to control the number of migrant students. We should conduct this policy, but this does not mean that we should be completely open for migrant students without any condition. We cannot over-conduct this policy"* (Officer D, City 1).

Therefore, according to the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province, migrant students have been allowed to sign up for the NCEE locally as long as they have completed three years in senior high school and have a student status of a local high school for three years.

Apparently Zhejiang conducted the Offsite NCEE; however, a barrier has been set to limit the number of migrant students. Regions (municipal level) have been given the right to make their own senior high school entrance exam policies. Municipal governments were allowed to set out a series of criteria via senior high school entrance exam policy to decide whether migrant students can get into senior high schools according to their local situations. This determines whether migrant students can take the NCEE three years later in the inbound places:

> *"So the key point is if the student can get into senior high school here. We give the right of making senior high school entrance policy to each sub-region to allow themselves decide how many migrant students study there, how many migrant students take the exam there. They complain that they are the department which directly facing the problem and take the pressure for move-in migrant students. So we give the right to them, let them decide. They can customize their own plan according to their situation. If the region thinks*

they can afford many students, they can open, they can allow all migrant students to get into senior high school. If they think they cannot afford, then it is OK to make the policy strict" (Officer D, City 1).

"Our conditions are studying here for the whole 3 year senior high school and having student status. So the key point is if the student have studied here for senior high school, the student can get into senior high school. The conditions for senior high school entrance are made by sub-governments. They depend on each region's own regulations. If the region wants to encourage migrant workers to move in, they can make the condition very loose, they can approve all migrant students who want to study there for senior school. But if the region is saturated, they do want too many migrant students move in, they can make strict conditions to control the number of migrant students to get into senior school. This is our way to deal with this policy" (Officer C, City 1).

"This is to say, we move the barrier to senior high school entrance exam. Once the student could access senior high school in Zhejiang, he or she can take the NCEE here. Thus, although Zhejiang opened 'Offsite NCEE', can students really take the exam here? This all depend on whether they can get into senior high school, and study here for the whole three years. The NCEE policy is unified in the whole province, but the senior high school entrance exam policies vary between regions. Policies are made according to local conditions, such as the number of migrants, compulsory education. Each region has its own barriers and condition" (Officer B, City 1).

Officers stated that the Offsite NCEE policy design in the inbound province achieves a 'balance' point between different groups of stakeholders. On the one hand, the Offsite NCEE policy has been programmed and conducted in the inbound province to meet the requirements of the central government. Meanwhile, in order to protect local residents' interests, the inbound province government set out a series of criteria so that it could easily restrict the number of migrant students who participate in the Offsite NCEE policy.

5.3 Policy implementation

This section addresses the stage of policy implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province. It aims to answer the third group of sub-questions of the research.

Q3.1 Who is responsible for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented?

Q3.3 What are the factors that affect the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.4 What is the impact of these factors on the policy implementation?

This section firstly addresses the first two sub-questions. It identifies the responsibilities in government departments in the policy implementation, and describes the detailed procedures of the Offsite NCEE application and review process. Then this section answers the last two sub-questions. It seeks to address the factors that affect policy implementation and the issues that occur in policy implementation. The data reported in this section was collected through student interviews, officer interviews and documents.

5.3.1 Responsibilities

In terms of the responsibilities of government departments in policy implementation, the inbound province Document 5 quotes the paragraph from the central government Document 1:

> *"Strengthening organizational leadership and coordination. All regions and all related departments should strengthen leadership for migrant children entrance examination, making clear division of responsibilities, keeping close coordination and cooperation to contribute to the joint management patter. The Examination and Admission Authority in each region should co-coordinate the works of migrant children entrance examination. The educational department and related departments should properly allocate the resources in accordance with the number of students, make admission quotes, manage the examination registration and implementation, and arrange the admission and enrolment. The Development and Reform Department should take migrant children's education into local economic and social development plan. The Public Security Department should strengthen the management of population floating service, and provide the information of migrant residence in time. The Human Resources and Social Security Department should provide the information of migrant workers employment and social insurance in time. All regions and all related departments should study and solve the problems arising in the implementation in time, and seriously sum up and promote the successful experience, taking different ways to do the work of publicity and interpretation of the migrant children entrance examination policy, guiding public opinions to create a good atmosphere"*(Document 1, p.2).

This statement can be seen to clearly set out the responsibilities of different government departments in the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. From

the content analysis of this statement, it lists five departments and assigns the different responsibilities for them.

- Examination and Admission Authority
- co-coordinate the works of migrant children entrance examination
- Educational Department
- allocate the resources in accordance with the number of students, make admission quotes, manage the examination registration and implementation, and arrange the admission and enrollment
- Development and Reform Department
- take the migrant children's education into local economic and social development plan
- Public Security Department
- strengthen the management of population floating service, and provide the information of migrant residence in time
- Human Resources and Social Security Department
- provide the information of migrant workers employment and social insurance in time

As noted earlier (section 4.2), policy implementation involves the students status management. Document 7 looks at compulsory school student status management, while Document 8 looks at ordinary full-time senior high school student status management. The two documents clearly state the principles applied in the student status management and describe the roles that government departments are expected to play in student status management in the inbound province.

The principle of student status management system is described as:

> *"The mode of 'provincial coordination; hierarchical responsibility; local management; school implementation' is applied in the student status management system and online management system."* (Document 7, p.2; Document 8, p.2)

Then the two documents explained this principle by describing the responsibilities of the government department in the student status management system.

1. Provincial educational administrative department:

- formulating student status management measures according to the requirement of national educational administrative department;
- guiding, supervising, and examining all the schools and the students status management in the province.

2. Municipal educational administrative department:
   - coordinating the senior high school student status management in the region;
   - formulating the municipal student status management regulations;
   - guiding, supervising, and examining subordinate county-level educational administrative departments and students status management;
   - identifying senior high student status;
   - confirming changes;
   - printing certification of graduation.

3. County-level educational administrative department:
   - the student status management daily work in the region;
   - formulating the relative working regulations;
   - guiding, supervising, and examining the students status management;
   - assisting and coordinating the municipal educational administrative department for the identification of student status, confirmation of changing, and print certification of graduation.

4. Schools:
   - taking the main responsibility of student status management;
   - building and changing student status;
   - dealing with application of graduation;
   - reporting to the superior educational administrative department on time;
   - responsible for routine maintenance of status information and record file.

In the course of officer interviews, when asking who or which department is responsible for the policy implementation, the responses of officers in City 1 and 2 were consistent with the findings of documentary analysis. In the two cities, officers claimed that three authorities were participated in the policy implementation, including the municipal-level educational bureaus, the county-level educational bureaus and the municipal education examinations authority.

5.3.2 Procedures

Document 7 describes the procedures of student school transferring as follows:

> *"Student do school transfers in accordance with local policies, student or the parents apply for the inbound school, approved by the outbound school and the inbound school, and report to the educational superior administrative departments in the outbound place and inbound place, can transfer schools"* (Document 7, p.6).

Here, we can see that Document 7 sets out three steps for school transferring:

1. Student's application for inbound school
2. Approved by outbound school and inbound school
3. Report to the educational superior administrative departments in both outbound place and inbound place

In describing the procedures of student school transferring in ordinary full-time senior high school, based on the statement proposed by Document 7, Document 8 further claims that:

> *"Theoretically student school transferring should follow the principle of school level equivalence. In terms of inequivalent school transferring, student should be assessed as to whether his or her senior high school examination results meet the admission requirements. Student cannot change grade when transfer school"* (Document 7, p.6).

> *"Intra-province ordinary senior high school transferring, in accordance with the local policies of the inbound place, needs to provide certificates, such as certification of school attendance and studying credits provided from the outbound school, and certification of academic proficiency test achievement, which is recognized by the provincial educational administrative department, etc."* (Document 8, p.9).

This shows that intra-province ordinary senior high school transferring requires more certificates. Document 8 lists two of them:

➢ certification of school attendance and studying credits from the outbound school
➢ certification of academic proficiency test achievement recognized by the provincial educational administrative department

It was found in the interviews with the officers that City 1 and City 2 share the same procedures of the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy.

For example, in City 1, Officer E and F who were responsible for reviewing migrant students' application described the detailed procedure of the policy implementation as:

> *"When migrant students do the enrolment, schools are asked to give them a form. Students fill the form in which provides their information. All migrant students who want to take the NCEE here must fill the form. After they filled the form, the first stage is the school. The person in charge needs to sign and stamp on the form, to certify the student have three-year constant student status. There is a paragraph to state the certification in the form. What about the first year, the second year, the third year. If it shows that the student have studied in the school from the first year to the third year and have the three-year constant student status, then the form will be sent here, our department. We have the student status management system, then I review the application again"* (Officer E, City 1).

> *"The school is the first department to check the students' qualification. Our department is the schools' superior educational administration department. After we have reviewed it, if there is no problem, we will stamp on the form. That's it. Then the migrant student is approved to take the NCEE here"* (Officer F, City 1).

In City 2, when asked about the procedure of Offsite NCEE application and assessment, officer J who was charge of reviewing migrant students' school status described it as:

> *"The student status is in the school' hands. It is just an enrolment procedure…….. The school reports firstly, then we check if the student status is OK or not. If the school is supervised by the distinct government, then the assessment falls within the jurisdiction of the district government. If the school is supervised by the municipal government, the assessment is taken in the municipal government"* (Officer J, City 2).

However, it was found that in both city 1 and 2, there is slight difference between officers' responses regarding the procedure. Some officers said provincial education examinations authority do not participant in the procedure. They did not need to send the migrant students' applications to the provincial education examinations authority and get approved. Meanwhile, some officers mentioned the final step is to get approved from provincial educational examinations authority. For example, officer F in City 1 said:

> *"The final step is to get approved from the provincial educational examinations authority. We send the application forms to the provincial*

educational examinations authority, and they reviewed and stamped" (Officer F, City 1).

To sum up, according to the interviews of officers, the procedure of the policy implementation in the inbound province contains five steps:

1. Students fill in a form
2. School checks the student's form and sends the form to its superior administrative department.
3. The educational department approves, and sends the form to the municipal education examinations authority.
4. The municipal education examinations authority approves and sends the form to the provincial education examinations authority.
5. Provincial education examinations authority approves.

In the student interviews, migrant students claimed that they need to complete two routes of application: online application and hard copy documentary application.

➢   Online application

Migrant students who want to take Offsite NCEE need to do one extra step when they are doing NCEE online application. Students are asked whether they have local hukou when they complete online NCEE enrolment. If they answer 'YES', they will be asked to provide more detailed information later.

➢   Hard copy documentary application

Migrant students need to fill an application form, in which they provide basic information. They need to hand in the copy of their personal ID, the copy of their household registration, and the form to the school.

5.3.3 Factors and Issues

When referring to the factors and measures in the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy, the inbound province documents quotes the paragraph that refers to factors and measures need to be considered in the policy implementation from the central Document 1.

From content analysis of the documents, the factors and measures can be summarized as:

1. Student status management

    - Improving the student school transferring regulation

    - improving student status management regulation

2. NCEE migration

    - Preventing college entrance exam migration

    - preventing senior high school entrance exam migration

3. Migrant population management

    - Strengthening migrant registration

    - Improving residence permit system

    - Collecting and providing migrant population information

4. Migrant children education

    - Putting migrant children's education into local social and economic development plan

5. Admission

    - Regulating admission process

Moreover, the inbound province Document 6 further points out that:

> *"Considering the residential population, educational resources and development trend, adjusting and improving the distribution of primary schools and junior high schools, effectively allocating educational resources to meet legitimate educational demand and ensure scientific harmonious development of education"* (Document 6, p.9).

Document 6 considers on the population management and educational resources. It requires the adjustment and improvement of distribution of educational resources, such as the distribution of primary schools and junior high schools.

Officers in both City 1 and City 2 complained that they were confused about the arrangement of the policy implementation. *"I do not know about the examination authority's overall arrangement for this. I feel the examination authority's arrangement is not clear"* (Officer F, City 1). When asking how exactly the confusion is, officers reported their confusions in three aspects.

The first issue is about the procedure of the application assessment. For example, the conversations with Officer G in City 1 Municipal Educational Bureau who was responsible for reviewing migrant's application forms are as follows:

Officer G: *"it is not easy. In the last year, as the last year is the first year of conducting this policy, after I have done all the things that I should (reviewing the form), the examination authority collected everything (forms) back, but I do not know how they deal with things then. This year after I have done what I need to do, the schools said the examination authority did not want the forms."*

Researcher: *"What do you mean 'do not accept'?"*

Officer G: *"I'm not clear. The enrolment already has been finished, but they just did not take the forms from me. So I'm thinking do you (Municipal Examination Authority) want to see the assessment result or not? I worked overtime for few days and finally get these done, but they do not care at all."*

Officer G complained that the Municipal Examination Authority did not take the application forms after the Municipal Educational Bureau reviewed the application forms. This results in the officers' confusion about the procedure.

Moreover, officers complained about the administrative system caused difficulties in policy implementation.

For example, Officer K in City 2 said:

"The examination authorities have a single contract. We do not know their work, we do not know how they deal with the application."

Officer J in City 2 said:

"Theoretically, the examination authority cannot lead educational administration department. We educational administration department is under control of provincial educational department. So even the examination authority come to tell us what should to do, we still need to ask our superior department whether we should do that."

The evidence above suggests that the inter-government relationship has a great impact on the policy implementation.

Thirdly, many officers argued that formal documents should be given to each department to clearly state the procedure.

"Theoretically, the document should be given to us, but in fact we do not receive any document. So we do not clear about this, just the examination authority come to tell us that we should do such balabla now, then we do that" (Officer H, City 1).

"We have no document to tell us the details. We do not know the timeline, what time should do what or what department should do what" (Officer L, City 2).

5.4 The views of stakeholders

This section aims to ascertain the views of stakeholders in the inbound province. It addresses the fourth group of research sub-questions.

Q4.3 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to 'educational equity'?

Q4.4 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the context in China for the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q4.5 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q4.6 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

The findings presented in this section were collected through interviews with officers and students.

5.4.1 Educational equity

Officers in the inbound province were asked about their views of the concept of educational equity. The main points that officers referred to in terms of the concept of educational equity can be classified into three aspects:

➢ Equity in the 'beginning', 'process' and 'result'
➢ Barriers in achieving educational equity
  • Gap between urban education and rural education
  • Elite educational mode
  • Household registration system
➢ No 'perfect' educational equity

Equity in 'beginning', 'process' and 'result'

Officers discussed the concept of educational equity by putting it into three stages: beginning, process and result. Educational equity in the beginning refers to equal educational opportunities:

> *"The starting is the most significant point to show educational equity. Generally, what we say is that equity is equity to start with. The equity in starting is equal opportunity to access to higher education. Everyone has the opportunity to take the exam"* (Officer A, City 1).

> *"Educational equity refers to equal opportunity for students to access education"* (Officer D, City 1; Officer H, City 1; Officer L, City 2).

Officers claimed that everyone should have an equal opportunity to access education. Children should have an equal opportunity to access compulsory education, and students should have an equal opportunity to take the NCEE for higher education.

Equity in process is interpreted as equal treatment of students in the process of receiving education. For example, Officer B said:

> *"Students should be treated equally regardless of which school they are studying or which region they are living"* (Officer B, City 1).

Officer G expressed the fact that the educational resources should be allocated equally in the field of higher education:

> *"After students get into HEIs, the government investment of each HEI is not equal, and the educational resources should be allocated equally"* (Officer G, City 1).

Two officers proposed their ideas of educational equity in terms of results. That is, it should be evaluated to what extent educational equity has been achieved, and to what extent students' achievement are equal:

> *"We need to know the result, to know how it works in practice, whether equity at all stages has been achieved or not"* (Officer K, City 2).

Barriers in achieving educational equity

The interviews with officers suggested that three barriers may contribute to the issue of educational inequity:

> ➢ Gap between urban education and rural education

> ➢ Elite educational mode
>
> ➢ Household registration system

Gap between urban education and rural education

Officers admitted that there is great gap between urban education and rural education. Generally urban schools get better educational resources, and urban students get more academic support, while schools in rural schools face a lack of educational resources, such as qualified teachers:

> *"The way for rural students to gain information is really limited. Rural students do not even know some policies. For example, we published the 'parallel application' policy five years ago, but some student do not even know it now. They may have heard this policy, but do not know what exactly it is. They just do the application according to their tutors' understanding and opinions. They do not know it at all, they just choose 'disobedience'. Urban students definitely know this policy, there is no issue with urban students"* (Officer I, City 2).

Officer I in City 2 pointed out the students are treated unequally by describing their way of getting information. Rural students cannot get the information of application or admission on time as urban students.

Elite educational mode

An elite educational mode is applied in basic education in China. In this mode, resources in basic education are allocated unevenly. Schools are distinguished as 'key' and 'non-key' schools. Key schools get better educational resources, and thus get better examination results. Officers pointed out that this mode can cause issues of educational inequality.

> *"One of the remarkable equity issues is our elite education mode. Schools are divided into groups, provincial key school, municipal key school, and ordinary school. The educational resources of the schools are different. There is a big gap between their teacher quality, investment and everything. So they are different in results. Students are treated differently according to which school they are in. So students want to get into good schools, all parents want their children go to good schools. But no matter which school the students are in, the money they pay for school is same. But they are treated differently, leading to a different result. So this is an educational equity issue" (Officer M, City 2).*

"The issue of 'key schools' and 'ordinary schools' refers to teacher qualification problem. We can say that the majority of well qualified teachers are in key schools" (Officer H, City 1).

Household registration system

In the interviews with officers, the household registration system (Hukou) in China was identified as a barrier in promoting educational equity:

"Household registration is a barrier. There is no equity if the household registration system exists" (Officer A, City 1).

"Everyone knows HE admission is not equal across the country. Students with same score are treated different. How the students are treated is based on where they household are registered" (Officer C, City 1).

No 'perfect' educational equity

It is the general view of officers that educational equity is an ideal that cannot ever fully be attained. Officers admitted that educational equity is promoted conditionally.

"There is no perfect educational equity. We have to admit that we can never achieve 100% equal treatment of students and schools" (Officer A, City 1).

"...but we should know that there is no perfect educational equity. It is just a nice dream for us" (Officer J, City 2).

"Educational equity is relative, we are trying to achieve it, but we cannot finally get there. All we can do is approach it closer and closer" (Officer E, City 1).

5.4.2 Context

All officers thought the NCEE was a very equal way to select students for high education.

"NCEE makes everyone equal in front of the exam score" (Officer A, City 1).

"NCEE is the best way to select students for HE" (Officer I, City 2).

However, they also complained about the weakness of the HE admission system. Officers placed a focus on five failings of the admission system, specifically:

1. The distribution of an admission quota is the key point of the whole HE admission system. However, the uneven distribution of admission quotas across provinces causes inequality in admission rate.

2. Different exam modes and content across provinces causes difficulties in examination assessment.

3. The preferential policy offers extra benefits for local students, which means that other students suffer.

4. The equity of other ways of admission cannot be guaranteed, such as 'independent enrolment'.

5. The NCEE is over equal. The current HE admission system is a 'one size fit' mode. We over rely on the exam result, but ignore students' personal characteristics.

The interviews with students suggest that both the views of migrant students and local students regarding the admission system were generally matched with the views of officers. Local students thought the NCEE itself is fair, but not the admission policy. 16 migrant students thought the HE admission is not equal as:

➢ "HEIs offer special benefits for local students."
➢ "The admission score lines are different across the country."
➢ "Students in some places are easier to get into university."

Local students had similar views to migrant students. They stated that the NCEE was very fair, as "everyone is standing on the same line". However, they complained that the admission rates were different across the country, resulting in inequalities in HE admission. They hoped that they could move to a place with high admission rate, such as Beijing and Shanghai.

5.4.3 Policy programming

The migrant student interviews show that all migrant students are satisfied with the design of the Offsite NCEE policy. When asking their opinions of the policy plan, they stated that they were satisfied with the design. Most migrant students thought that the conditions for them in the Offsite NCEE policy were appropriate. Local students in the inbound province were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with the design of the Offsite NCEE in Zhejiang.

According to the interviews with officers, officers thought the design of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province was ingenious. The Offsite NCEE policy has

been conducted, meanwhile, a series of criteria has been set in the senior high school entrance examination. In this way, although the Offsite NCEE policy has been conducted as the requirement of the central government, the number of offsite NCEE participants has been strictly controlled.

> *"I think the design makes good sense. As to what I said, we need to find a balance point, and I think we have finally got the balance point. We did what the central government required, we allow migrant students to take NCEE here. On the other hand, the number of migrant students is under control. We made the conditions that not all migrant students who want to can successfully take the NCEE here. They must meet the conditions, otherwise they cannot take NCEE here. We consider the acceptance from all aspects"* (Officer C, City 1).

5.4.4 Policy implementation

As discussed earlier (section 5.3), officers complained that they were confused about the application assessment. They expressed that they were not clear about the arrangement of the superior department. For example, Officer F in City 1 complained:

> *"Last year the provincial education examination authority approved once for all migrant students, but in this year the migrant students were divided into several batches according to their subject. But I even do not know how to divide the students, in which way? Which subject?"* (Officer F, City 1)

5.4.5 Impact

Officers suggested that the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province caused:

- Pressure on educational resources
- Pressure on HE admission

In the student interviews, local students were worried that this policy might encourage many migrant students to move in. However, migrant student thought this policy would be good for them. There are three main dimensions that students considered when thinking about how the policy impacted on them.

1. This policy provides great convenience for migrant families. Children can stay with their parents.

2. It relieves the migrant families' pressure on expenditure.
3. They could get into better HEIs if they take the NCEE in Zhejiang

Students' views

Table 5.6 Group Statistics Q4.1-Q4.10

hukou_place		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q4.1	Zhejiang	324	3.14	1.022	.114
	other province	68	3.41	.712	.173
Q4.2	Zhejiang	324	2.84	1.054	.117
	other province	68	3.29	.920	.223
Q4.3	Zhejiang	324	2.99	1.135	.126
	other province	68	3.18	1.074	.261
Q4.4	Zhejiang	324	2.41	1.202	.134
	other province	68	3.29	.920	.223
Q4.5	Zhejiang	324	3.17	1.181	.131
	other province	68	4.24	.970	.235
Q4.6	Zhejiang	324	3.19	1.130	.126
	other province	68	4.24	1.033	.250
Q4.7	Zhejiang	324	3.12	1.041	.116
	other province	68	3.41	1.121	.272
Q4.8	Zhejiang	324	2.90	1.241	.138
	other province	68	3.76	1.147	.278
Q4.9	Zhejiang	324	2.46	1.107	.123
	other province	68	3.47	1.068	.259
Q4.10	Zhejiang	324	2.71	1.206	.153
	other province	68	2.53	1.328	.322

In the questionnaire analysis, the t-test was used to compare the views of local students and migrant students regarding HE admission and the Offsite NCEE. Local students and migrant students show difference on Q4.4 ($p=0.02$, $p<0.05$), Q4.5 ($P=0.01$, $p<0.05$), Q4.6 ($P=0.01$, $p<0.05$), and Q4.9 ($p=0.02$, $p<0.05$). Compared to

local students, migrant students knew the Offsite NCEE better (m=3.29), and they were more welcoming of Offsite NCEE policy (m=4.25). They had a greater desire to conduct and promote Offsite NCEE immediately (m=4.24). They also admitted that they derived greater benefits from this policy (m=3.47). In other questions, there was no great difference between the views of local students and migrant students (p>0.05). They think they know HE admission and policy well (m=3.14; m=3.41). They neither agree nor disagree that HE admission system is fair. Local students neither agree nor disagree that the policy has impact on them (m=2.9). They did not think they gained benefits (m=2.46), but also, they did not think they suffer as a result of this policy (m=2.71).

Summary

This chapter represents the data collected in the inbound province case. When describing the context for the Offsite NCEE policy, documents and officers place focus on issues of intra-province migration and educational equity in China. The documents mention that the number of migrant workers has been increasing, resulting in the issue of migrant children's entrance examination. The data collected from the questionnaire survey and interviews show that both local and migrant student had strong demand for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. The majority of migrant students preferred to study and take the NCEE in Zhejiang, but not go back to their original household registration places. Even though most migrant parents were not well-educated, they had great expectations of their children's educational achievement. Officers discussed the concept of educational equity by putting it into three stages: beginning, process and result. It is the general view of officers that educational equity is an ideal that cannot ever fully be attained. Officers stated that the distribution of admission quota is the key point of the whole HE admission system. Officers complained that they did not have many admission quotas. Students claimed that they would like to move to the regions with a high admission rate. Also, different exam modes and contents across provinces causes difficulties in examination assessment. And the preferential policy offers extra benefits for local students, which means that other students suffer.

The policy procedures go through the government hierarchy from top to down. The central government offered a general principle for the policy programming. It assigned that provincial governments formulate and issue their own plans. The provincial governments programmed their own policy plans and delivered the decisions to lower level authorities. The provincial educational administrative department made the conditions for migrant children and issued directives to the municipal educational administrative department. The municipal-level educational administrative department continued to deliver the directives to county-level educational administrative department.

Local carrying capacity and local residents' interest were the two main factors that affects the policy programming in the inbound province. Officers carefully evaluated the local educational resources and then made the decisions. Meanwhile, they also seek a balance relationship between local residents and migrants when drafting the policy plans. As a consequence, the local governments at municipal level were allowed to set out a series of criteria via senior high school entrance exam policy to decide whether migrant students can get into senior high schools. This determines whether migrant student can take the NCEE in the inbound province.

Local educational carrying capacity was the major factor affecting the policy implementation in the inbound province. The local educational carrying capacity depends heavily upon educational supply by the local governments, which is most directly reflected in the study places available for children. A breakdown of the number of schools and students enrolled support the fact that the local government has not provided sufficient school place, the educational supply has deteriorated.

Chapter 6 Results of Outbound province case

Introduction

This chapter reports on the research results of Case 2 (Outbound province). On the basis of Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach of policy analysis, the findings of outbound province case are presented according to the structure of the research questions. The first section presents the context of the outbound province. The second section addresses the stage of policy programming, and the third section focuses on the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province. The final section investigates the views of stakeholders. The findings reported in this chapter are based on qualitative and quantitative data collected through student questionnaire survey, student interviews, officer interviews, and documentary analysis.

6.1 Context

This section represents the context of the outbound province. This section aims to answer the first group of the research sub-questions.

Q1.1 What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q1.2 What are the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy?

The focus is placed upon documentary evidence of the context for the Offsite NCEE policy, and student background and student preferences collected through student interviews and questionnaire survey II.

6.1.1 Context in documents

When referring to the context of the Offsite NCEE policy, the leading document of the outbound province, Document 9 'Notice of General Office Jiangxi Provincial People's Government-Implement Opinion on other provinces migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in the local place' quotes a paragraph from the central Document 1:

> *"With expanding proportion of rural to rural to urban migrant workers, the number of migrant children who completed compulsory education has been increasing, the issues of migrant children's entrance examinations have become increasingly prominent. Further working on migrant children entrance examination is the objective requirement of insisting on 'people-oriented' concept, protecting migrant children's right to education, and promoting educational equity. It is significant to protect and improve people's livelihood, to strengthen and innovate social management, and to promote social stability"* (Document 1, p.1; Document 9, p.1).

Here we can see that Document 1 and 9 address the context for the offsite NCEE policy through intra-province rural-urban migration and migrant children's education. In describing the increasing number of migrant children, the documents are concerned with the issue of migrant children entrance examination.

Document 9 further quotes the sentence from Document 1. The sentences can be seen to clearly set out the purposes of the Offsite NCEE policy. From a content analysis point of view, the sentences contain seven purposes of Offsite NCEE policy:

1. To solve the entrance exam problem for migrant children.

2. To insist on 'people-oriented' concept

3. To protect migrant children's right to education

4. To promote educational equity

5. To protect and improve people's livelihood

6. To strengthen and innovate social management

7. To promote social stability

6.1.2 Student background

Table 6.1 Background Characteristics of students in the quesionnaire (N=400)

Variable	Frequency	Percent %	Valid Percent %
Gender			
Valid Male	188	47.0	47.2
Female	211	52.7	52.8
Total	399	99.5	100.0
Missing system	1	0.05	
Total	400	100.0	
Age in years			
Valid 13	52	13.0	13.0
14	226	56.5	56.5
15	104	26.0	26.0
16	16	4.0	4.0
19	2	0.05	0.05
Total	400	100.0	100.0
School year			
Valid			
Final year junior high school	400	100.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0
Father's working location			
Valid Jiangxi	282	70.5	81.5
Other province	64	16.0	18.5
Total	346	86.5	100.0
Missing system	54	13.5	
Total	400	100.0	
Mother's working location			
Valid Jiangxi	272	68.0	87.7
Other province	38	9.5	12.3
Total	310	77.5	100.0

Missing system		90	22.5	
Total		400	100.0	

Household registration place				
Valid	Jiangxi	344	86.0	98.9
	Other province	4	1.0	1.1
	Total	348	87.0	100.0
Missing system		52	13.0	
Total		400	100.0	

Household registration type				
Valid	Agricultural	138	34.5	46.9
	Non-agricultural	156	39.0	53.1
	Total	294	73.5	100.0
Missing system		106	26.5	
Total		400	100.0	

In questionnaire survey II, the participants were almost equally distributed in gender. As shown in Table 6.1, 52.7% of students were female and 47% of students were male. Most of them were 14 (56.5%) or 15 (26%) years old and below. All of the survey participants were final year junior high school students.

Among the 400 students, almost all of them were local students with Jiangxi hukou, while only 1% (valid percentage) of them said their hukou registration places were in other provinces. This evidence also supports the fact that Jiangxi is an outbound province with few migrants moving in.

The participants were almost equally distributed according to Household registered type. However, it should be noted that some of them (26.5%) did not provide information about their Household registered type. This finding is based on the valid data.

Figure 6.1 Education received in Jiangxi

Junior high school student

■ From kindergarten ■ From primary school ■ From junior high school
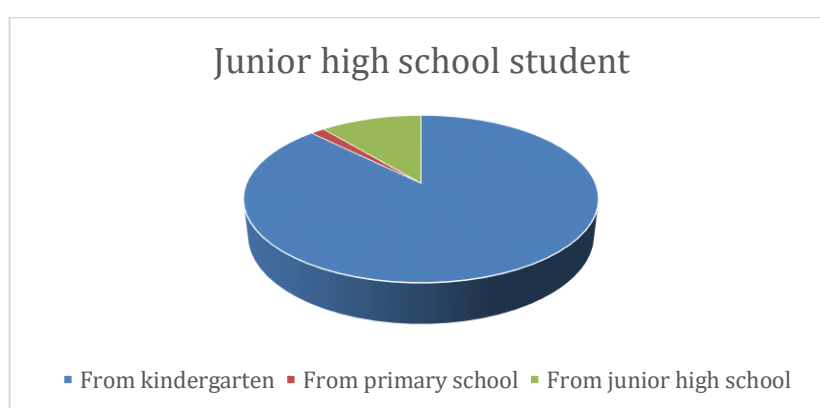
As shown in Figure 6.1, 87% of students have studied in Jiangxi from kindergarten. However, it should be noted that 11% of them have studied in Jiangxi from junior high school level. There is evidence that some students stayed and studied in other provinces before junior high school, and then returned to Jiangxi/

Family background of students

As shown in Table 6.2, most of the parents (father 70.5%; mother 68%) were working in Jiangxi. However, parents who were working in other provinces also accounted for a proportion of the whole population (father 16%; mother 9.5%). Evidence suggests that there were a number of left-behind students who were apart with their parents. This finding supports the fact that Jiangxi is an outbound province.

Table 6.2 Occupations of Parents

Father occupation	Percent	Mother occupation	Percent
Valid	25.5	Valid	30.5
Farmer	16.5	Farmer	16.5
Worker	11.0	Self-employed	16
Self-employed	15.5	Worker	8.0
Officer	8.0	Unemployed	7.0
Company employee	9.0	Teacher	6.0
Teacher	5.5	Company employee	5.5
Engineer	2.5	Officer	4.0

Doctor	2.5	Doctor	2.0
Driver	1.0	Accounting	1.5
Bank staff	0.5	Bank staff	0.5
Accounting	0.5	Professor	0.5
Cooker	0.5	Sales	0.5
Journalist	0.5	Nurse	0.5
Manger	0.5	Manger	0.5
Policeman	0.5	Journalist	0.5
		Library staff	0.5

In the questionnaire, students were asked about their parents' occupations. It should be noted that many students did not provide information about their parents' occupation. The percentages of valid data were only 25.5% and 30.5%. The valid data only took a small percentage (father 25.5%; mother 30.5%) of the whole population. Table 6.2 only lists the valid data. As shown in Table 6.2, the most common occupation of parents was farmer (father 16.5%; mother 16.5%). Factory work and self-employed were also common forms of employment among parents. Table 6.3 shows that 11% of fathers and 8% of mothers were engaged in factory work, while 15.5% of fathers and 16% of mothers were self-employed. It was found that most self-employed parents opened up small shops or companies. 7% of mothers were unemployed.

Table 6.3 Education Background of Parents

	Father %	Mother %
Primary school and below	6.2	11.5
Junior high school or equivalent	44.7	48.0
Senior high school or equivalent	22.4	27.7
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	25.5	12.8
Master's degree or equivalent and above	1.2	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

In the questionnaire, students were also asked about their parents' educational levels. As is shown in Table 6.3, most parents (father 93.8%; mother 88.5%) had finished

junior secondary education, while 6.2% of fathers and 11.5% of mothers had not completed compulsory education. Nearly half of parents (father 49.1%; mother 40.5%) continued to study after finished compulsory education, and had completed senior secondary education. Furthermore, over a quarter of fathers and 12.8% of mothers had completed higher education. A small number of fathers (1.2%) had achieved master's degree or above.

Parents' attitudes towards education

In the questionnaire, parents' attitudes toward education were explored. Students were asked about their parents' expectations for their educational achievement. It was found that the majority of parents held great expectations for their children. 89% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their parents hoped they can get into universities.

This was exemplified in the interviews with students. The interviews with students confirmed that both local students and left-behind students cared strongly about their children's education. Moreover, the interviews supported the point that almost all parents hold great expectations for their children's educational achievement.

> *"My parents always say that all they want is that I get into a good university"*
>
> *"Getting into university is their expectation for me. I know they have a lot of expectations for my future, and getting into university is the first step"*
>
> *They say I'm the only hope of our family. So I have to get into a good university."*
>
> *"They think they are not well-educated. This is the reason that they cannot get good jobs and live in a better life. So they want me to get a good degree and graduate from a good university. So I can live better than them."*
>
> *"My parents think having a degree is very important. Having a degree means having a good job.*

In the interviews with the left-behind students, they reported that although their parents were not with them, their parents still strongly cared about their study.

> *"Every time my parents give a call to me, they ask about my study. They ask how I feel in school, and how my exam was."*
>
> *"My parents hope I can get into a university in their city, so that we can be together."*

However, having great expectations does not mean that all parents were strict in relation to their children's studies. In the questionnaire, when asking whether their parents were strict on their studies, nearly half of students (41.5%) reported that their parents were strict on their studies. Nearly half of them (48%) neither agreed nor disagreed that their parents were strict on their study. A small number of students (11.5%) meanwhile stated that their parents were not strict with their studies.

This was consistent with the findings of the student interviews. The interviews with the students suggested that over half of parents pushed their children hard with their studies. When asking what exactly they meant by being strict with their studies, most of students said that their parents forced them to study. For example:

> *"They require a lot of me. I cannot go out to play with others. I must at home and study.*
>
> *They give calls to my teachers to ask about my performance. If the teacher said that I did not doing well, I will be punished."*
>
> *"They give me a lot of homework to do. In addition to the homework that my teacher gives me, I have to finish other homework my parents ask me to do."*

Nearly half of local students reported that their parents are fairly strict or not strict. However, this does not mean that their parents were not concerned about their children's examination results. The interviews suggested that parents were very exam-oriented. They pushed their children hard to get good examination results. And students reported that their parents were only concerned with the examinations results, but paid little attention to how they were studying. This is what exactly they meant by saying their parents were not strict on their study.

> *"I do not think they are strict in my studies. Because they are very busy, and cannot look at me every minute. They only look at my exam scores."*
>
> *"They do not care how I study. But if I do not get on well in exams, they will be angry."*
>
> *"My parent care strongly about my examination results. They will be angry if I do not do well in exams"*
>
> *"They are happy to see my improvement. And they will angry if I get a lower score than last time."*

In the interviews of left-behind students, it was found that their parents could not supervise them as they did not live together. This is why the left-behind students reported that their parents were not strict regarding their study.

> *"They are not here, so they cannot help me very much. They cannot supervise me everyday."*

> *"My father is working in Guangdong. He is not here. So he said he cannot help with my study."*

Students' preferences

Table 6.4 Students' preferences

Questionnaire item	YES	NO	Not sure	Missing	Total
Q2.5 Will you take the NCEE in Jiangxi?	89.0%	1.0%	9.0%	1.0%	100.0%
Q2.6 Do you like to study in other province rather in Jiangxi?	78.5%	11.5%	0.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Q2.7 Do you like to take the NCEE in other province rather in Jiangxi?	70.0%	15.5%	0.0%	14.5%	100.0%

Students were asked whether they would take the NCEE in Jiangxi. Most of them (89%) confirmed that they would indeed take the NCEE in Jiangxi, while 9% of them said they were not sure. Only two students stated that they would move to another province.

This was exemplified in the interviews with left-behind students. Out of 20 left-behind students interviewed, only one of them reported that he would move to another province for senior high school and then take the NCEE. 11 left-behind students reported that they might move out, but they were not sure. The 11 left-behind students reported that their parents mentioned this or discussed this with them. Other students reported that they had never thought about this or heard from their parents. When asking about the reasons behind their answers, there were three main reasons proposed by the left-behind students:

1. Students thought they did not need to think about it now. Their mission was the senior high school entrance examination at the moment.

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2. Students were not able to move out and stay with their parents for some reasons, such as parents' being busy working and financial issues.

3. Some students never stay in other provinces. Although their parents were working in other provinces, the students never stayed in other provinces and always studied in Jiangxi. They were more familiar with the studying environment in Jiangxi, although they might have opportunities to move out, they still preferred to stay.

In the questionnaire, students were asked whether they wanted to move to other provinces to study or take the NCEE. As show in Figure 6.2, it was found that most of students preferred to move out for studying (78%) and taking the NCEE (70%).

Figure 6.2 Places students want to go
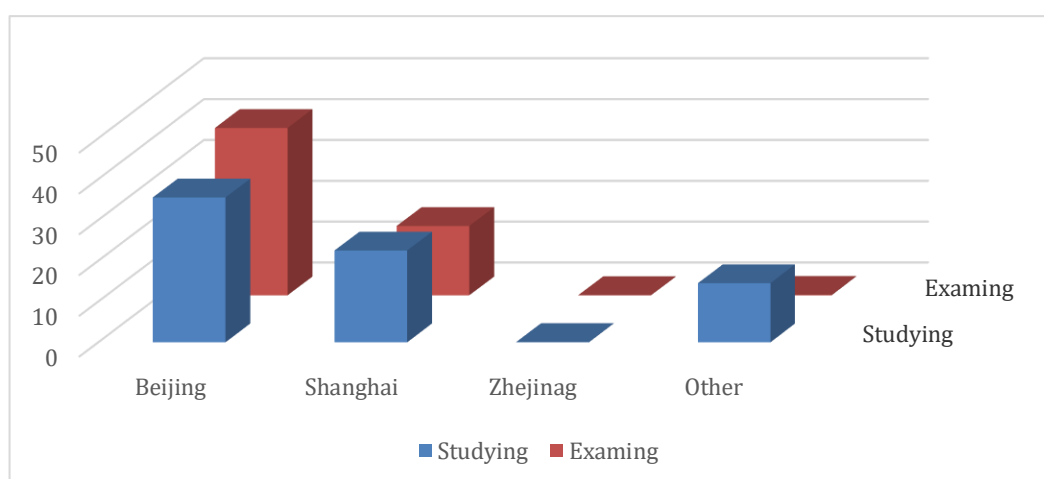
In the open-ended questions, students were asked about the specific places they wished to move to. The most frequently mentioned places in their answers were Beijing (ranked 1st), Shanghai (ranked 2nd), and Zhejiang (ranked 3rd).

Evidence shows that Beijing and Shanghai were the two most attractive places for students. There were three main reasons behind their preferences. Firstly, the students were attracted by the high quality education in Beijing and Shanghai. They thought Beijing and Shanghai are the most appropriate locations to study. The two places have the best schools and are able to provide the best educational facilities. The students also desired quality teaching in the two places. They thought they could enjoy the perfect studying environment and atmosphere if they studied in Beijing and Shanghai. The second reason refers to HEI admission rates. Students pointed out that Beijing and Shanghai have much lower admission score lines than Jiangxi. Students

wanted to take the NCEE in the two places with high admission rates in the hope that they could get better examination results. The third reason referred to HEIs in Beijing and Shanghai. The students mentioned that there is a large number of HEIs in Beijing and Shanghai, especially top HEIs. Some students stated that they wanted to get into the HEIs in Beijing and Shanghai. It would be much easier for them if they take the NCEE in the two places.

Moreover, Zhejiang is also an attractive province for students. The only reason was that their parents were working in Zhejiang. Students wanted to move to Zhejiang to stay with their parents. In addition, the students also mentioned some other places where they wished to move to. The main reason of all the preferences is that their parents were working in these provinces. This evidence showed that the students had a strong desire to stay with their parents.

6.1.3 Education in Jiangxi

Jiangxi public financial budget funds for education

Figure 6.3 Jiangxi public financial budget funds for education
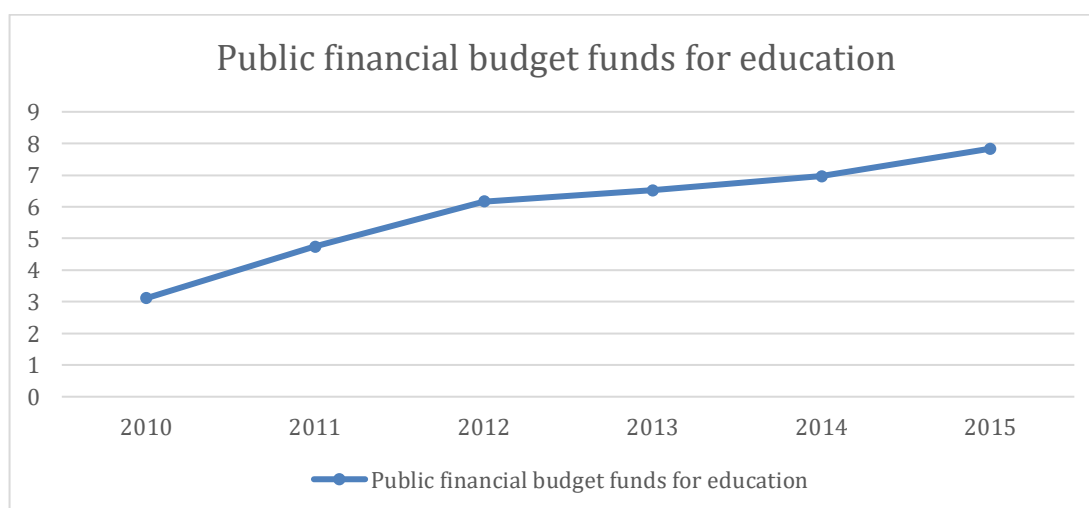
According to the data from the Announcements on National Education Finance Implementation 2010-2015, the public budget funds for education in Jiangxi has been increasing year by year (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). In 2015, the public budget funds for education in Jiangxi reached 7.83 billion yuan, 151% higher than the 3.11 billion yuan of 2010 (ibid). Also, the ratio of fiscal expenditure on education to the total fiscal expenditure in Jiangxi has been slightly increasing

from 2010 to 2015. In 2010, the ratio of fiscal expenditures on education to the total fiscal expenditure was 16.17% (ibid). In 2015, the ratio was 17.75% (ibid). All the data of government investment in education indicates that the financial ability of the provincial government to support education has been steadily improving.

Schools and students in Jiangxi

Compulsory schools in Jiangxi 2010-2015

2010

There were 14879 compulsory schools, 245 less than the previous year.

➢ 12772 primary schools, 249 less than last year, 748300 students enrolled, an increase of 33000 students and 4.4% higher than the previous year;

➢ 2107 junior high schools, 4 more than the previous year, 683600 students enrolled with a decrease of 1.8%.

2011

There were 13750 compulsory schools, a reduction of 1129 on the previous year.

➢ 11633 primary schools, 1139 less than last year, enrolling 778000 students, an increase of 29700 students and 3.9% higher than the previous year;

➢ 2117 junior high schools, 10 more than the previous year, enrolling 675600 students, 8000 students less and 1.1% less than the previous year.

2012

There were 13280 compulsory schools, a reduction of 470 on the previous year.

➢ 11173 primary schools, 460 less than last year, enrolling 800400 students, an increase of 22400 students and 2.8% higher than the previous year;

➢ 2107 junior high schools, 10 less than the previous year, enrolling 655900 students, 19700 students less and 2.9% less than the previous year.

2013

There were 12751 compulsory schools, a reduction of 529 on the previous year.

- 10650 primary schools, a reduction of 523 on the previous year, enrolling 789000 students, a reduction of 11400 students and 1.4% less than the previous year;
- 2101 junior high schools, 6 less than the previous year, enrolling 610800 students, a reduction of 45100 students and 6.8% less than the previous year.

2014

There were 11891 compulsory schools, a reduction of 860 on the previous year.

- 9764 primary schools, a reduction of 886 on the previous year, enrolling 695300 students, a reduction of 93700 students and 11.8% less than the previous year;
- 2127 junior high schools, 26 more than the previous year, enrolling 594700 students, a reduction of 16100 students and 2.6% less than the previous year.

2015

There were 11891 compulsory schools, a reduction of 860 on the previous year.

- 9465 primary schools, a reduction of 299 on the previous year, enrolling 715900 students, an increase of 20600 students and 2.9% higher than the previous year;
- 2131 junior high schools, 4 more than the previous year, enrolling 600700 students, an increase of 6 thousand students and 1% higher than the previous year.

(All Data collected from the Statistical Communiqués on Jiangxi Provincial Educational Development 2010-2015, Jiangxi Provincial Bureau of Statistics)

Figure 6.4 The number of compulsory schools in Jiangxi 2010-2015
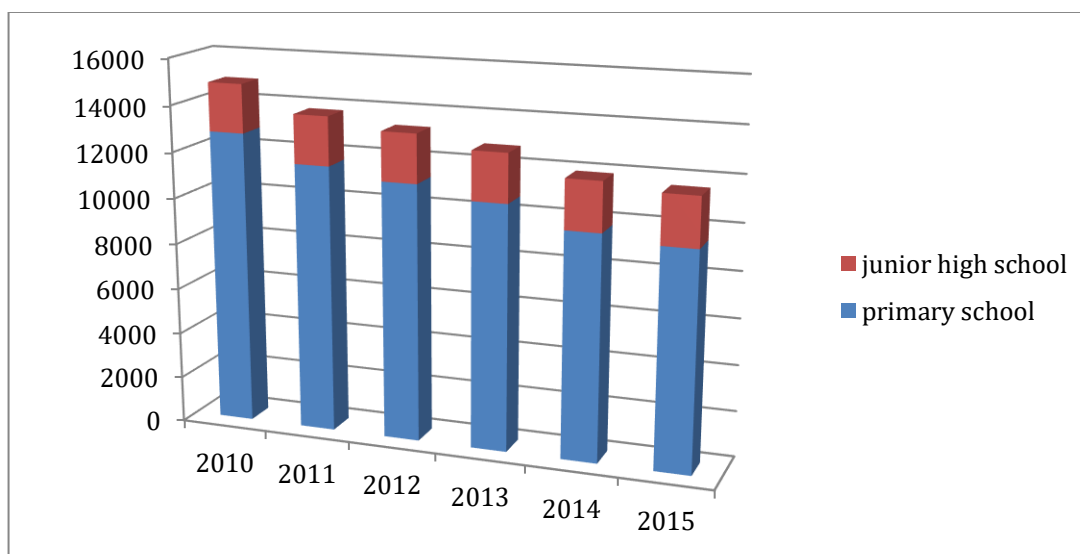
(Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

The number of compulsory schools from 2010 to 2015 is shown in Figure 6.4. There were 14879 compulsory schools in 2010, including 12772 primary schools and 2107 junior high schools. However, the number of compulsory schools reduced to 11891 in 2015, including 9465 primary schools and 2131 junior high schools.

Figure 6.5 The number of students enrolled in compulsory schools 2010-2015

(Jiangxi Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

Figure 6.5 shows a slightly decrease of the number of students enrolled in compulsory schools from 2010 to 2015. In 2010, there were 748300 students

enrolled in primary schools and 683600 students enrolled in junior high schools. In 2015, the number of students enrolled in primary schools reduced to 715900, and the number of students enrolled in junior high schools reduced to 600 thousand.

Ordinary senior high schools in Jiangxi 2010-2015

2010

There were 452 ordinary senior high schools, 24 less than the previous year; 256500 students enrolled, an increase of 5500 students and 2.1% higher than the previous year;

2011

There were 438 ordinary senior high schools, 14 less than the previous year; 308900 students were enrolled, an increase of 52400 students and 20.4% higher than the previous year;

2012

There were 435 ordinary senior high schools, 3 less than the previous year; 308300 students enrolled, a reduction of 600 students and 0.1% less than the previous year;

2013

There were 436 ordinary senior high schools, 1 more than the previous year; 310500 students enrolled, an increase of 2200 students and 0.7% higher than the previous year;

2014

There were 442 ordinary senior high schools, 6 more than the previous year; 316200 students enrolled, an increase of 5700 students and 1.8% higher than the previous year;

2015

There were 460 ordinary senior high schools, an increase of 18 on the previous year; 320400 students enrolled, a reduction of 4200 students and 1.3% less than the previous year;

(All Data collected from the Statistical Communiqué on Jiangxi Provincial Educational Development 2010-2015, Jiangxi Provincial Bureau of Statistics)
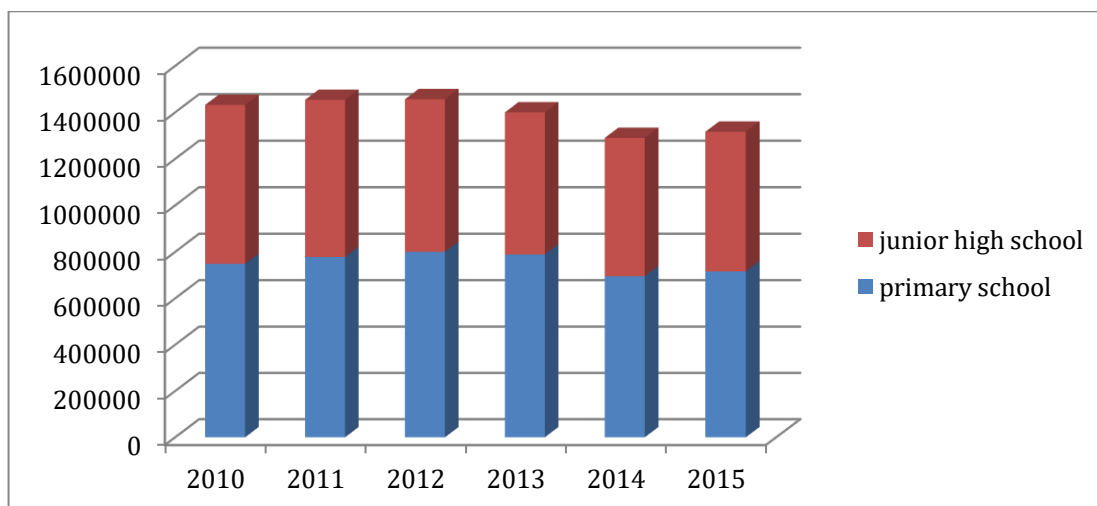
Figure 6.6 The number of ordinary senior high schools in Jiangxi 2010-2015
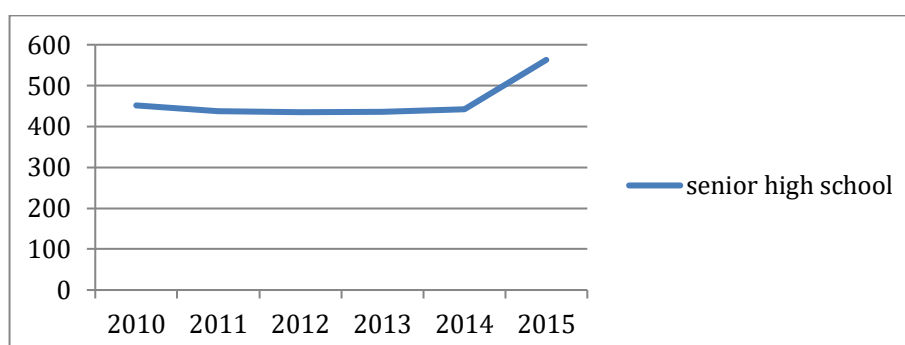
(Jiangxi Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

The number of ordinary senior high schools in Jiangxi from 2010 to 2015 is shown in Figure 6.6. Here we can see that the number of ordinary senior high schools in Jiangxi slightly increased from 452 to 460.

Figure 6.7 The number of the number of students enrolled in ordinary senior high schools 2010-2015
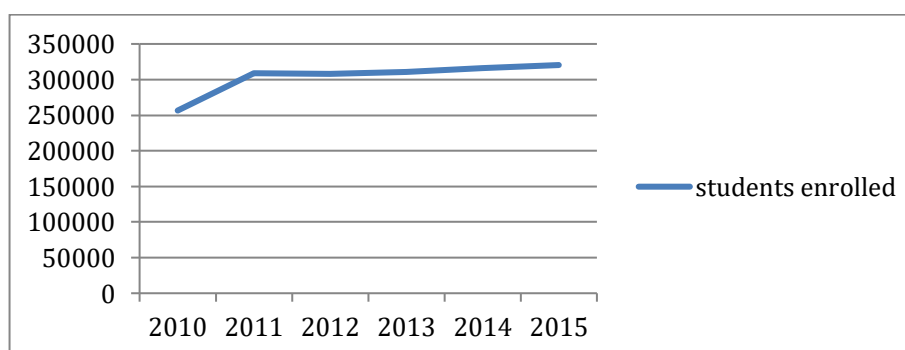
(Jiangxi Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016)

Figure 6.7 shows an increase in the number of students enrolled in ordinary senior high schools from 2010 to 2015. In 2010, there were 256500 students enrolled. Meanwhile, in 2015, the number of students enrolled increased to 320400.

6.2 Policy programming

This section addresses the stage of policy programming of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province. It aims to answer the second group of research sub-questions.

Q2.1 Who is responsible of the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q2.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed?

Q2.3 What are the factors affecting the decisions of policy makers?

Q2.4 What is the impact of these factors on the decisions of policy makers?

This section firstly addresses the first two sub-questions. It identifies the responsibilities of government departments in the policy programming, and presents the detailed procedures of policy programming. This section then answers the last two sub-questions. It identifies the factors that affect the decisions of policy makers. It further looks at how the factors affect the decisions made by officers in the policy programming. The data presented in this section were collected through officer interviews and documents.

6.2.1 Responsibilities

Although the documents do not directly claim who or which department was responsible for the policy programming in the outbound province, the departments involved in policy programming can be identified through content analysis of the document. Having identified Document 9 'Notice of General Office Jiangxi Provincial People's Government-Implement Opinion on other provinces migrant worker's children take the entrance examination in the local place' is the leading document of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province, the further application of document analysis procedures then leads to an exploration of the authors. Document 9 was published by the People's Government of Jiangxi Province, and it was forwarded from the Provincial Educational Department. This provides clues as to who was responsible for the policy programming. Here we can see that Document 9 was forwarded from the Provincial Educational Department. This

finding shows that the Provincial Educational Department was responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province.

In the course of the officer interviews, when asking who was responsible for the policy programming in the outbound province, all officers claimed that the department in charge of drafting policy was the Regular Higher Education Entrance Examination and Admission Division which supervised by the Provincial Education Examinations Authority. For example, Officer P in City 3 explained:

> *"The Provincial Education Examinations Authority was assigned to make this policy. Our division is responsible for HEI admission. So it was our division drafted this policy. Our division has three offices, one is our office, which take the responsibility for undergraduate level admission and recruitment. The others are postgraduate admission office and artistic and physical education admission office.....The direct responsible party is our office"* (Officer P, City 3).

Here we can see that Officer P clearly explained the responsibilities of the policy programming in detail. He claimed that the Regular Higher Education Admission Administration Office which under the Regular Higher Education Entrance Examination and Admission Division took the responsibility to draft the policy plan.

6.2.2 Procedures

Officers were asked to describe the detailed procedure of policy programming. The responses from the four officers involved in the policy programming were generally consistent, but also with some slightly difference. When asking whether they have done any research before drafting the policy, officers gave different answers. Only one officer said they have done some research in schools and HEIs for this policy.

> *"We have done some research before we made the decisions……..questionnaire, in some high schools. We had meetings with some HEIs admission teams"* (Officer O, City 3).

Officer O claimed that they investigated the students' opinions through the questionnaire survey in senior high school. And they also interviewed HEIs admission teams and school head teachers to ask their opinions. However, other officers did not mention that they have done questionnaire survey and interviews. Instead, they claimed that they had department meetings with all-level Examination and Admission Authorities to discuss this policy before drafting the policy plan.

Moreover, when asking about the timescale of the policy programming, the responses from the four officers were different. Officer N described that the whole procedure of policy programming as taking one to two months. Meanwhile, Officer P pointed out that the policy programming took no more than one week. The other two officers stated that they spend around one month on the policy programming.

From the analysis of the officer interviews, in the case of the outbound province, the procedure of the policy programming contains eight steps:

1. The Ministry of Education published the policy and asked each province to make their own plans.
2. Doing Research (questionnaire survey, interviews, departments meetings)
3. Drafting the plan
4. Asking the public's opinions
5. Reporting to superior authority (provincial government)
6. Approved by superior authority (provincial government)
7. Publish the plan
8. Filing the plan with Ministry of Education

According to the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province, left-behind students have been allowed to sign up for the NCEE locally as long as they have studied one year above in senior high school and have student status.

> *"Migrant children can sign up for the NCEE locally as long as they have studied one year above senior high school and have student status, and they can enjoy the same admission policy with local students. This policy is implemented from 2014"* (Document 9, p.1).

6.2.3 Factors

In referring to the policy programming, Document 9 proposes the "essential principles" of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province:

> *"Solving actively, approved conditionally, in accordance with local conditions"* (Document 9, p.1).

These requirements are considered as the guiding principle for the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province. Based on the guiding principle, Document 9 further

quotes the dominant principles of the Offsite NCEE from the central government Document 1:

> *"Insist on good for protecting migrant children's right to education and opportunity access further education equally. Insist on good for promoting proper population flow. Comprehensively considering the need of migrant children taking entrance exam. Comprehensively considering the educational resource carrying capacity of the inbound places. Promoting the work of migrant children entrance exam actively and steadily"* (Document 1, p.1; Document 9, p.1).

As discussed earlier (section 5.2), the principles are considered as dominant principles of the Offsite NCEE that all provinces must comply with in the policy programming.

In the course of the officer interviews, three factors were illustrated.

➢ Local situation
➢ Leaders' opinion
➢ Migrant children education

Local situation

All officers claimed that local situation is the main factor that affected the decisions of policy programming. For example:

> *"Jiangxi is one of the largest outflow provinces. The number of inbound migrants in Jiangxi is not huge. It is acceptable for inbound migrants to take our educational resources"* (Officer O, City 3).

> *"We are outbound place. We would not suffer in this policy. There are only 0.7%-0.8% inbound migrant students in Jiangxi. So we tried to meet the needs of inbound students"* (Officer Q, City 3).

Here we can see that officers estimated the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy when they programmed the policy, and they believed that Jiangxi is able to provide education for the inbound migrant students. This implies that the local government were certain that the Offsite NCEE policy would not put great pressure on the educational resources in Jiangxi.

Migrant children's education

Another factor affecting the officers' decisions was migrant children's education. Two officers mentioned that they have fully considered about how to solve migrant children's education problem:

> *"This policy even helps us, because we hope more talents to move in to contribute to our economic development. So we need to solve their children's education problem"* (Officer P, City 3).

This view was supported by Officer R:

> *"We made very flexible conditions for inbound migrant students. Actually we do hope talent migrants to move in, this is what the government always hope, this is good for the development in Jiangxi. So how can we encourage talents to move in, but meanwhile do not solve their children's education problem? If their children cannot study here and take exam here, how can their parents focus on job? So we made very flexible conditions for them, they can study here and take exam here if they wish"* (Officer R, City 3).

Officers have fully considered the needs of migrants, and stand by the migrant families' side when drafting the policy. It should be noted that the drivers behind the officers' decisions of making flexible conditions is to attract talent to move to Jiangxi. Officers clearly claimed that flexible conditions for inbound migrant student in the Offsite NCEE policy may help the local government to attract more talents and entrepreneurs to stay in Jiangxi.

Leaders' opinion

In additional, officers pointed out that the decisions of policy programming were derived from leaders and superior departments.

For example, Officer Q described that decisions were made their team leaders:

> *"The leaders said what, we did what. We just did what the leaders required. The leaders said how it should be, then it is"* (Officer Q, City 3).

In describing the procedures of policy programming, Officer P mentioned:

> *"In the initial designing of the plan, students were requested to study at least 2 year in Jiangxi to take the exam. We send this plan to provincial government but was rejected. The provincial government still think this condition is too strict, then we just changed it. The minimum year of studying in Jiangxi was changed to 1 year"* (Officer P, City 3).

Here we can see that officers were asked to change the policy plan, as the provincial government thought the conditions for migrant students in the initial policy plan were not flexible enough.

When asking about the difficulties and issues in the policy programming, all officers stated that there was no difficulty or issue at all. Officers reported that they did not have any pressure on the policy programming:

> *"We are outbound province. We do not have pressure regarding to this policy."* (Officer O, City 3)

> *"We made this policy very quickly. It is not a hard work for us."* (Officer P, City 3)

> *"It is very easy, because we are outbound province."* (Officer Q, City 3)

6.3 Policy implementation

This section addresses the stage of policy implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province. It aims to answer the third group of sub-questions of the research.

Q3.1 Who is responsible for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented?

Q3.3 What are the factors that affect the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.4 What is the impact of these factors on the policy implementation?

This section firstly focuses on the first two sub-questions. It identifies the responsibilities of government departments in the policy implementation, and describes the detailed procedures of student school transferring. Then this section addresses the last two sub-questions. It identifies the factors that affected the policy implementation, and looks at how the factors affect the policy implementation. The issues that occurred in the policy implementation are investigated.

6.3.1 Responsibilities

In describing the responsibilities of government departments in the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy, Document 9 states:

> *"Organizational leadership. All regions and all related departments should strength leadership for migrant children entrance examination. Making clear division of responsibilities, keeping close coordination and cooperation. The Examination and Admission Authority in each region should co-coordinate the works of migrant children entrance examination. The educational department should strength construction of primary and high school electronic student status administration system, and get the basic information of migrant children in time. The educational department and related departments should manage the examination remigration and implementation, and arrange the admission and enrolment. The Development and Reform Department should take the migrant children's education into local economic and social development plan. The Public Security Department should strengthen the management of population floating service, and provide the residence information of migrant workers and their children. The Human Resources and Social Security Department should provide the employment and social employment information of migrant workers in time. All regions and all related departments should take different ways to do the work of publicity and interpretation of the migrant children entrance examination policy, guiding public opinions to create a good atmosphere"* (Document 9, p.2).

This statement can be seen to clearly set out the responsibilities of different government departments in the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province. In the view of content analysis of this statement, it lists five departments and signs the different responsibilities for them:

1. The Examination and Admission Authority:
   - Co-coordinate the works of migrant children entrance examination
2. The Educational department:
   - strength construction of primary and high school electronic student status administration system;
   - get the basic information of migrant children in time;
   - manage the examination remigration and implementation;
   - arrange the admission and enrolment
3. The development and Reform Department

> ➢ take the migrant children's education into local economic and social development plan

4. The Public Security Department
    - ➢ Strengthen the management of population floating service;
    - ➢ Provide the residence information of migrant workers and their children

5. The Human Resources and Social Security Department
    - ➢ Provide the employment and social employment information of migrant workers in time.

In officer interviews, officers suggested that the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province is surrounding the student transferring management and student status management.

Document 10 addresses primary school and high school student status management in the outbound province, and in particular looks at the student school transferring management. It clearly states the principles applied in the student status management. It describes the procedures of student school transferring and assigns the roles that government departments are expected to play in the student status management in the outbound province.

The principle of student status management system is described as:

> *"The student status management in our province employed the technological mode, and applied the administrative system of hierarchical responsibility, provincial coordination, local management, school implementation"* (Document 10, p.2).

Document 10 explains this principle by assigning the responsibilities of different authorities in the student status management system.

1. Provincial educational administrative department:
    - ➢ Co-coordinating the works of the student status management;
    - ➢ Formulating the student status management measures;
    - ➢ Guiding, supervising, and examining all the schools and the students status management in the province;

> ➢ Building the running environment and student information database for the national network electronical student status information administrative system according to the requirement of the central government, and ensure its normal running and data exchange.

2. Municipal educational administrative department

> ➢ Guiding, supervising subordinate county-level educational administrative departments to carefully implement all national and provincial regulations and requirements for student status management;

> ➢ Guiding the direct supervisee schools about the student status management and the implementation of electronical student status management system.

3. County-level educational administrative department:

> ➢ Taking charge of the student status management in the schools of the region;

> ➢ Appling electronical student status management system;

> ➢ Supervising the schools in the student status management daily work.

4. Schools

> ➢ Information collection, gathering, reviewing, and reporting;

> ➢ Appling electronical student status management system in daily work;

> ➢ Ensuring the reliability, accuracy and integrity of the information.

In the course of interviews with officers, when asking who or which department is responsible for the policy implementation, it was found that the responses of officers in City 3 and 4 were generally consistent with the findings from the documentary analysis. Officers claimed that the policy implementation procedures go through by the government hierarchy. Three levels of educational departments involved in the policy implementation: county-level, municipal level and provincial level.

For example, Officer R in City 3 stated:

> *"The whole procedure needs to go through by three levels of educational departments: county level, municipal level, and finally approved by provincial level. And the electronic student files need to be processed as well"* (Officer R, City 3).

This was also exemplified in the interviews with officers in city 4. Officer W in City 4 expressed similar views:

> *"Different departments work together. It is based on the government structures. Superior departments supervise subordinate departments. For example, we report the application to our superior department which is the municipal educational department"* (Officer W, City 4).

6.3.2 Procedures

Document 10 lists the conditions for students who would like to do school transferring. Compulsory education students can apply for school transfer if they meet one of the conditions:

1. The guardians move their hukou registration place or change their work location. The new hukou registration place or work location is not within the school district (admission district) of the original school;
2. Migrant children who need to transfer to the new school which is located in the new work location, and provide the certificates which required by the provincial educational department;
3. Any other special reason to transfer school.

For ordinary senior high school students, students can apply for school transfer if their guardians move their hukou registration place or change their work location, or have any other special reason that need to transfer school.

In describing the procedures of student school transferring in compulsory and senior high school, Document 10 places the focus on student status transferring procedures:

> *"Student status changing and student basic information changing for school transferring, suspension, drop out, etc., parents or other guardians submit hand-copy application and other related certificates, schools and student status supervise department review the application and then run the electronic student status system"* (Document 10, p.4).

> *"After students complete the student status transferring procedures, the outbound school should transfer the student status files in time, and complete the procedures within one month"* (Document 10, p.4).

> *"After student transfer school, the inbound school should take over student files based on the student status files it accepted"* (Document 10, p.4).

Here we can see that Document 10 sets out six steps for school transferring:

1. Parents or other guardians submit hand-copy application and certificates
2. Approved by inbound school
3. Approved by outbound school
4. Approved by the student status supervise departments in both outbound place and inbound place
5. The outbound school transfer the student status files to the inbound school
6. The inbound school take over student files

Moreover, Document 10 requires that the procedures of school transferring should be done through both hand-copy route and electronic route.

> *"For student school transferring or enrolment, the inbound school should do the student status transferring procedure through the electronic student status system, the outbound school and the student status supervise departments of both the inbound school and outbound school should review and transact. Schools should update the student photos in electronic student status system in time"* (Document 10, p.4).

> *"For student status information changing, student status transferring, or student graduation (including school completion and drop out), schools should maintain the information in electronic student status system in time, and collect the certificates into student files. The student status supervising department should update the student status in time"* (Document 10, p.4).

This shows that the inbound school, outbound schools and their educational superior administrative departments should review and approve the applications through electronic student status system.

In additional, Document 10 clearly stated that the school transferring procedures should be completed within 10 working days.

> *"The inbound school, the outbound school, and the student status supervise departments of both the inbound school and outbound school should complete the student status transferring procedures within 10 working days"* (Document 10, p.4).

In the course of the officer interviews, officers claimed that the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province focused on the school transfer management. It is heavily dependent upon the student status management in the outbound province. For example, in City 3, the interview with Officer R confirmed

that student school transferring management was the key point of the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province:

> *"In fact, the Offsite NCEE policy in our province is just the issue of student school transferring management. We do not have any inbound student problem. So what we are concerned with is how mange student school transferring for the students who would like to move out. That's the point in our work regarding to the Offsite NCEE policy"* (Officer R, City 3).

This was supported by the interviews with officers in City 4. Officer V said:

> *"Jiangxi is an outbound province. We do not have much trouble with this policy. So when talking about the policy implementation, we do not need to do much things like other inbound provinces. Our students move to other provinces, so we just carefully deal with the student school transferring. That's all"* (Officer V, City 4).

Based on this point, officers further claimed that the procedures of student school transferring in the Offsite NCEE policy were regular student school transferring procedures.

> *"The procedures of student school transferring for students who want to move out are exactly same as the student regular school transferring"* (Officer S, City 3).

> *"It (student school transferring in the Offsite NCEE policy) is the regular student transferring"* (Officer V, City 4).

It was found in the interviews with the officers that the procedures of student school transferring in City 3 and City 4 were generally consistent. In City 3, officers described the detailed procedure of student school transferring as:

> *"The student transferring procedures in compulsory education and secondary education are almost the same. There are two routes for student transferring: hard copy and online. Both the two procedures need to be completed. For hand-copy route, students need to collect four stamps from four authorities: the outbound school, the outbound school superior educational administrative department, the inbound school superior educational administrative department, and the inbound school. For online route, firstly, the inbound school needs to create an application online, and then reviewed and approved by the inbound school superior educational administrative department. Then the application needs to be sent to the outbound side, and get reviewed and approved by the outbound school superior educational administrative department. Then it needs to be confirmed by the outbound school"* (Officer S, City 3).

In City 4, when asking student school transferring, Officer W described the procedures in a similar way:

> *"The procedure needs to go through three levels of the educational department: county level, prefectural level, and finally approved by provincial level. And the electronic student files need to be processed as well. Applicants need to get the inbound school certificate in which the inbound school confirms it would like to enrol the student. And applicants also need to get the outbound school certificate, that is, the student status certificate. Then applicants need to get the transferring certificate from the Educational Bureau and the ordinary senior high school academic test transcript in the Education Examinations Authority. Then the application will be approved by the Provincial Educational Department"* (Officer W, City 4).

To sum up, the procedure of student school transfer in the outbound province contains two routes: hand-copy and electronic student status administrative system (online).

Hand-copy route

1. The outbound school application form
2. Reviewed and approved by the outbound school superior educational administrative department Inbound educational department
3. Reviewed and approved by the inbound school superior educational administrative department Inbound educational department
4. Confirmed by the inbound school

Electronic student status administrative system (online) route:

1. Application from the inbound school
2. Reviewed and approved by the inbound school superior educational administrative department Inbound educational department
3. Reviewed and approved by the outbound school superior educational administrative department Inbound educational department
4. Confirmed by the outbound school

6.3.3 Factors and Issues

Factors

Referring to the student status management, the outbound province Document 10 proposed some factors and measures that need to be mentioned. In the view of content analysis, the factors and measures can be summarized as:

1. student status management system
    - Building student status reviewing system, information confidential system
    - Making clear responsible authority;
    - Perfecting administrative system;
    - Building working mechanism;
    - Reviewing student status each term;
    - Providing necessary facilities, such as laptops, scanners, digital cameras or HD cameras.
2. student status management team
    - Making clear responsibilities of leaders and student status manger and keep it relevant steady;
    - Appointing specialized student status manager, calculating the workload of the student status manger, reporting the basic information of student status mangers to the superior educational administrative department;
    - Accountability system, seriously prosecute the people who have violated rules;
    - Conducting training program for student status manager.
3. supervision and inspection
- Conducting special supervision and inspection.

During the interview, the officers were also asked to explain in detail how they reviewed the application. The findings showed that the focus of the application review was placed on supporting documents reviews. For example, in City 3, Officer R was responsible for reviewing hard-copy documents and confirming whether the applicants are able to move out:

> *"The review is mainly to check three things. Firstly, whether it is normal school transferring or spiteful school transferring. The review is just to*

check if it is spiteful school transferring, but not to stop students to move out. And we need to check whether the applicant have all required supporting document and to confirm that the applicant have sufficient reasons to move out. We need to check the reality of all supporting documents. Thirdly, we need to check whether the applicants are able to move out. For example, if a student wants to transfer to a 'key' school. His or her academic test result must meet the 'key' school score line. And we need to prevent the second year senior high school student from take the NCEE, as it is not in line with the requirement that the second year senior high school student to take the NCEE" (Officer R, City 3).

Here we can see that the application review focuses on three points:

1. Examining the supporting documents
2. Identifying whether it is normal school transferring
3. Confirming whether the applicant is able to move out, that is, whether the applicant meets all conditions.

The interviews with officers in City 4 confirmed this point:

"We pay special attention to checking the reality of supporting documents. We need to check if the supporting documents are fake or not" (Officer W, City 4).

"We need to carefully review the supporting documents, especially to look at the completeness and reality of supporting documents. Completeness refers to whether the student all have supporting documents. Reality refers to whether the supporting documents are real or not" (Officer X, City 4).

Officers were required to identify whether it is normal school transferring and whether the applicant meets all the conditions by examining the supporting documents. Officers were also required to check whether the applicant has supporting documents and to confirm the validity of the supporting documents.

Issues

In the course of officer interviews, officers in both City 3 and City 4 pointed out that it was not easy for students to move out from Jiangxi:

"The procedure seems very clear and easy, but actually it's very difficult in practice. The rate of successful school transferring is about 30%. There are problems that occur in many parts of the procedure. All these hidden problems are exposed when students want to transfer schools" (Officer R, City 3).

Students may have difficulties in school transferring procedures. From the analysis of the officer interviews, the difficulties can be interpreted with two dimensions.

Issues in schools

Officers pointed out that, in some cases, the outbound school might try to prevent a student from moving out. For example, Officer R in City 3 mentioned:

> *"Schools receive funding from the government. The funding is allocated to each school according to the number of students. A school receives more funding if it has a large number of students. Schools lose government funding when students transfer. Thus, school do not want too many students to move out, and they may take measures to stop student transferring."*

Officers explained that the schools report the number of students to local education bureaus in a whole academic year. On the basis of the information they have collected from the schools, the educational bureaus estimate headcount fees for each student and then aggregate the funding need in very school. Funding is distributed annually to each school in accordance with the number of students. This implies that losing students will reduce funding. Therefore, schools need to control the number of students and may stop students from moving out.

Moreover, officers mentioned that schools might try to keep the students who have good examination results:

> *"Schools would stop good students moving out. Of course schools want to keep the students who get high scores in examinations. The examination result and admission rate is the academic performance of the school. This refers to the reputation of a school. It is very important for each school"* (Officer V, City 4).

> *"Schools want good students to move out. They will try to keep them for admission rate"* (Officer S, City 3).

Officers claimed that the students are differentiated by examination results. The schools are also labelled good or bad schools by their examination results. This usually determines the reputation of a school. Therefore, schools might try to stop students who have good examination results from moving out.

Officers pointed out that, for the two main reasons, the schools might set out a series of criteria to stop students moving out:

"The schools take measures to stop student to move out. For example, they may permit a remission on tuition fees or provide funding for students. They provide financial help to attract students, to keep them stay. Beside this, they may also take other measures. For example, if one good student wants to move out, the school may refuse to provide the school certificate, or even refuse to provide the student file. In doing so, the student cannot do the school transferring procedure" (Officer S, City 3).

"In some cases, the outbound school refuses to provide students with basic information. The school wants to stop the students from moving out, so they refuse to do online procedures. Thus, online procedures cannot be processed. And in some cases, the outbound school and educational department do not stamp the application" (Officer U, City 4).

Outbound schools provided financial help to attract students, and in some cases, outbound schools do not help with school transferring procedures.

Issues in student status management

Officers in both City 3 and City 4 complained that issues in student status management have a great impact on student school transferring.

As discussed earlier (section 6.3,) the procedure for student school transfer in the outbound province contains two routes: hard copy and online student status administrative systems. The two routes are handled by different offices. However, the officers claimed that the in-coordination of different offices caused difficulties for students in students transferring schools.

In Jiangxi, it is required to complete the online procedure in one student's school transfer application. However, some provinces do not have online student status management system and cannot complete the online procedure. This would become a trouble if one student apply for school transfer from Jiangxi to another province which do not have online student status management system. Moreover, officers complained that it was not convenient to contact other provinces:

"It is easy to contact someone or some departments within one province, but it is not convenient to contact other provinces" (Officer V, City 4).

"The online student file administration system has just started. It is used in some provinces, but some provinces are not ready for the online system. So if students were to move to these provinces, we would not know how to carry out online procedures" (Officer T, City 3).

Officers also pointed out that the educational department might also stop students moving out. For examples, local educational departments tried to keep students who have examination results for the admission rate.

> *"The educational department also do not want good students to move out. In this case, they may not stamp their documents"* (Officer W, City 4).

Some officers and school staffs involved in student status management were not clear about the procedure.

> *"Sometimes we have problems with the online system. We know which session has problem, but we do not know how to deal with the problem"* (Officer S, City 3).

Officers suggested that a detailed administrative standard or regulation should be made by the superior educational department. The detailed procedure should be made clearly to set what and when the officers and schools need to do, step by step, and there is no training programme. Officers also suggested that a training programme should be conducted to help officers and school staff. Officers suggested that a specific supporting team needs to be built into each school to take responsibility for student status management.

6.4 The views of stakeholders

This section aims to investigate the views of stakeholders in the outbound province. It addresses the fourth group of research–questions.

Q4.3 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to 'educational equity'?

Q4.4 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the context in China for the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q4.5 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q4.6 What are the views of stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

The findings presented in this section were collected through the interviews with officers and students.

6.4.1 Educational equity

During the interviews, the officers were asked about their views of the concept of educational equity. All officers admitted that educational equity is very significant and should be constantly promoted. The main points that officers referred to in terms of educational equity can be classified into four aspects.

➢ Equal educational opportunity
➢ Equal standards of admission requirements
➢ Equal treatment of students
➢ No 'perfect' educational equity

Equal educational opportunity

From the content analysis of officer interviews, it was found that equal educational opportunities for children are regarded as the key point of the concept of educational equity:

> *"Every student has an equal opportunity to access education. Education opportunity is equal"* (Officer O, City 3).

> *"Educational equity' is the equal opportunity to get access education"* (Officer P, City 3).

> *"Every student in this country enjoys an equal opportunity to access education. Students are not treated differently according to their background"* (Officer Q, City 3).

> *"Children have equal opportunity to access education"* (Officer U, City 3).
> *"Everyone has an equal opportunity to access education, regardless of poverty or wealth, whether one is in urban area and in rural area, and family education level"* (Officer V, City 4).
> *"Educational equity means equal opportunity for all children to get access schools"* (Officer X, City 4).

It is the general view of officers that educational equity refers to equal opportunity for all children to get access education.

Equal standards of admission requirements

Officers discussed the concept of educational equity by relating it to school admission and HE admission. Officers suggested that students should be admitted by equal standards of admission requirements:

> "Educational equity means that students can be admitted by equal standards of admission requirements" (Officer N, City 3).

> "Students are admitted by same standards, and are treated equally" (Officer R, City 3).

> "Everyone enjoys 'equal' education. All candidates must be recruited according to the same standards of admission requirements. All candidates must be treated equally. Everyone is equal in front of exam results" (Officer T, City 3).

> "In terms of equity in HE admission, this refers to the equal and standard examination and admission" (Officer V, City 4).

> "All students are recruited by the same score line or by same level of admission requirement" (Officer W, City 4).

Equal treatment of students

In the officer interviews, educational equity was also interpreted as an equal treatment of students in schools. Officers suggested that students should be treated equally in schools.

> "Teachers may treat students differently. Teachers like students who have good exam results, and do not like students who have bad exam results. So they may treat good students more kindly, but may not have much patience with bad students. This is understandable, but it is not right. From the view of students, they are all equal in front of teachers and schools, and should not be treated differently" (Officer V, City 4).

> "Schools should guarantee that students are treated equally. Teachers need to pay special attention to the face of students, and not label students as good or bad according to their background or even academic performance" (Officer X, City 4).

Here we can see that Officers in City 4 pointed out that students should receive equal treatment in schools. Schools should pay attention to teacher performance and guarantee that students are not treated differently according to their background or academic performance.

No 'perfect' educational equity

In the course of officer interviews, there appears to be a general view that full educational equity cannot be attained. Officers admitted that educational equity can only be achieved with conditions:

> *"We try to achieve educational equity, as it is one of the most important goals in our country. But we can never achieve 100% educational equity, as there is no perfect educational equity"*(Officer N, City 3).

> *"But educational equity is impossible to achieve completely"* (Officer P, City 3).

> *"But educational equity is not educational equality. We must recognise that educational equity is conditional. It has regional limits, that is to say we need to achieve a related equity within a specific region. And it has time limits. It is developing, and we cannot compare the present with the past"* (Officer Q, City 3).

> *"No perfect educational equity exists in the world. We are looking forward to it, but never achieve it. What we can do is try to pursue it"* (Officer R, City 3).

> *"Educational equity is a historical issue. We cannot attain it or get obvious improvement in the short term. We can even say that we can never attain full educational equity"* (Officer V, City 4).

6.4.2 Context

Officers were asked about their views of the context of the Offsite NCEE policy in China. All officers stated that the NCEE was the most equal way to select students for HE education:

> *"The NCEE is the most equal way we can have now"* (Officer N, City 3).

> *"Every student is equal in front of the NCEE"* (Officer V, City 4).

However, they also mentioned the weakness of the current HE admission system. In sum, the main points that officers by which referred to the weakness of the HE admission system can be classified into four dimensions:

- The provincial fixed-quota admission policy
  The provincial fixed-quota admission policy is the most significant factor to restrict the equity in HE admission system. As a result of an uneven distribution

of admission quotes across the country, the admission rates are different between provinces. This leads to inequities in HE admission.

- Over equity of the NCEE

  The NCEE is over equal. Officers claim that the current HE admission over relies on examination result, but ignores students' personal talents. It is not fair to evaluate a student purely according to one examination result.

- Disadvantage position of Jiangxi

  Jiangxi suffers in the HE admission system. Jiangxi has a large number of students, but only a few HEIs. The HE admission rate of Jiangxi is relatively low.

- Elite Educational mode

  In additional, officers mentioned that the elite educational mode has a great impact on educational inequity. Officers exposed the fact that the elite educational mode causes an unbalanced development of schools in Jiangxi. Schools are labelled as 'key' and 'non-key'. The key schools get better educational resources, while the 'non-key' schools are discriminated against in the allocation of educational resources. This contributes to a significant gap in examination results between schools, resulting in an uneven HE admission rate.

When asking about the purposes of the Offsite NCEE policy, Officers mentioned four main purposes:

- To promote educational equity
- To help migrant students
- To promote regional development by attracting migrant workers to move in
- To promote urbanization

Among the four purposes, two of them were 'to promote educational equity' and 'to help migrant students' are included in the seven purposes stated in the documents. The last two of them 'to promote regional development by attracting migrant workers to move in' and 'to promote urbanization' were not in documents but proposed by the outbound province officers.

In the course of the student interviews, it was found that the views of students regarding to the context were generally consistent with the views of officers. Students admitted that the NCEE itself was fair, but that the HE admission system was not:

> "The only way for us is the NCEE. We cannot deny that NCEE is a fair way to let us to go to university, after all, everyone is equal in front of examination score. But the unfair thing is admission. Why do we need to get much higher exam score than others? Why can they go to university easily?"

> "The admission score line in Jiangxi is high. So we have to pay more in order to stand on same line as others."

> "I feel it is very very difficult to go to university in Jiangxi, especially to go to good universities. I hope I can take the NCEE in another place, Beijing or Shanghai."

> "It is useless if only the NCEE is fair but the admission system is not. It is still unequal for us".

> "I hope the admission score line can be unified across the country. And we are free to choose the place to take the exam".

Students complained that they were placed in a disadvantaged position with regard to HE admission. They felt great pressure to get into HEIs due to the low admission rate in Jiangxi. Although they admitted that the NCEE is fair, students pointed out the equity in HE admission cannot be attained only through a fair examination. They desired a unified admission score line across the country. They also expressed the fact that they wanted to move to other places with a high admission rate to take the exam.

Table 6.5 Responses to questions about the context of the Offsite NCEE policy

Questionnaire item	% of students responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
Q3.1 I know the HE admission system and policy well.	25.5%
Q 3.2 I satisfied with the current HE admission system.	36%
Q3.3 The current HE admission system is fair.	40%

This was supported by the findings of the questionnaire survey. In the questionnaire survey II, students were asked about their views of the context of the Offsite NCEE policy. Only 25.5% of students stated that they knew the HE admission system and policy well. 36% of students declared that they were satisfied with the current HE admission system, and 40% of students thought the current HE admission system was fair.

Moreover, some students shared a similar view with the officers, referring to the over exam-oriented admission system. In the student interviews, students expressed the fact that the admission requirements over emphasise the NCEE results. "The NCEE overemphasise exam scores, but ignore our overall quality." They hoped the admission requirement look at student's personal characteristics, but not only focus on examination result.

6.4.3 Policy programming

In the course of the officer interviews, the outbound province officers were asked about their views of national and provincial programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. All officers stated that they were satisfied with the national programming of the Offsite NCEE policy.

As discussed above, the Offsite NCEE policy has not been conducted in all provinces yet. Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou are still not open for migrant students to take the NCEE. The central government decided that the three regions should not conduct this policy at the moment, but take actions towards it. This decision was supported by the outbound province officers. Officers suggested that the Offsite NCEE policy cannot be fully conducted across the country at the moment:

> *"Some places are not open for the Offsite NCEE yet. That's not because they do not want to open, it is because they cannot open. We all know that it is easy to get into university in Beijing, if Beijing conducts this policy, everyone will move in. Even if it made conditions, the conditions could not prevent people from taking actions as quickly as possible to move in. Once it opens a window, it opens a door. How can it afford so many migrant students? It is not only about HE admission, but also basic education. Basic education cannot afford so many high school migrant students moving in"* (Officer O, City 3).

Officer U in City 4 expressed the similar view:

> *"We do need this policy, but we also need to take it slowly. This policy is only for migrant children. If this policy were opened up to others, the current admission system would suffer. As the admission situation of each province is not balanced, the complete opening of this policy may bring the 'NCEE migration', this policy must be limited. Why are all provinces at different stages? Because the admission situation of each province is different."*

Moreover, most officers stated that the conditions made by the central government make sense:

> *"It is good to set the condition that students must study in the inbound place 1-3 years before they take the NCEE. This condition is in accordance with the facts. That's to prevent wheeling and dealing, and to avoid NCEE migration"* (Officer Q, City 3).

> *"It is good to set the condition that parents should have tax records. Having tax records means they do contribute to the inbound place and deserve to be paid back. This condition makes clear sense"* (Officer V, City 4).

However, three officers argued that the superior conditions still had some weaknesses:

> *"It appears to make sense. But it requests that the students' parents must have a stable job and detailed tax and insurance records. Generally, low class migrant workers may not have stable job, such as builders. They may not have detailed tax and insurance records. Thus, this policy is not equal to them"* (Officer P, City 3).

> *"Students are required to hand in some supporting documents to prove that their parents have stable jobs and tax and insurance records. But not all parents have these. Not all parents have stable jobs, and not all parents have tax and insurance records. What about them? This is a bug in the policy"* (Officer W, City 4).

The key argument of the officers focused on the condition 'parents must have stable jobs, tax record and insurance record'. Officers pointed out that some parents may not have stable jobs or tax and insurance record. This condition thus leaves them behind.

In terms of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province, all officers stated they were satisfied with the policy programming:

> *"It makes good sense. I believed that they (policy makers) had a full consideration before they programmed this policy. So the design of this policy is based on the real situation in our province"* (Officer N, City 3).

Officers claimed that the design of the Offsite NCEE policy plan in the outbound province was in accordance with the situation.

In the course of student interviews, nearly half of students stated that they were satisfied with the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. However, over half of students thought that the conditions made by the central government were too strict. Some provinces required that students must study in the inbound province for 3 years senior high school. Students argued that 3 years are too long. For example, one student in City 3 argued that the condition was unequal by sharing his personal experiences.

> *"I think this is not OK. 3 years is a long time. My parents are working in Zhejiang, and I want to stay with my parents, but I cannot. I came here when I was in first year high school. I do not know this policy at that time, I do not this policy would come out one day. So I came here. Now even if I want to back to stay with parents, I cannot. I'm already in the final year now. The condition stated that I need to study three years there. So I do not have choice. I do not think this condition is equal for me."*

Table 6.6 Responses to questions about the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy

Questionnaire item	% of students responding with Strongly Agree and Agree
Q3.4 I know 'Offsite NCEE' policy well.	33%
Q3.5 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy is needed.	60.5%
Q3.6 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy should be conducted and promoted immediately.	60%
Q3.7 The design of the 'Offsite NCEE' in Jiangxi is make sense.	48%

In the questionnaire survey II, students were asked about their views of the programming of the NCEE policy. As shown in Table 6.6, one third of students reported that they knew the 'Offsite NCEE' policy well. Most of students thought the Offsite NCEE policy is needed (60.5%) and should be conducted and promoted immediately (60%). Nearly half of students (48%) thought the design of the Offsite NCEE policy in Jiangxi is make sense.

6.4.4 Policy implementation

As discussed above (Chapter 6.3), officers complained about the disorganized governance in student status management. They expressed the fact that they were confused about the procedures for application assessment, and that detailed administrative standards or regulations should be made by superior educational department.

6.4.5 Impact

In the course of officer interviews, it is the general view that the outbound province benefit from this policy:

> *"This policy is good for Jiangxi. There are a large number of outbound migrants in Jiangxi. This reduces the pressure of HE admission in Jiangxi. And an inbound flow of migrant workers is good for economic development in Jiangxi"* (Officer N, City 3).

> *"We benefit from this policy. Students whose parents are working in other provinces have the opportunity to move out, to take the exam. There are a lot of 'left-behind children' in Jiangxi. This policy provides the opportunity for them to move out to stay with their parents. This benefits them. And with their out-migration, the pressure of NCEE competition will be reduced"* (Officer R, City 3).

> *"Our province benefits from this policy. As to what I said before, 'left-behind children' can move out and stay with their parents. The pressure of NCEE competition in Jiangxi will be reduced. The inbound province may suffer, our pressure is transformed to them. They have to receive migrant students, and provide educational resources for them, schools, teachers, and even HE admission quota"* (Officer V, City 4).

To sum up, from the analysis of the officer interviews, the impacts of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province are:

1. This policy benefits the left-behind student in the outbound province
2. This policy benefits the outbound province by reducing the pressure of NCEE competition.

This policy provides opportunities for the left-behind students to move out from the outbound province. It only provides opportunities for the left-behind students to stay

with their parents, but also reduce the pressure of NCEE competition in the outbound province.

Meanwhile, officers also admitted that this policy placed great pressure on the inbound province:

> *"It affects the inbound provinces. They have to afford pressure to receive migrant students, not only in HE admission, but in the whole field of education, such as basic education, educational investment, etc., and also in other aspects, such as population management, social security, etc. They make contributions for this policy"* (Officer Q, City 3).

> *"The inbound province may suffer, our pressure is transformed to them. They have to receive migrant students, and provide educational resources for them, such as schools, teachers, and even HE admission quotas"* (Officer X, City 4).

Officers claimed that the Offsite NCEE policy should be constantly promoted. However, some officers also pointed out that the Offsite NCEE policy is just a step to deal with the unequal issues of the current HE admission system. Officers still placed the focus on the admission quota system and considered it as the key point to solve the unequal problems of HE admission system:

> *"But if we want to totally change the unequal situation of HE admission, the current Offsite NCEE policy is not enough. We need to look at the admission quota. And of course we also need to continue to promote the Offsite NCEE policy, conduct it fully"* (Officer R, City 3).

Table 6.7 Responses to questions about the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy

Questionnaire item	% of students responding with Strongly Agree and Agree	% of students responding with Neither Agreed nor Disagreed
Q3.8 The 'Offsite NCEE' has impacts on me.	25%	39.5%
Q3.9 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy benefits me.	25.5%	46.5%
Q3.10 I suffered by the 'Offsite NCEE' policy.	5%	30%

In the questionnaire survey, students' views of the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy were explored. When asking whether the Offsite NCEE policy impact on

them, over one third of students (35.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only 25% of students admitted that the Offsite NCEE policy had an impact on them. 39.5% of students neither agreed nor disagreed. This is also shown in Q3.9 and Q3.10. In Q3.8 and Q3.9, students were asked how the Offsite NCEE policy impact them. 25.5% of students showed positive attitudes while only 5% of students showed negative attitudes. While 46.5% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that the Offsite NCEE policy benefits them, 30% of them neither agreed nor disagreed that they suffered through the Offsite NCEE policy. This evidence suggests that students were clear about their position regarding to the Offsite NCEE policy, and indicated that students were uncertain about the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy.

This was consistent with the findings of the student interviews. In the student interviews, when asking about the impacts of the Offsite NCEE policy, students said they could not see any great influence now, as they were not participating in this policy. However, all students stated that they were happy with this policy. Left-behind students claimed that this policy provided opportunities for them and gave them hope for moving out and living with their parents.

Summary

This chapter represents the data collected in the outbound province case. When describing the context for the Offsite NCEE policy, documents and officers placed focus on issues of intra-province migration and educational equity in China. In describing the increasing number of migrant children, the documents are concerned with the issue of migrant children's entrance examination. The data collected from the questionnaire survey and interviews showed that students in the outbound province had a strong demand for the full implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. In particular, left-behind children had a strong desire for moving out from the outbound province and living with their parents. However, they still had to study and take the NCEE in Jiangxi. And parents also had great expectations of their children's educational achievement.

Officers discussed the concept of educational equity by focusing on three aspects: equal educational opportunity, equal standards of admission requirements, and equal

treatment of student. And there appears to be a general view that full educational equity cannot be attained. Officers admitted that educational equity can only be achieved with conditions. They also pointed out that the provincial fixed-quota admission policy is the most significant factor to restrict the equity in HE admission system.

The policy procedures go through by the government hierarchy from top to bottom. The Provincial Educational Department was responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. The policy plan was drafted by the Regular Higher Education Entrance Examination and Admission Division, which supervised by the Provincial Education Examinations Authority. Three levels of educational departments involved in the policy implementation: provincial level, municipal level and county level. The higher rank government deliver the directives to the lower rank government.

The local situation was the main factor that affected the decisions in the policy programming. As an outbound province with a limited number of inbound migrant students, officers estimated that Jiangxi had the ability to provide educational resources for inbound migrant students. Flexible conditions for inbound migrant student in the Offsite NCEE policy might help the local government to attract more talents and entrepreneurs to stay in Jiangxi.

As an outbound province, the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound surrounds student school transfer management. There were two factors underlying the decisions of local governments regarding student school transfer management. The first was the responsibility of government and schools in funding allocation. Schools and local educational departments controlled the number of students to secure the funding. The second factor was exam-oriented educational system. Schools and local educational departments might make an attempt to retain the students who have good exam results and to prevent them from transferring to other schools or other regions.

Chapter 7 Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the Offsite NCEE policy by looking at four dimensions, the context, the policy programming, the policy implementation and the impact. This research investigated two cases, one is the inbound province, and another one is the outbound province. The findings show that each case is individual, but they also share some common patters. The two cases are discussed in this chapter.

7.1 The context of the Offsite NCEE policy

This section discusses the context of the Offsite NCEE policy. It addresses the first group of research sub-questions.

Q1.1 What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q1.2 What are the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy?

It firstly discusses the context for the Offsite NCEE policy by placing the focus on the issues of educational equity in the context of China. It also discusses the stage of agenda setting of the Offsite NCEE policy by using Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach. Then this section discusses the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy.

7.1.1 What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy?

The issues of educational equity

In the two cases, when seeking a contextual explanation of the Offsite NCEE policy development, documents and officers placed focus on issues of educational equity in China.

Officers discussed the concept of educational equity by focusing on five aspects:

1. Equal educational opportunity;
2. Equal standards of admission requirements;

3. Equal treatment of students in the process of receiving education;
4. Equal distribution of educational resources;
5. Evaluation of educational outcomes.

Officers discussed the concept of educational equity in three stages: beginning, process and result. Educational equity in the beginning refers to the equal educational opportunities and equal standards of admission requirement. Equity in process was interpreted as equal treatment of students in the process of receiving education and equal distribution of educational resources. In addition, officers also suggested that educational outcomes should be evaluated to what extent the educational equity has been achieved.

The views of officers with regard to the concept of educational equity are similar to the three core positions of educational equity proposed by Guiton and Oakes (1995). Guiton and Oakes (1995) proposed three core positions around equity: inputs, processes, and outcomes. Equal input is tied to an equal distribution of educational resources. Equal processes involve all the ways of delivering education, and question whether the process in which the input was distributed is equitable. Educational outcomes are considered as central to the concept of educational equity. It concerns whether the goals of educational equity are achieved.

It is a general view of officers that educational equity is an idea that cannot ever fully be attained, but only can be promoted conditionally. This point supports Cobbold's (2011) view of educational equity who asserts that the true equalisation of outcomes is not realistic. He claims that Educational input for students should take into account students' individual differences. Equity in education is to pursue unequal educational outcomes (Cobbold, 2011).

This is similar to the concept of vertical equity. Vertical equity is interpreted as "unequal treatment of unequals" (Toutkoushian and Michael, 2007, p396). Vertical equity assumes that different students should be treated differently according to their individual characteristics (Brown, 2006). However, it recognizes that unequal treatment is a means of attaining equal outcomes.

The later section will illustrate how the views of officers may influence the programming and implementation of Offsite NCEE policy (see section 7.2 and 7.3).

Provincial fixed-quota admission policy

In the course of the interviews with officers, there appeared to be a general view that the provincial fixed-quota admission policy was the key point of the whole undergraduate education admission system.

As noted in section 2.7, the provincial fixed-quota admission policy is currently employed in undergraduate education admissions. It refers to a type of admission policy in which the quota of undergraduate enrolment numbers are allocated to each province by the state according to certain criteria. It decides on the admission score line and the number of students admitted to a given province.

The literature suggests that the provincial fixed-quota admission policy is the most significant factor that restricts equity in the undergraduate education admission system (Wang, 2011; Zhang and Wang, 2014). The opportunity for students to access undergraduate education is not only based on their academic performance, but on how many admission quotas their provinces have. The number of admission quotas of a province decides on the number of student admitted, and thus decides the admission rate of a province. In this way, the opportunity for students to access undergraduate education is closely related to which provinces they take the exam. Admission rates thus differ between provinces.

The data collected in this research supports this point. In the two cases, officers attributed the inequity of undergraduate education admission to the uneven distribution of admission quotas. Officers complained that uneven distribution of admission quotas leads to unequal admission rates across the country.

As noted in section 2.7, all regions (provinces or municipalities directly under the central government) are divided into four levels in terms of the higher education entrance opportunity index. The inbound province, Zhejiang, ranks in the second class. While the outbound province, Jiangxi, ranks in the third class.

Table 7.1 The entrance opportunity rate of yiben (first rank) universities

	2013	2014	Average	Rank
Beijing	24.33%	24.81%	24.57%	1
Shanghai	22.64%	21.92%	22.28%	3
The inbound province, Zhejiang	13.38%	13.61%	13.50%	9
The outbound province, Jiangxi	9.07%	8.92%	8.99%	23

(People.cn, 2015)

Table 7.1 shows the entrance opportunity rate of yiben (first rank) universities. Here we can see that the opportunity rate in Beijing and Shanghai were much higher than other provinces. Nearly one quarter of students in Beijing and Shanghai can get into yiben universities. The inbound province, Zhejiang is ranked 9[th,] while in the outbound province, Jiangxi, less than one tenth of students can get into yiben universities. This illustrates a decreasing set of yiben entrance opportunity rates, showing a great gap in entrance opportunity rates between provinces.

This is exemplified in this research. Both inbound province and outbound province officers complained that they did not have many admission quotas. In the inbound province, the officers claimed that the admission rate in Zhejiang was much lower than Beijing and Shanghai. Officers explained that this awas because they did not have as many quotas as Beijing and Shanghai. In the outbound province, officers complained that the provincial fixed-quota admission policy placed Jiangxi in a disadvantaged position. Officers reported that the admission rate of Benke (academic route) universities in the outbound province was below the national average. The data collected from the questionnaire survey and student interviews suggest that both inbound province and outbound province students hoped to move to the regions with a high admission rate.

In the two cases, officers pointed out that the admission system could not have any significant improvement if the fixed-quota admission policy were not changed. However, when asking how to change the fixed-quota admission policy, some officers claimed that the admission quotas should be allocated to each province only according to the provinces' proportion of total national population, but not any other

criteria. Officers claimed that this was the only way to guarantee the equity of the higher education admission system.

However, the literature argues that equal distribution of admission based on the population cannot be employed in practice (Guo, 2010; Du and Xiong, 2012). The fixed-quota admission policy cannot be immediately changed, as there are three main obstacles to equally allocate the admission quotas according to the provinces' proportion of total national population: preferential policy, uneven distribution of educational resources, and different exam modes (ibid).

Preferential policy

As noted earlier (section 3.2), since the economic reform of the 1970s, the fundamental direction of China's education policy has been designed to meet the needs of China's modernizing economy and future development (GOV, 2015b). Strategies of decentralization, localization and marketization have been conducted in the educational reforms. The role of local governments in education has greatly increased. Local governments are playing a significant role in the financing, administration, and planning of education. The administration and development of the HEIs are placed under local social and economic development plans, thus creating a tendency for regionalization of local HEI admission. Local governments were granted the power to supervise local HEIs. Self-interest incentivises local government to require the HEIs to offer more places to local students. As a consequence, in the admission process, the students with local hukou are preferred in the recruitment process.

The preferential policy is widely criticised by researchers. For example, Yu et al (2012) point out that the preferential policy offer extra benefits for local students, which allows them to enjoy a privilege of lower scores to access local HEIs. They point out that the preferential policy offers extra benefits to local students, which allows them to enjoy the privilege of lower scores to access local HEIs. The general consensus from the literature is that the preferential policy limits the equity of the higher education admissions system. This is supported by the officers in this research. Officers regard the preferential policy as a 'stumbling block' of equity in the higher

admission system. Officers pointed out that the preferential policy divides students by their household registration place, but not academic performance. It creates an extra benefit for local students. This is a discrimination against students who do not have local hukou, and reflects regional over protection.

However, officers stated that the preferential policy cannot be abolished at the moment. The success of the preferential policy in China relies heavily on the close relationship between HEIs and the local government. In this regard, HEIs need local government's help in their administration and development, and also look for local investors for their financial resources. The close relationship between HEIs and local social and economic development is also unlikely to be changed at the moment.

Uneven distribution of educational resources

One of the main reasons behind the geographical inequalities of the provincial fixed-quota admission policy is the uneven distribution of educational resources. The distribution of educational resources depends heavily on local economic performance.

The literature suggests that basic education is an important driver in higher educational opportunity in China (Xin and Kang, 2012). However, regional differences in economic development make differences in the resources available to basic education. In the economically advantaged provinces, local governments are willing to provide sufficient funding for basic education, while in the regions with deficient government budgets, basic education may be under heavy financial constrain. The overall quality of basic education services in a given province depends upon the wiliness of local governments to expand and improve educational services. The economy-driven effect behind the government investment for education creates a significant gap between the overall quality of the basic education service across provinces.

In the inbound province, according to the data from Educational Statistics Yearbook of China, in 2014, government investment for education was 101.85 billion yuan, accounting for 19.74% of the whole public financial expenditure (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). Meanwhile, in the outbound province, the government

investment for education in Jiangxi was 69.62 billon yuan, accounting for 17.93% of the whole public financial expenditure (ibid).

In the inbound province, it was found that the majority of migrant students prefer to study and take the NCEE in Zhejiang, but not go back to their original household registration places. When asked why they preferred to stay in Zhejiang, one of the most frequently mentioned reason was that Zhejiang had better basic educational services. Moreover, in both inbound province and outbound province, students claimed that they hoped to move to Beijing and Shanghai for studying. One of the significant reasons was that students were attracted by the high quality of the basic education service in the two places. The key point of the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province is that there is a mismatch between basic education demand and supply in the inbound province. This will be discussed in detail in a later section (section 7.3).

Secondly, the same logic applies to the distribution of HEIs. The literature suggests that long-term regional differences in economic growth potentially cause uneven distribution of HEIs (Mok et al, 2009; Liu, 2009; Lee and Pang, 2011; Hannum and Wang, 2006; Wu, 2010). The good economic situation in well-developed regions benefits the expansion and development of local HEIs. As noted in section 2.7, the distribution of HEIs shows a gradual decrease from the east to the west of China. HEIs, particularly top universities, are mostly located in well-developed regions. As a result, people in the large cities and well-developed regions have benefited from the distribution of higher education resources. With preferential policy in higher education admission, the uneven distribution of higher education resources further contributes to regional inequity in accessing higher education. As noted in section 2.4, there are 29 '211' or '985' project HEIs in Beijing and there are 15 '211' or '985' project HEIs in Shanghai. The number of '211' or '985' project HEIs in Beijing and Shanghai accounts for more than a quarter of all '211' or '985' project HEIs.

This point is exemplified in this research. In the two cases, officers and students were concerned about the distribution of HEIs. Officers complained that top universities are mostly located in Beijing and Shanghai. In the inbound province,

there is only one '211' and one '985' HEI. In the outbound province, there is only one '211' HEI and no '985' HEI. Moreover, students were attracted by HEIs in Beijing and Shanghai. Students claimed that they would like to move to Beijing and Shanghai as it would be much easier for them to get into top HEIs if they take the NCEE in the two places.

Different exam mode and questions

Researchers argue that the differences in exam modes and test subjects also have great effect on the equity of undergraduate education admission (Yu et al, 2012; Hannum et al, 2011). When seeking an explanation for the differences in exam modes and test subjects, the literature places the focus on the educational quality (Yu et al, 2012; Liu, 2012). Researchers point out that educational quality is different across provinces. The design of exam modes and test subjects should be in accordance with the educational quality of a given province. The differences in test subjects and evaluation standards makes a difference in allocating admission quotas across the country, resulting in inequity in the admission process.

This point was supported by officer interviews. In the course of the officer interviews, different exam modes and questions across provinces was also considered as one of the significant weakness of the admission system. Officers pointed out that students were not be put at the 'same line' of the exam. The differences in exam modes and test subjects caused great difficulties in making equal evaluation standards. How to equally assess the exam results becomes an issue.

However, in the two cases, officers admitted that it was difficult to unify the exam modes and test questions across the country. Officers explained that the differences in educational quality between provinces should be carefully considered when designing exam modes and test questions.

In the inbound province, it was found that the majority of migrant students preferred to study and take the NCEE in Zhejiang, but not go back to their original household registration places. When asked why they preferred to stay in Zhejiang, one of the most frequently mentioned reasons was that they were very familiar with the exam mode and questions in Zhejiang. In the outbound province, one of the significant

reasons for migrant students staying in Jiangxi was that they were more familiar with the study environment in Jiangxi. Students reported that they did not have any idea about the exam mode and questions in other provinces. They were afraid that they could not adapt to the new exam modes, and preferred to stay in a familiar environment.

7.1.2 The stage of agenda setting

As noted in section 3.3, Knoepfel et al (2011) propose four constituent elements that should be considered in the analysis of the agenda setting stage of a policy.

- The intensity of the problem;
- The perimeter (or audience) of the problem;
- The newness of the problem;
- The urgency of the problem.

As far as the Offsite NCEE policy is concerned, the issues of educational equity with regard to migrant children's education have been widely recognised as a public problem. In previous policy, all students were required to attend the NCEE where their original household was registered, regardless of their current residence and school location, resulting in significant inconvenience for migrant students. The social group of migrants has long been under threat by unequal treatment. This has long been a debate and there has been demand for public intervention.

What are the drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy?

As discussed in section 4.1, the leading Document 1 state the sentences in which clearly set out the purposes of the Offsite NCEE policy. The sentences are quoted by the inbound province document and outbound province document. Documents state seven purposes of the Offsite NCEE policy. From a content analysis point of view, the seven purposes can be divided into three groups:

1. Migrant children's education
   - This policy is to direct aim of the Offsite NCEE policy is to solve the entrance examination problem for migrant children;
   - This policy is to protect migrant children's right to education.

2. Educational equity

  ➢ This policy is based on the concept of educational equity.

3. Social aspects

  ➢ This promotes social stability, to strengthen and innovate social management.

  ➢ This policy concerns about 'people-oriented' concept.

  ➢ This policy is to protect and improve people's livelihood.

This was generally consistent with the findings of officer interviews. Officers proposed three main purposes of the Offsite NCEE policy:

1. To help migrant students
2. To promote educational equity
3. To promote regional development

There were two main drivers behind the Offsite NCEE policy. One was the large scale of intra-province migration in China, and one was strong demand of migrant families.

Intra-province migration

The large number of intra-province migrants makes the issue of the entrance examination for migrant children a serious problem. In China, the term floating population refers to the population who live in places other than their household registration. Intra-province migrants are those people who are household registered in their original provinces, but have resided in the destination provinces for at least six months. The literature suggests that intra-province migration in China is very closely associated with regional economic disparities (UNDP, 2011; Liu et al, 2003). Well-developed provinces offer job vacancies, attracting people from other provinces to move in for working and living. Li (2008) points out that the majority of the intra-province migration is rural to urban migration. The great urban-rural income gap and labour surplus in rural areas prompts people to move from rural areas to urban areas, and to move from less-developed regions to developed regions.

The number of intra-provinces has continued to increase. According to China Statistical Yearbook 2015, in 2014, there were 84.86 million intra-province migrant workers (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016). By the end of 2014, there were 18.94 million inbound migrants in Zhejiang, ranked 2nd in China (ibid). While there were 6.71 million outbound migrants in Jiangxi, ranked 5th in China (ibid). Compared with 2013, the number of intra-province migrants have increased by 1.6%.

In the inbound province, the data collected in questionnaire survey shows that 17% of the participants were migrant students who came from other provinces. Among the migrant students, most of them held a rural hukou. In the outbound province, it was found that a certain proportion of the parents were working in other provinces.

With an increasing number of intra-province migrants, both media reports and academic research were concerned about migrant children's education (People.cn, 2016; Chen, 2015b). The issue of entrance examination for migrant children has been thus widely recognised as a public problem that needs to be immediately resolved. In particular, the issue of entrance examination for migrant children has been received much attention in Zhejiang. As introduced in section 4.4, Zhejiang is one of the largest inflow provinces in China. The economic prosperity in Zhejiang attracts many migrant workers to move in to work and live. In 2013, 17.2% of primary school students were migrant children, and 9.3% of secondary school students were migrant children (Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2016). According to the Statistical Communiqué of Zhejiang province on the 2015 National Economic and Social Development, there were over 14 million migrant students studying in compulsory schools in Zhejiang (ibid). The large number of migrant students have placed the issue of entrance examination for migrant children at the centre of public attention.

Strong demand of migrant families

Students' attitudes

The data collected from the questionnaire survey and student interviews shows that students had strong demand for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. In the inbound province, migrant students stated that they preferred to study and take

the NCEE in Zhejiang, but not back to their original household registration places. Local students also hoped to move to other places to take the NCEE such as Beijing and Shanghai. In the outbound province, it was found that students had a strong demand for the full implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. Although left-behind students were not willing to move out, they still happy with this policy. They hoped that the Offsite NCEE will be fully implemented one day.

Parents' attitudes

The findings of this research show that all parents considered education to be a very important issue. Evidence suggests that many migrant parents were not well-educated themselves. Most migrant parents dropped out of school after junior secondary education. Less than one fifth of migrant fathers and one tenth of migrant mothers finished senior secondary education. In comparison, nearly half of local parents finished senior secondary education, and some of them completed higher education. Evidence shows that the migrant parents received less education than local parents.

Since the socioeconomic reform of the 1970s, occupation is largely determined by the education that people have received (Hu, 2012). Since migrant parents tend to be less well educated, they find it difficult to get well-paid and stable jobs in the inbound province. More than half of migrant parents were doing factory working, and some of them were self-employed. This finding suggests that migrant parents did not have well-paid jobs. This was also supported by the officers, who reported that many migrant parents did not have stable jobs.

Some scholars claim that educational inequity come from differences between families (Ballarino, 2012; Picard and Wolff, 2005). Picard and Wolff (2005) claim that the probability of receiving higher education for children is associated with their parental education. The more education their parents receive, the more their children are likely to be well-educated. However, the findings of this research do not confirm this point.

Migrant parents were aware of the link between education and life in China, and attribute their less well-paid jobs to a lack of education. This was one of the

significant drivers by which they pushed their children to study hard and go to university. Even though most migrant parents were not well-educated, they had great expectations for their children's educational achievement. They even considered that the only way to prevent their family from living a life of poverty is to allow their children to be well-educated. By expecting their children to live a better life, they strongly cared about their children's education. Migrant parents thus had a strong demand for the Offsite NCEE policy.

7.2 Policy programming

This section discusses the stage of programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. It addresses the second group of the research sub-questions.

Q2.1 Who is responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q2.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed?

Q2.3 What are the factors affecting the decisions of policy makers?

Q2.4 What is the impact of these factors on the decisions of policy makers?

This section firstly discusses the allocation of responsibilities for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy and the procedures of the policy programming by using Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach. Following this, the role of self-interest and the role of culture in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy are explored.

7.2.1 Who is responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy?

When considering the allocation of responsibilities and procedures for the policy programming, the government structure in China has to be clearly explained. As noted in section 2.1, the government structure in China constitutes a hierarchical administrative system. The state administrative organs of China include the central and local administrative organs (China.org.cn, 2015). The central government is led by the State Council. The State Council is located at the top of the government system, and is the highest state organ of administration. Apart from the central government led by the State Council, there are five ranks of local government:

provincial governments, municipal (prefecture) governments, county governments, township governments and village governments (ibid). The State Council issues directives to both functional departments (e.g. the Ministry of Education) and local governments at the provincial level. At each level, the local governments issues directives to the functional departments at their own level (e.g. provincial educational departments, municipal educational departments), and the local governments at lower levels. In principle, the central government makes final decisions, and lowers the rank by which governments must accept the decisions of superior rank governments (ibid). In such a way, the decisions and directives are delivered from higher to lower ranking governments.

In this research, it was found that the programming of the offsite policy is characterised by its discretion. At national level, the central government made the superior programme outline of Offsite NCEE policy. Four authors were involved in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy: the Ministry of Education, Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. The central government assigns the local governments at the provincial level with the task of formulating and issuing their own plans for the Offsite NCEE policy. The provincial governments thus programmed their own Offsite NCEE policies and develop regulations. The provincial governments made the choice of public actors to be involved and their responsibility for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy at the local level. In the inbound province, there were four authorities that were responsible for the policy programming in the inbound province: Provincial Educational Department, Development and Reform Commission, Provincial Public Security Department, and Provincial Human Resources and Social Security Department. In the outbound province, the findings show that the provincial educational department was responsible for the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province.

7.2.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed?

As noted in section 3.3, Knoepfel et al (2011) highlight the fact that there are two products of policy programming stage. The first of these is the political-

administrative programme (PAP), while the second is the political-administrative arrangement (PAA). The political-administrative programme (PAP) refers to all decisions involved in the policy process, comprising solution to the problems, objectives to be attained, and the definition of target groups. It also covers the allocations of responsibility for the policy to administrative services: that is, the political administrative arrangement (PAA). The PAA defines the attribution of competencies, resources and responsibilities for the implementation of the policy.

In the programming of Offsite NCEE policy, the central government made the superior programme outline of Offsite NCEE policy. It assigned the general political-administrative programme (PAP) and the political administrative arrangement (PAA) for the Offsite NCEE policy. With regard to the political-administrative programme (PAP), the central government decided on the target group, objectives, and intervention instruments of the Offsite NCEE policy, providing a guiding principle for the whole policy process. Migrant children were defined as the target group in the Offsite NCEE policy. The objectives to be attained contain three dimensions, according the requirements of the central government:

1. To solve the entrance examination problem for migrant children, and to protect migrant children's rights to education
2. To promote educational equity
3. To promote social stability

The central government stated that the local situations differ between provinces. In the political-administrative arrangements (PAA), the central government attributed the responsibilities for the Offsite NCEE policy to local authorities. This means the provincial governments were granted the authority to programme the Offsite NCEE policy at the local level. In this case, the local governments at provincial level have the great freedom to decide how to interpret the Offsite NCEE policy on the basis of their needs. As demonstrated above, the central government reduced the degree of decentralisation with regard to the Offsite NCEE policy. Instead, it attributed the discretionary responsibilities to local governments. Such autonomy at the local level seemd to be one of the significant factors affecting the implementation of the Offsite NCEE in the two cases. This will be discussed in detail later (section 7.3).

7.2.3 What are the factors affecting the decisions of policy makers?

When referring to the factors affecting the decisions of policy makers, it was found that the two provinces were generally consistent. Two points are worth noting for discussion. Firstly, the findings suggest that cultural dimensions have an impact on the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. Secondly, it was found that both the inbound province and the outbound province programmed their policy plans based on their self-interest.

Cultural value

Cultural dimensions must be considered at the strategy and policy formulation level (Kim, 2009). The role of culture and its potential impact need to be understood and assessed. For example, in Kim's (2009) study of cultural dimensions of strategy and policy, he asserts that cultural factors enables and constrains political and strategic decisions, actions, and behaviors. Kim (2009) further suggests that we must make the effort to make the strategy and policy formulation more answerable to cultural factors. Admitted the importance of the role of culture at the policy formulation level, it is necessary to analyse the cultural factors that may affect policy makers' decisions in the Offsite NCEE policy.

In the course of the officer interviews, there is a general view that there is no 'perfect equity'. Officers pointed out that educational equity cannot ever fully be attained, but be promoted conditionally. It should be noted that this view of officers comes from the cultural value of harmony they hold. The value of harmony has been seen as the essential cultural value in Chinese society. It comes from the traditional Chinese Confucian culture, and is widely recognized as the core value of Confucian theories of social interaction (Wei and Li, 2013). In Confucianism, harmony refers to the coexistence of multiple parties and a favourable relationship among them (ibid). In Wei and Li's (2013) study of the Confucian value of harmony, four interactional features of the Confucian harmony are summarised. Firstly, harmony describes how human beings ought to act. A person is expected to be able to respect different opinions and work with different people. Secondly, harmony emphasises the coexistence of multiple parties. Harmony cannot be achieved by a single party, but

by coordinating multiple parties in a cooperative way. Thirdly, harmony is not sameness. Harmony respects differences of individuals. In harmonious circumstances, it is not necessary that one gives up one's identify in order to reach harmony (Huang, 2006). Last but not the least, harmony provides a mutual context that for and against each party. A harmonious relationship facilitates mutual support between parties (Wei and Li, 2013).

This philosophical perspective is highly valued in Chinese social life. It has been ingrained in the minds of Chinese and has deeply influence on Chinese social life and structures of Chinese societies for thousands of years (Wei and Li, 2013). In 2004, the central government launched a movement for Harmonious Society Construction (ibid). This had the aim of reducing social conflict and to building a more balanced relationship between social classes. This movement defines social harmony as the dominant socioeconomic vision of China. Under such circumstances, the value of harmony continues to be promoted. It guides people's beliefs and interaction behaviours and manners in every aspect of Chinese social life.

In relation to modern social life, the literature refers to the value of harmony as conflict control and pursuit of balance (Huang, 2006). In harmonious circumstances, it intends to avoid confrontations between parties and to reduce the degree of conflict. It also seeks a certain degree of balance between the interests of the parties. It looks for a peaceful solution to competition and a harmonious result for all stakeholders. The value of harmony facilitates mutual understanding and tolerance between various parties. Wei and Li (2013) point out that the value of harmony guides people to keep in balance position when conflict occurs. "When two parties are in conflict or hold different positions on one issue, the Chinese tend not to completely deny or accept one side. Instead, they frequently settle for the neutral viewpoint or solutions in pursuit of the group balance" (Wei and Li, 2013, p.62). To be balanced is recognized as a sensible solution for a conflicting issue, and also becomes a sensible interaction behaviour in Chinese social life.

The role of self-interest

Self-interest in the Offsite NCEE policy is largely the consequence of the Chinese household registration system, known as 'hukou'. When examining the role of self-interest in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy, the Chinese household registration system should be clearly explained. As noted in section 2.2, the Chinese household registration system requires the registration of every Chinese citizen at birth, and officially identifies a person's residential location and hukou type (Chan, 2009). Every Chinese citizen must registered in one place of residence only. The importance of hukou in this research is that it defines every individual as a resident of an area, and thus defines the individuals' rights to purpose eligibility for services and to gain access to benefits in a specific locality (ibid). Meanwhile, regions normally do not provide benefits for citizens whose hukou location is elsewhere, but instead, treat them as 'outside migrants'. In this way, Hukou separates people according to their registration place. Local governments are concerned with the welfare of local residents, and take action for regional protection.

In principle, children are expected to study and take the NCEE in the region where their hukou is registered. However, as noted in section 5.1, with the large scale of intra-province migration, migrant children's education has received much attention. Different provinces have different situations. The inbound province and the outbound province occupy different positions regarding the Offsite NCEE policy. However, as discussed earlier, the allocation of responsibilities in the programming of Offsite NCEE policy gives great discretionary powers to local governments. The discretionary powers of local governments in the programming of Offsite NCEE policy provide an opportunity for both the inbound and the outbound local governments to design their policy plans based on their self-interest.

7.2.4 What is the impact of these factors on the decisions of policy makers?

Cultural value

Guiding by the value of harmony, the government looked for a peaceful solution for the NCEE policy. As noted in section 7.1, the offsite NCEE policy aims to solve the entrance exam problem for migrant children and to protect migrant children's right

to education. With regard to the Offsite NCEE policy, the two groups of stakeholders, migrants and local residents are holding different positions on the Offsite NCEE policy. Migrant students are happy with the Offsite NCEE policy. Both interviews with migrant students in the inbound province and the interviews with students in the outbound province reflect the great expectation of migrant students towards fully implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. However, local residents may become overanxious and become worried about the Offsite NCEE policy. Interviews with local students in the inbound province suggest that they hold negative attitudes towards migrant students moving into Zhejiang. They worried that they might be threatened by migrant children as they have to share educational resources with migrant students and compete with them in the exam. Migrant families and local residents have their own interests and attitudes towards the Offsite NCEE policy. This implies that it is very difficult for the two groups of stakeholders to achieve agreement on the Offsite NCEE policy. How to balance the relationship between the two groups of stakeholders regarding to the Offsite NCEE policy is thus a major problem for policy makers. This is exemplified by the findings from the officer interviews. During the interviews with policy makers in the inbound province, the word 'balance' was frequently mentioned by the officers. They stated that their mission in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy was to find a balancing point between the two groups of stakeholders, and try to make the policy acceptable to everyone.

The role of self-interest

In the inbound province, when examining how the role of self-interest influence local governments in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy, the findings suggest that two factors were carefully considered by the provincial governments based on their self-interests, namely local carrying capacity and welfare of local residents. Firstly, with the large scale of intra-province migration, migrant children have a strong demand for studying in the inbound province. This makes the inbound province concerned with their local carrying capacity. In the course of the interviews, officers claimed that they had to carefully evaluate local educational resources and facilities, and predict how many migrant students they could afford to educate. This is what the officers meant by local carrying capacity. Officers were also concerned

about educational investment. They complained that the inbound province would have great financial pressure if a lot of migrant students moved in. And the large number of inbound migrants would create extra work on population management. The implication of all this is that the local government regards migrant children's education as a kind of additional favour to migrant families. It takes education for migrant children as an additional pressure, rather than a compulsory responsibility.

Secondly, the inbound province officers stated that local residents' interests must be carefully considered and protected. During the interviews, officers claimed that the biggest difficulty in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy was to find a way to protect local residents' interests. The findings suggest that local students may suffer twofold. Firstly, as noted in section 6.1, the admission quota for a given province is fixed. Migrant students take the quota if they take the NCEE in the inbound province, thus causing local students to suffer. Moreover, as the studying places of existing schools are limited, migrant students take the studying places of local students. Officers were concerned with how to protect the welfare of local residents when drafting the policy plan. The welfare of local residents has been given much more priority than migrant student education.

In the outbound province, when referring to the role of self-interest in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy, evidence shows that local situation has been carefully considered by the officers. Firstly, setting loose conditions in regard to the Offsite NCEE policy is the consequence of local governments' passion for local development. As noted in section 3.3, Jiangxi is a rather less developed province. In order to promote local economic development, a series of talent introduction policies has been promoted in Jiangxi (People's Government of Jiangxi Province, 2016). The local government is inclined to attract more talent and entrepreneurs to stay in Jiangxi to contribute to local development. For this reason, how to build up a friendly environment for the talents and entrepreneurs has become one of the responsibilities for the local government. The local government needs to take their needs into account when making decision. Local governments have to consider about social services for them, such as housing, health, and their children's education. This strengthens the local government's inclination to set more lenient conditions for inbound migrant students to allow them to study in Jiangxi. Secondly,

officers estimated the consequences of the Offsite NCEE policy in Jiangxi when making decisions. As Jiangxi is an outbound province with limited number of inbound migrant students, officers believed that Jiangxi has the ability to provide sufficient study places for inbound migrant students. Therefore, in the outbound province, we can see that self-interest incentivises the local government to set loose conditions when programming the Offsite NCEE policy in Jiangxi.

To sum, the cultural value and the role of self-interest are the two main factors in the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy. Following the value of harmony, the central government and local governments carefully balance the relationship between migrant children and local residents. Central government documents clearly state that the Offsite NCEE policy of each province should be made according to local conditions. The implication of this is that the central government aims to protect migrant children's right to education, and meanwhile, it also carefully considered the local carrying ability of the inbound province. The solution made by the central government to achieve the balance between the two groups of stakeholders is to give full discretion to local governments to make their specific policy plans.

7.3 Policy implementation

This section discusses the stage of implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. It addresses the third group of the research sub-questions.

Q3.1 Who is responsible for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented?

Q3.3 What are the factors that affect the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Q3.4 What is the impact of these factors on policy implementation?

Q3.5 To what extent is the Offsite NCEE policy effectively implemented?

This section firstly addresses the allocation of responsibilities for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy and actions in the policy implementation by using Knoepfel et al's (2011) approach. The factors affecting the policy implementation in the two cases are discussed. Then the effectiveness of the policy implementation is examined.

7.3.1 Who is responsible for the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

The Offsite NCEE policy has been implemented by using the 'top-down' mode. As noted in section 3.3, in the 'top-down' mode of policy implementation, policy goals and decisions are generated by the 'top' of the political system and delivery 'down' to the implementers (Pulzl and Treib, 2007).

With regard to the Offsite NCEE policy, the central government made the final decision that the Offsite NCEE must be conducted. It defined the target group, policy goals, and guiding principles. It provided the political-administrative arrangement (PAA) for the Offsite NCEE policy at national level. The decisions were then delivered to local governments at the provincial level. The discretionary power of the provincial governments gave them full authority to interpret the Offsite NCEE policy based on their needs. The provincial governments programed their own policy plans and delivered the decisions to lower level authorities. In the inbound province, the policy implementation procedures go through the government hierarchy from top down. The provincial educational administrative department made the conditions for migrant children and issued directives to the municipal educational administrative department. The municipal-level educational administrative department continued to deliver the directives to county-level educational administrative department. In the inbound province, there were three authorities that participated in the policy implementation, namely the municipal-level educational bureaus, municipal education examinations authority, and the county-level educational bureaus. In the outbound province, the policy implementation procedures go though by the same procedure as is the case with the inbound province. Three levels of educational administrative departments were involved in the policy implementation: provincial level, municipal level and county level.

Here we can see that, in both inbound province and outbound province, the decisions and directives of the Offsite NCEE policy are delivered from higher to lower ranking governments, from superior authorities to lower level authorities. The way of delivering decisions in the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy represents a 'top-down' process.

7.3.2 How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented?

As noted in section 3.3, Knoepfel et al (2011) propose two products at the stage of policy implementation, action plans (Aps) and implementation acts (outputs). Action plans refer to the production of concrete measures and the allocation of resources for the policy implementation. Implementation acts (output) refer to final acts of the political administrative processes aimed at the defined affected groups.

In the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy, based on their self-interest, the local governments interpreted the Offsite NCEE policy according to their local situations. In the inbound province, the provincial government made flexible conditions for migrant children who want to take the NCEE in Zhejiang. The conditions contain two dimensions:

> ➢ Having student status
> ➢ Have been studying in senior high schools of Zhejiang for three years

Migrant student who meet the two conditions are allowed to take the NCEE in the inbound province. This seems very easy for migrant students. However, the provincial government gave full discretion to the local governments at municipal level to make their admission criteria for migrant children to access schools. The local governments in effect restrict migrant children's opportunity to get a study place in the inbound province. In this way, the number of migrant children in schools is under control and the number of migrant children who participate in the Offsite NCEE is also controlled. In the outbound province, according to the conditions made by the provincial government, inbound migrant children are required to have student status, and at least one year studying experience in Jiangxi. Factors and issues in the policy implementation of the two cases will be discussed later.

7.3.3 What are the factors that affect the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy?

Factors affecting the policy implementation, the inbound province

Both the central government documents and the local government documents clearly claim that educational carrying capacity of the inbound province should be considered in the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. This was supported by the findings of the officer interviews. Officers claimed that local educational resources are one of the most significant issues in the implementation of the offsite NCEE policy. Officers were concerned about whether local carrying capacity can afford education for migrant students. Local educational resource carrying capacity heavily depends upon the educational supply of the local governments. This suggests that the mismatch between educational demand and supply in the inbound province is a major variable in implementing the Offsite NCEE policy.

Before discussing the mismatch between educational demand and supply in the inbound province, it is necessary to give a definition of the two concepts. The concepts of demand and supply carry different meaning in different contexts. In education research, the term supply is regarded to the provision of educational opportunities while the term demand is regarded to the decisions to take advantage of such opportunities (Buchmann and Hannum, 2001). In Buchmann and Hannum's (2001) research of education and stratification in developing countries, they point out that the concepts of demand and supply are interrelated and simultaneously impacted by some factors.

In the context of this research, educational demand is associated with the requirement of students for schooling. This is measured by the number of students, including the number of local students and the number of migrant students. Educational supply is associated with educational resources available for students in the inbound province. It is measured by the number of schools, the number of professional teachers, school facility, educational quality and the educational funding, etc. To be more specific, in this research, two dimensions are discussed to measure

the educational supply in the inbound province, these being public financial budget funds for education and the number of schools.

When facing the strong demand of migrant children for school places, the mismatch between educational demand and supply has become a significant factor affecting migrant children's education policy.

Factors affecting the policy implementation, the outbound province

As noted in section 6.3, the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province surrounds the students' transfer management. The findings of this research suggest that the exam-oriented educational system and funding allocation are two main factors that affect the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province.

Exam-oriented educational system

The findings of this research suggest that the exam-oriented education system affects the decisions of schools and local educational bureaus in student transferring management.

The examination-oriented education has long been deeply embedded in China. Within such an exam-oriented educational system, academic achievement has long been considered as the primary indicator for evaluating school performance and regional educational quality (Chai and Cheng, 2011). In Chai and Cheng's (2011) study of basic education in China, they discover that teachers' performance, school performance and regional educational quality heavily depend on students' examination results. Students are labelled as 'good' or 'bad' in schools according to their examination results. Schools evaluate teachers by assessing performance of their students in the examinations. The local educational departments measure school performance by assessing the admission rates in the selective examinations. This criterion is further adopted to evaluate the educational quality of a region.

The exam-oriented mode has been widely criticised. Indeed, the Ministry of Education has conducted a series of reforms to promote 'suzhi jiaoyu' (quality –

oriented education) in schools. 'Suzhi jiaoyu', which is often translated as 'quality-oriented' education, refers to an educational mode that focuses on developing well-rounded individuals rather than only examination scores (Dello-Iacovo, 2009). According to the reforms, the local government at all levels is not allowed to measure school performance by accessing academic achievement, but takes account of a variety of factors, such as moral education, teacher ethics, etc. However, the Ministry of Education has admitted that the exam-oriented educational mode has not fully changed yet (Ministry of Education, 2016). Education in China still uses the examination-oriented mode. Schools are still caught by an exam-oriented educational system that measures school performance by examination results.

Academic achievement is still one of the most important indicators used by the educational department to assess school performance. In the outbound province, the school assessment regulations published by the provincial educational department list a number of indicators which are used to evaluate school performance. The school assessment regulation clearly states that 'academic standards' are an indicator of assessing school performance (The people's Government of Jiangxi Province, 2016). The 'academic standard' contains two key elements, which are pass rates in the examinations and students' academic performance in schools. According to the assessment regulations, each school is given a score on the basis of the indicators (ibid). This implies that the schools where students attain better examination result can get higher score in school evaluation. This is crucial for school as the evaluation decide whether the school is 'key school' or 'non-key school'.

Moreover, examination results are closely associate with the reputation of the schools. There is a socio-cultural perception that academic performance is a measure of identifying schools' reputation. Sagir et al (2014) point out that academic success is the most important factor effecting school reputation. In Sagir et al (2014) research of school reputation in Turkey, it was found that parents take academic success as the most important thing for school reputation. In this research, it was found that the socio-cultural perception regarding with school reputation in China is similar to that of Turkey. In both the inbound province and outbound province, parents strongly care about their children's examination results. Parents take examination results as the most significant indicator to evaluate the quality of schools. Schools with high

admission rates are labelled as 'good' schools, while schools with low admission rates are labelled 'bad' schools. The schools are thus differentiated by examination results in parents' eyes.

The responsibility of government and schools in funding allocation

In the course of the officer interviews, it was found that funding allocation is one significant factor that affects the decisions of schools in regards to student transferring management. Funding allocation is closely associated with the number of students, as the funds for schools contain the headcount fees of every individual student. The headcount fees largely maintain the daily running cost of schools.

During the interview, officers described the procedures of funding allocation in the outbound province. The procedures of funding allocation gone through by the government hierarchy involve three levels of government authorities. The schools report the aggregated number of students in a whole academic year to their superior educational administrative departments, which might be a district education bureau or municipal education bureau. The local educational departments collect the information from schools and estimate headcount fees for each student. The information and budget are mutually reviewed and approved by the local educational departments and local financial departments. It is then reported to the provincial level authorities. After being reviewed and approved by the provincial educational department and the provincial financial department, the budget is reported to the people's government of Jiangxi province. The final stage of the procedures involves being reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance. When allocating funds, the procedures go through from top down. On the basis of the number of students and headcount fees for each student, the superior government makes the decision about how much funding is allocated to each sub-region. On the basis of the number of students, the district governments then decide on how much funding is allocated to each school.

7.3.4 What is the impact of these factors on policy implementation?

The Inbound province

The most serious problem relating to migrant children's education in the inbound province is the tension between the large number of migrant children and the limited educational resources. That is, whether the migrant children are able to access education in the inbound province depends upon how many study places are available for them. Officers complained that they were under great pressure when facing the increasing educational demand from children. The less migrant children access schools, the less pressure the local government will have. Providing sufficient places to a large number of children is a major obstacle to the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. The focus is thus placed upon the admission policy for compulsory schools in the inbound province.

The mismatch between educational demand and supply made the schools become highly selective. Officers stated that the inbound province would not be able to provide sufficient study places for children if there was no action taken to control the number of migrant students. As a consequence, the local governments at municipal level have been allowed to set up their own admissions criteria for compulsory education.

In City 1, the municipal educational bureau published a detailed regulation for the compulsory education admission. According to the regulation, all children of compulsory school age are divided into four tiers. Children are categorized into four tiers according to the three main factors, which are their hukou, their parents' hukou and home housing situation. The schools enrol children according to the tier rank. The first tier children have priority in admissions. If there are still study places available, the schools go for the next tier. There are fewer places for students in the lower tiers.

> *"The first tier*
>
> *First category: The student's hukou is accordance with parents' hukou and home address, located in the educational service district of the school; The school-age child's hukou and parents' hukou belongs to the grandparent's*

hukou from the birth of the child, and grandparents are living in the educational service of the school, if the parents have no housing property. Second category: The student's hukou is in accordance with one of the parents' hukou and home address, located in the educational service district of the school." (Regulation for the compulsory education admission of Hangzhou, 2015).

"The fourth tier: Migrant children of school age who meet the conditions" (Regulation for the compulsory education admission of Hangzhou, 2015).

In City 2, the regulations clearly state that "Schools should consider the hukou and home housing situation, and the priority principle of "hukou and home address consistence", enrol students according to the tier rank" . Similar with the regulation of City 1, the regulations of all districts also divide children into five tiers according to the three main factors, which are their hukou, their parents' hukou and home address situation.

"The first tier
The student's hukou is accordance with parents' hukou and home address, located in the educational service district of the school (and the householder in Hukou booklet and housing owner is and only is parent); if the number of children in this tier far exceeds the admission plan, the children should be admitted according to when their hukou registered" (Regulation for the compulsory education admission of Ningbo, 2015).

"The fifth tier
Migrant children of school age who meet the conditions" (Regulation for the compulsory education admission of Ningbo, 2015).

Indeed, the central government requires that migrant children be equally treated with local children. However, the regulations published by the local governments present huge barriers for migrant children to access schools and thus threaten migrant children's right to access education. In the regulations of City 1 and City 2, the local children whose hukou are accordance with parents' hukou and home address are given priority in the tier rank, while the migrant children are placed in the last tier. This suggests that school places and access are restricted to migrant children.

This is supported by the findings of this research. As noted in section 4.1, the findings of student questionnaire survey show that the majority of the migrant students studied in Zhejiang at the beginning of primary schools. Only about one tenth of migrant students were accepted by the schools when they were halfway

through secondary education. The interviews with migrant students further support this point. A majority of migrant students interviewed have been in Zhejiang from primary school. This implies that not all migrant children can access education in Zhejiang. It appears to be very difficult for migrant children who are halfway through secondary education to find a study places in the inbound province. Some non-first year migrant students are excluded from the education in the inbound province.

In City 1, regarding to the migrant children's application for compulsory schools in 2016, migrant children must meet five conditions.

1. The school-age children in 2016 refers to the children who born 01/09/2008-31/08/2009;
2. All migrant children who have a guardian in their original hukou place should receive compulsory education in their original hukou place;
3. Both parents have (temporary) residence certificate by 31/08/2016 and keep handling as required without interruption
4. Both or one of parents have paid insurance by 31/08/2016 and keep handling as required without interruption;
5. Both or one of parents have signed a contract of employment with the employer of City 1 or have obtained the business licence Of City 1 from industrial and commercial department by 31/08/2016 and keep handling as required without interruption;

The local government further clearly lists seven certificates needed for migrant children's school applications.

1. The family household registration booklet and parents' IDs;
2. Both parents' (temporary) residence certificates in City 1;
3. Property ownership certificate or proof of tenancy agreement;
4. Both or one of parents' proof of insurance record in City 1
5. Both or one of parents' proof of employment or the business licence Of City 1 from industrial and commercial department
6. Children's vaccination certificate

7. Certificate of the only child or a family planning certificate issued by the township level or sub-district level government of the original hukou place

In City 2, regarding the migrant children's application for compulsory schools, the local government requires that the living location of the migrant children must be in accordance with parent's working location and insurance record location. Besides, migrant children must meet four conditions to apply for compulsory schools.

The four conditions are:

1. Having a certificate issued by the township level or sub-district level government of the outbound place acknowledging that there is no guardian for the child in the original hukou place;
2. Both parents have stable residences in the inbound place, and already have the 'Residence Certificate of Zhejiang' or 'Temporary Residence Certificate of Zhejiang' for more than one year without interruption. Meanwhile, parents have the tenancy agreement formal text in accordance with the address shown in 'Residence Certificate of Zhejiang' or 'Temporary Residence Certificate of Zhejiang'.
3. One of the parents has a legal and stable occupation, and has a contract of employment or business licence for more than one year. Parents must pay insurance in the inbound place (one year or above, ongoing, without interruption, supplementary payment is invalid).
4. Parents must not be against the Family Planning Policy, and have current valid 'proof of migrant population marriage and childbearing' or 'Proof of Migrant Family Planning'

Here we can see that migrant families must hand in six certificates to the district educational bureaux to apply for compulsory schools.

1. a certificate issued by the township level or sub-district level government of the outbound place acknowledging that there is no guardian for the child in the original hukou place;
2. 'Residence Certificate of Zhejiang' or 'Temporary Residence Certificate of Zhejiang' for more than one year;

3. tenancy agreement formal text which accordance with the address show in 'Residence Certificate of Zhejiang' or 'Temporary Residence Certificate of Zhejiang';

4. proof of employment or business licence for more than one year;

5. proof of insurance record for one year and above;

6. 'proof of migrant population marriage and childbearing' or 'Proof of Migrant Family Planning'.

It should be noted that in regard to the regulation mentioned about 'guardian in the original hukou place'. In City 1, it is stipulated that the migrant children who have guardian in their original hukou place should receive the compulsory education in their original hukou place. In City 2, it stipulated that migrant children applying compulsory schools must hand in a certificate issued by their home government acknowledging that there is no guardian for the child in the original hukou place. In other words, the inbound places will not provide education for migrant children unless they do not have any guardian in their original hukou place and have to move to the inbound province with their parents. The implication of this is that the inbound province in effect does not want to afford education for migrant children, and even takes action to stop migrant children from accessing schools.

The local governments set up their own school admission conditions for migrant students. The conditions present huge barriers for migrant children to study in public schools. By setting out the barriers, the local governments are in effect excluding some migrant children from the education in the inbound province. Some migrant children are enrolled while some of them are kept out.

The outbound province

The importance placed on academic performance has meant that schools tend to focus on how to increase the admission rate. Officers in the outbound province revealed that schools pay closest attention to 'good' students who have the best prospects of accessing university. As a consequence, schools might make an attempt to retain 'good' students and prevent them from transferring to other schools. In the same logic, local educational departments tend to focus on admission rate and the

number of students enrolled by the HEIs. In the course of the interviews with officers, they admitted that local educational departments might try to retain 'good' students to increase the admission rate. Schools and the local educational departments tended to prevent students who have the best prospects of accessing university from moving out.

For this reason, schools and local educational departments did intervene in the school transferring procedures of students. For example, as one officer described, schools might provide extra funds for 'good' students to attract them, and might refuse to complete the school transferring procedure for students. The local education departments are able to fail any student's transfer application. Students cannot complete the procedures if the local educational department do not stamp the documents.

In the inbound province, it was funding allocation was one significant factor that affects the decisions of schools in regards to student transferring management. Because funding allocation in the inbound province is closely associated with the number of students. The implication of this funding allocation mode is that schools with more students receive more funds, while losing students will receive reduced funds. In this way, schools tended to control the number of students. They might make an attempt to prevent school transferring if a large number of students wish to move out.

7.3.5 To what extent is the Offsite NCEE policy effectively implemented?

In this research, evidence suggests that ambiguous policy goals and discretion in the policy process undermine the effectiveness of the policy implementation. Firstly, scholars point out that the effectiveness of policy implementation heavily depends upon the design of the policy, that is, clear policy goals facilitate effectiveness in the policy implementation (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1983; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). The overall goals of the policy should provide concrete objectives and targets for policy implementers. Policy implementers should know what they are supposed to do in the implementation process.

However, with regard to the Offsite NCEE policy, the guiding principles and goals of the Offsite NCEE policy proposed by the central government are not clear. As noted in section 6.1, from the content analysis of the central government documents, the central government made seven goals of the Offsite NCEE policy.

1. To solve the entrance examination problem for migrant children
2. To insist on 'people-oriented' concept
3. To protect migrant children's right to education
4. To promote educational equity
5. To protect and improve people's livelihood
6. To strengthen and innovate social management
7. To promote social stability

The central government proposed general policy goals that they require local governments to achieve. However, it did not provide any concrete action for the policy implementation, for example, what actions should be taken in order to protect migrant children's right to education? What are the consequences if the local governments fails to achieve the goals? Being ambiguous in policy goals may reduce the feasibility of the policy implementation. By setting up clear goals and concrete policy actions, the centre government can better supervise local governments' behaviours in the policy implementation. However, regarding to the Offsite NCEE policy, local governments were not told exactly what they were supposed to do.

Secondly, discretion in the development process of the offsite NCEE policy has a significant effect on the results of policy implementation. As discussed above, the programming of the offsite NCEE policy at national level has its own rationale. Different provinces experience different circumstances. Therefore, the central government gives great discretionary power to local governments and leaves room for them to formulate their own policy plans. Local governments tend to take advantage of discretionary power to pursue their own interests. Room for discretion undermine the policy goal of 'promoting educational equity'. This is exemplified with the findings of the inbound province case.

The inbound province: Exclusion of migrant children from schools

In the inbound province, the local government has its own routine to interpret the Offsite NCEE policy. Indeed the local government satisfied the requirement of the central government that conduct the Offsite NCEE policy. The inbound province published their regulations and conduct the Offsite NCEE policy from 2013. As noted above, the inbound province made loose conditions for migrant students which contain only two dimensions:

➢   Having student status
➢   Have been studying in senior high schools of Zhejiang for three years
 (The people's Government of Zhejiang Province, 2016)

In the interviews with migrant students in the inbound province, students stated that the application procedure for the Offsite NCEE were easy and convenient. According to the findings of student interviews, we can see that the inbound province did follow the documentary and implemented the policy as planned. However, the discretionary power of local government enables the inbound province to set out a series of criteria via local government policy to exclude migrant children from schools. By setting out these criteria, local governments are in effect undermining the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy, resulting in policy objectives not being achieved.

The condition 'have been studied in senior high schools of Zhejiang for three years' indicates that migrant children must complete the senior high school education in Zhejiang. Meanwhile, the local governments at municipal level set up their own conditions for migrant students to access senior high schools. The conditions of all regions within the inbound province shared one similarity, which is that migrant students must complete compulsory education in local schools if he or she wants to get into a senior high school there. This implies that the opportunity of accessing primary schools is crucial to migrant student, as it decides whether the migrant children can stay and take the NCEE in the inbound province.

As what discussed earlier (section 7.3), there are huge barriers for migrant children to access primary schools in the inbound province. The local governments at

municipal level set up their own school admission conditions for migrant students. In practice, it is not easy for migrant families to meet all these conditions and have all certificates. There are many factors that may tend to restrict migrant families' opportunities from meeting the conditions. For example, Migrant parents may not have stable jobs and are not (always) able to provide proof of employment or business licence. Migrant families have to go back to their original hukou place to collect the certificates, which costs a huge amount of time and transportation. Only if migrant families meet all the conditions and collected all certificates can they be put on the waiting list. However, even though they might be able to meet all the conditions and collect all certificates, they are still ranked in the last tier of the waiting list. The result of the regulations and conditions is that it is extremely difficult for migrant children to get study places in the inbound province. Some migrant children who cannot access public schools have to find study places in private schools or migrant schools. And some of them have to return to their original hukou place.

In the inbound province, the exclusion of migrant children from schools shows the local government's hostility for providing education for migrant children. The school access policy for migrant children in the inbound province is not fully implemented. The number of migrant students' access to senior high schools is thus strictly controlled, resulting in ineffectiveness of the Offsite NCEE policy.

The outbound province: students' expectations and decisions

The findings of this research demonstrate the strong desire of children for moving out from the outbound province. The findings of the questionnaire survey suggest that most students prefer to move out from Jiangxi to study and take the NCEE. When asking about the places they prefer to move to and the reasons behind their preferences, some students claimed that they wanted to move to the places where one or both of their parents were staying. This suggests that there were some students who were left behind by their parents. For example, it is interesting to note that Zhejiang, the inbound province in this research, was ranked 3rd in students' preferences regarding the place they would like to move to. The reason behind this preference is that one or both of their parents were working in Zhejiang. The

implication of students' preferences is that the left-behind children have a strong demand for moving out from the outbound province and living with their parents.

As noted in section 4.5, firstly senior high school students were considered as the target group in this research. However, throughout the pilot study, it was hard to find any senior high school students who would move out to other provinces and take the Offsite NCEE. Officers suggested that there was no suitable outbound student in senior high school due to the condition of the Offsite NCEE policy made by the central government: 'the student must have completed 1-3 year (min 1 year) high school study in the inbound place.' This condition stipulates that student must study in the inbound place 1-3 year if they would like to take the Offsite NCEE. This means that the senior high school students may not have the opportunity to take the exam in another province. The target group in the inbound province thus changed to junior high school students. In principle, the migrant students in junior high school have the opportunity to move out from the outbound province and stay with their parents. However, this research reveals that the majority of them failed to do so. A majority of migrant students claimed that they would not move out with their parents, but stay in Jiangxi, while very few of them stated that they would move to other provinces. When discovering the reasons behind their choice, five dimensions were illustrated.

Firstly, the Offsite NCEE policy has not been fully conducted across the country. Some migrant students reported that their parents were working in the three regions which do not conducted the Offsite NCEE policy, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong. Scholars point out that policy would have been different if it were Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong, as they are the three inbound place with the largest scale of inbound migrants (Chen, 2015). There are multiple restrictions on the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy in these regions. In this research, officers stated that the main reason for delaying implementation of the Offsite NCEE in the three regions was local carrying capacity. The local governments of the three regions are not able to provide education for a large number of migrant children. For this reason, the three regions have not conducted the Offsite NCEE policy (People.cn, 2016). Beijing only opens the Offsite vocational college entrance examination (ibid), and migrant children are only permitted to access vocational colleges if they take the NCEE in

Beijing. Although Shanghai has opened the Offsite NCEE with a series of highly restrictive criteria. Although it allows migrant students to take the NCEE, the admission score line for migrant students is different from the score line for local students (ibid). Guangdong opens the Offsite NCEE from 2016 (ibid). As a result, migrant children whose parents were working in the three regions could not take the NCEE there even if they moved to the three regions.

Secondly, some migrant students reported that they did not meet the conditions of the inbound province. They complained that the conditions of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound places were restricted for them. For example, some of them said that the inbound places required them to hand in insurance record certificates. However, their parents did not have any insurance record in the inbound place, and thus they were not able to get such a document. Moreover, some migrant students complained that they were not able to find a study place in inbound places due to the restrictive conditions of the inbound places for migrant children. For example, students claimed that their parents did not have stable jobs and thus were not able to provide proof of employment. This is supported by the findings of City 1. As noted in section 7.3, the local governments in Zhejiang set up their own conditions for migrant children, presenting huge barriers for migrant children to find study places.

Thirdly, some migrant students claimed that they preferred to stay in Jiangxi as they were more familiar with the study environment in Jiangxi. Students always studied in Jiangxi and had never been to study in other places. Teaching styles, exam contents and exam modes are different across provinces. They worried about how to familiarise themselves with a new environment, and even felt scared to move to a new place.

Fourthly, some migrant students stated that they were not able to move out due to family reasons. For example, due to the much higher cost of living in big cities or developed regions, as reported by some students, their family financial situation cannot help them to move out with their parents, while some students said that their parents were too busy to take care of them. For those family reasons, the students had to stay in Jiangxi with their grandparents or other families.

Last but not the least, there is a general view of students that it is too early to think about the NCEE at the moment for them. Their mission at the moment was the senior high school entrance examination, but not the NCEE. Many of them stated that they had not thought about the NCEE so far.

Jiangxi is considered to be the outbound province in this research. Standing in such position, many left-behind students in Jiangxi were not able to move to the inbound province. For this reason, the implementation of the Offsite NCEE in the inbound province is not fully effective.

7.4 Impact

This section discusses the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province and the outbound province. It addresses the fourth group of the research sub-questions.

Q4.1 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the inbound province?

Q4.2 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the inbound province?

It should be noted that the official statistics for the Offsite NCEE policy have limitations. There are no official statistics available regarding many of the dimensions. For example, how many migrant students took the Offsite NCEE in 2015, and how many migrant students were enrolled by HEIs through by the Offsite NCEE. As a result, the impacts in reality cannot be evaluated due to the absence of valid data. For this reason, in this section, the impacts of the Offsite NCEE policy are discussed using the views of stakeholders in this research.

7.4.1 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the inbound province?

The Offsite NCEE policy benefits the migrant children in the inbound province. It provides an opportunity for migrant children to take the NCEE in Zhejiang. Some migrant children even claimed that they could get into better HEIs if they took the NCEE in Zhejiang rather than their original hukou place. The Offsite NCEE policy enables migrant children to stay with their parents, providing great convenience for

migrant families. Migrant children do not have to return to their original hukou place and separate with their parents. The local students worried about their interests might be threatened by the Offsite NCEE policy. This is because the migrant students in the inbound province occupy the admission quotas.

The official statistics of the Zhejiang province only publish the data of 2013 and 2014 regarding the number of students who participated in the Offsite NCEE. 984 migrant students participated in the Offsite NCEE in 2013, and there were 3400 migrant students in 2014. The officers stated that the number of migrant students will keep increasing in coming years. The officers concerned about the local educational resources are under great pressure given the increasing demand of migrant children for education. The Offsite NCEE policy may also bring extra works to the population management in the inbound province.

7.4.2 What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the outbound province?

Officers believed that the Offsite NCEE policy benefits the outbound province. It provides opportunities for 'left-behind' children to move out with their parents. The pressure of NCEE competition will reduce in the outbound province with the moving out of left-behind children. However, it was found that there was no remarkable change in the NCEE and HE admission.

Table 7.2 The NCEE in Jiangxi

	The number of students	Admission rate of yiben HEIs
2012	269 thousand	8.91%
2013	274 thousand	9.07%
2014	326 thousand	8.92%
2015	354 thousand	8.10%

(Statistic Bureau of Jiangxi, 2016)

Table 7.2 shows the number of students participating in the NCEE from 2012 to 2015. The number of students has increased from 269 thousand in 2012 to 354 thousand in 2015. Meanwhile, the admission rate of yiben HEIs in Jiangxi remains only slightly different, at around 8% to around 9%. This suggests that the pressure of NCEE competition has not been reduced as the officers described. Moreover, this

research also found that very few left-behind children would move out with their parents. That is to say, there is no great influence on the outbound province at the moment.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This chapter summarises the findings of this study. It firstly answers the research questions, and then evaluates the contributions that this study can make to existing research. The conclusion chapter also discusses the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

8.1 Summary of the findings

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Offsite National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) policy in the two research places. This research analyses the Offsite NCEE policy by using three stages of Knoepfel et al's (2011) model: agenda setting, policy programming, and policy implementation. Furthermore, this research explores the policy impact and the views of stakeholders. The main research questions of the thesis are as follows:

What is the context for the Offsite NCEE policy? How is the Offsite NCEE policy programmed? How is the Offsite NCEE policy implemented? What is the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy? What are the views of the stakeholders tasked with the Offsite NCEE policy?

By conducting interviews, questionnaire survey and documentary analysis in the two research places, five dimensions of the offsite NCEE in China were explored: the context, the policy programming, the policy implementation, the impact and the views of stakeholders.

8.1.1 Context

The context for the Offsite NCEE policy surrounds the regional unequal opportunities of accessing higher education in the Chinese education system. Most discussion of educational equity issues focuses on the geographical inequalities of the provincial fixed-quota admission policy. The provincial fixed-quota admission policy is regarded as the core of the higher education admission system. It is directly associated with students' opportunities to access higher education at undergraduate

level. According to the provincial fixed-quota admission policy, different regions have different admission quotas. Students from the regions with more quotas have more chances of accessing higher education. The uneven allocation of admission quotas results in obstacles preventing students from enjoying equal opportunities in accessing higher education.

However, the government is not able to completely change or abolish the provincial fixed-quota admission policy at the moment. Firstly, the strategies of decentralization, localization and marketization enable local governments to play a major role in the financing, administration and planning of education, thus creating a tendency towards regionalization of higher education admission. As a consequence, HEIs tend to offer more places for local students. Secondly, the regional differences in economic development make differences in the resources available to basic and higher education across the country. The differences in government investment for basic education create a gap between the overall quality of the basic service across provinces. The long-term regional differences in economic growth potentially cause uneven distribution of HEIs. In addition, the differences in exam modes between provinces result in unequal allocation of admission quotas.

The first stage of a policy process in Knoepfel et al (2011)'s model is an agenda setting. In this stage, a problem needs to be judged on whether it is worthy of consideration. And the social groups that are affected by the problem also need to be identified in the stage of agenda setting. With regard to the Offsite NCEE policy, the large scale of intra-province migration makes the education of migrant children a serious problem for local governments. The social group that affected by the problem of migrant children education is migrants. The large number of migrant children places the issue of entrance examination at the centre of public attention. The issues of educational equity with regard to migrant children's education have been widely recognised as a public problem and requires policy development.

Knoepfel et al (2011) suggest that most public intervention is likely to correct or re-orientate a previous failed policy. The newness and urgency of the problem also need to be considered as determining factors to see if the problem is available to access to governmental agenda (Knoepfel et al, 2011). In previous policy, all students were

required to attend the NCEE where their original household was registered, regardless of their current residence and school location, resulting in significant inconvenience for migrant students. The social group of migrants has long been under threat by unequal treatment. Migrants have a strong demand to re-orientate the policy. Both the migrant students in the inbound province and the left-behind students in the outbound province have a strong demand for getting school places and taking the NCEE in the inbound places, since they want to stay with their parents. How to protect migrant children's right to education has long a problem and there has been urgent demand for public intervention. The initial purpose of the Offsite NCEE policy is to correct the previous policy and to solve the entrance examination problem for migrant children. It aims to provide equal opportunity of accessing higher education for migrant children.

8.1.2 Policy programming

Knoepfel et al (2011) suggest that there are two products of policy programming stage, the political-administrative programme (PAP) and the political administrative arrangement (PAA). With regard to the political-administrative programme, the central government decided target groups, objectives, intervention instruments and provided a guiding principle of the Offsite NCEE policy. Migrant children were defined as the target group in the Offsite NCEE policy. According to the requirements of the central government, the objectives to be attained are to promote educational equity, to promote social stability, to solve the entrance examination problem for migrant children, and to protect migrant children's right to education. In the political administrative arrangement, the central government made the principle of the Offsite NCEE policy and attributed the responsibilities for the policy programming and policy implementation to local governments.

The cultural value of harmony guided the policy makers to carefully balance the relationship between local residences and migrants. The central government aims to protect migrant children's right to education. Meanwhile, it also carefully considers the local carrying capacity of the inbound province. How to provide a harmonious result for all stakeholders has become a significant factor affecting the decisions of policy makers. The solution made by the central government to achieve the balance

between the two groups of stakeholders is to give full discretion to local governments at the provincial level. In this way, the principle made by the central government is low in specificity. It did not provide any specific action and measure for the policy implementation. Such a principle gave local governments plenty of space to exercise discretionary powers. Local governments at provincial level were granted with the authority to programme the Offsite NCEE.

Discretionary power of local governments in policy programming gave local governments freedom to interpret the Offsite NCEE policy. This provided an opportunity for both the inbound and the outbound local governments to design their policy plans based on their self-interest. In the inbound province, the local government was concerned with their local carrying capacity, and was inclined to protect the welfare of local residents. The conditions for migrant children to take the NCEE contain two dimensions: having student status and have been studying in senior highs schools in Zhejiang for three years. And the provincial government gave full discretion to municipal-level governments to make their own admission criteria for migrant children to access schools. In the outbound province, making flexible conditions for inbound migrant students in the Offsite NCEE policy might encourage more talents and entrepreneurs to stay in Jiangxi. The conditions for migrant children require that students must have student status and at least one year studying experience in Jiangxi.

8.1.3 Policy implementation

The government system in China is characterised by a hierarchical structure. In the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy, the policy procedures in both the inbound and outbound province go through the government hierarchy from top to bottom. Decisions and directives are delivered from higher to lower ranking governments, and from superior authority to lower level authority. In both the inbound province and outbound province, the provincial educational administrative department set the conditions for migrant children and issue directives to municipal educational administrative departments. Municipal-level educational administrative departments continue delivering the directives to county-level educational administrative departments.

Knoepfel et al (2011) propose two products at the stage of policy implementation, action plans (Aps) and implementation acts (outputs). In the inbound province, with regard to the action plans in the implementation of Offsite NCEE policy, the provincial government drafted the guiding principles and made specific conditions for migrant children to take the NCEE in Zhejiang. Meanwhile, municipal-level governments were given full discretion to make their own admission criteria for migrant children to access schools. Due to the mismatch between educational demand and supply in the inbound province, in the implementation acts of the Offsite NCEE policy, the local governments at municipal-level set out a series of criteria via local government policy to exclude migrant children from schools. In this way, the number of migrant student's access to senior high school is strictly controlled, which means the number of migrant students who take the Offsite NCEE in the inbound province is also strictly controlled. This undermines the effectiveness of Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province.

With regard to the actions plans in the outbound province, the provincial government drafted the procedures of student school transfer and assigned the responsibilities of different authorities in the student status management. In the implementation acts, it was found that schools and the local educational departments intervened in student school transfer procedures of students. The funding allocation mode made schools in the outbound province tended to control the number of students. They might make an attempt to prevent the school transfer if a large number of students wish to move out. Moreover, within an exam-oriented education system, the importance placed on examination results and academic performance has meant that schools and the local educational departments focus on how to increase pass rates in the examinations. As a consequence, schools and the local educational departments tended to prevent students who have the best prospects of accessing university from moving out. The findings of this research demonstrate the strong desire of left-behind children for moving out from the outbound province. However, the majority of them still had to stay in the outbound province. For this reason, the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province is not fully effective.

In both the inbound province and outbound province, the local governments did follow the requirement of the central government documents and conducted the

Offsite NCEE policy as planned. The initial purpose of the Offsite NCEE policy which is to solve the entrance examination problem for migrant children is being achieved. However, the findings of this research suggest that the ambiguous policy goals and discretion in the policy process reduce the feasibility of the policy implementation. The central government did not provide any clear goal and concrete action for the policy implementation. The discretionary power of local government enables them to interpret the policy in a way based on their needs. Local governments are able to choose not to fully conduct the policies that are required by the central government. This implies that a policy proposed by the central government will not be effectively implemented if the central government do not set clear policy goal or local governments are not motivated to implement it.

8.1.4 Impact

Based on the views of stakeholders, the impact of the Offsite NCEE policy on the inbound province surrounding the interests of migrant students and local students, and local carrying capacity. The Offsite NCEE policy benefits migrant children in the inbound province by providing an opportunity for them to take the Offsite NCEE in the inbound province. Meanwhile, the interests of local students might be threatened, as the migrant students occupy their admissions quotas and educational resources. Officers are also concerned that the increasing number of migrant students in coming years will place the local educational resources under great pressure.

In the outbound province, the Offsite NCEE policy benefits left-behind children by providing an opportunity for them to move out with their parents. It is predicted that the pressure of NCEE competition will be reduced, as the number of students who take the NCEE in the outbound province will decrease with moving out of left-behind children. However, in fact, the number of students who take the NCEE has increased and the admission rate of higher education remains relatively stable. There is no notable influence on the outbound province at the moment.

8.1.5 The views of stakeholders

Officers discussed the concept of educational equity by sequencing it according to three stages: the beginning, the process and the result. Educational equity at the

beginning refers to the equal educational opportunities and equal standards of admission requirement. Equity in process was interpreted as the equal treatment of students in the process of receiving education and equal distribution of educational resources. Officers also suggested that educational outcomes should be evaluated in terms of the extent to which educational equity has been achieved. Meanwhile, it is the general view of officers that educational equity cannot be fully achieved, but can only be promoted conditionally. Officers claim that three barriers may contribute to the issue of educational inequity in China, namely the gap between urban education and rural education, elite educational mode and the household registration system.

It is the general view of officers that the NCEE is the most equal method to select students for higher education at undergraduate level. However, they also revealed the weakness of the HE admission system. To sum up, the main points that officers referred to in regards to the weakness of the HE admission system surround five dimensions. The provincial fixed-quota admission policy causes uneven distribution of admission quotas between different provinces. The preferential policy offers extra benefits for local students, resulting in discrimination of non-local students. The difference in exam modes across provinces create difficulties in examination assessment. Within the elite educational mode, the uneven allocation of educational resources causes unbalanced development of schools. Officers also suggested that the current HE admission overly relies on examination results, but does not consider students' personal talents. The views of students regarding the context were generally consistent with the views of officers. Students admitted that the examination itself is fair, but that the HE admission system is not. Students complained that the admission rates were different across the country, resulting in inequality in HE admission. They also complained that the requirement of accessing higher education over-emphasise examination results, but ignore their personal characteristics.

Officers stated that the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy at national level makes sense. However, some officers argued that the superior conditions made by the central government still have some weaknesses. They pointed out that the condition 'parents must have stable jobs, tax record and insurance record' may exclude a large number of migrant children, as many migrants do not have stable

jobs or tax and insurance record. In the inbound province, officers thought the design of the Offsite NCEE policy plan in the inbound province was ingenious. On the one hand, it did follow the requirement of the central government and led to the conducting of the Offsite NCEE policy as planned. On the other hand, by giving discretionary power to the local governments at municipal level, the barrier has been set to exclude a number of migrant children from public schools. In this way, the number of the Offsite NCEE participants is strictly controlled. Officers believed that this strategy is the best solution to solve the Offsite NCEE problem in the inbound province. Migrant students were satisfied with the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province, while local students were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. In the outbound province, officers claimed that the design of the Offsite NCEE policy plan in the outbound province was in accordance with the local situation. The Offsite NCEE policy was interpreted as based on the needs of the outbound province. It was found that most students thought the Offsite NCEE policy should be conducted and promoted immediately. While over half of students thought that the superior conditions made by the central government were too strict.

In the inbound province, officers complained about the disarrangement in the policy implementation. They were confused about the procedure of the application assessment. Officers complained that they were not given any formal documents in which the procedure was clearly stated. In the outbound province, officers complained about the disarrangements in the student school transferring management. The procedure of student school transferring in the outbound province is handled by different authorities of inter-province and intra-province. In-coordination of different authorities causes difficulties for students in the student school transferring procedure. There is no officer training programme for the student school transferring management. The officers were not given any detailed administrative regulations in which the steps they should follow were described. No specific supporting team in schools took responsibility for student status management.

8.2 The contribution of this study

8.2.1 Theoretical implications

The findings of this research contribute to the existing literature in three aspects. Firstly, this thesis contributes to the existing body of literature on educational equity. Chapter 3 reviews the literature on educational equity. Some researchers discuss the concept of vertical equity and regard it as "unequal treatment of unequals" (Toutkoushian and Michael, 2007, p.396). Cobbold (2011) argues that the true equalization of educational outcomes is not realistic. Equity in education is to pursue unequal educational outcomes. In this research, the general view of officers further supports this point. Officers claim that educational equity can never be fully attained, but can only be promoted conditionally.

Secondly, as presented in Chapter 2, existing researches suggest that there are three significant factors that restrict equity in the undergraduate admission system. For example, in Wang's (2011) study, the provincial fixed-quota admission policy is regarded as the key to the admission system. The opportunity for students to access HEIs is not only based on their academic performance, but on the admission quotas their provinces have. The interviews with the officers in this research further exemplify this point. Officers complained that uneven distribution of admission quotas leads to unequal admission rates across the country.

The literature suggests that regional differences in economic development make differences in the resources available to basic education and also cause uneven distribution of HEIs (Mok et al, 2009; Lee and Pang, 2011; Hannum and Wang, 2006, Wu 2010). The evidence presented in this thesis also confirms this point. It was found that government investment for education in the inbound province was 46% more than in the outbound province. It was found that students would like to move to places with better basic educational services and more HEIs.

Research claims that differences in exam modes and test subjects leads to differences in evaluation standard, resulting in inequity in the admission process (Yu et al 2012, Hannum et al 2011, Liu, 2012). For example, Yu et al (2012) point out that different

test subjects and evaluation standards lead to inequity in the allocation of admission quotas. This research confirms this point. Officers pointed out that students are not placed in an equal position. The opportunity for students to access higher education heavily depends on where they take the exam. Beyond this point, this thesis further argues that the unwillingness of left-behind children to move out from the outbound province is due to different exam modes and test questions across provinces.

Thirdly, the existing literature suggests that the probability of receiving higher education for one's children is closely related to parental education (Picard and Wolff, 2005). Picard and Wolff (2005) find that the more educated parents were, the greater the expectations that parents hold for their children's educational achievement. In this case, their children were more likely to go to university. However, the findings of this research contradict this point. It was found that, according to the children, almost all parents hold great expectations for their children's educational achievement regardless of their own education background. Even through most of migrant parents were not well educated, they were aware of the link between education and life. Migrant parents strongly cared about their children's education and thus had strong demands in relation to Offsite NCEE policy.

8.2.2 Policy implications

Understanding the development of the Offsite NCEE policy is essential to address educational inequity issues in China, and the findings of this study provide various implications for education policy in China. So far, there has been a limited amount of research on the Offsite NCEE policy. All the existing literature focuses the discussions about Offsite NCEE policy on a theoretical basis (Du and Xiong, 2012; Chen, 2015). Compared with the existing literature, the present research conducts a more systematic examination of the Offsite NCEE policy, in terms of the context, policy programming, policy implementation, and impact. With regard to the Offsite NCEE policy, provinces adopt different positions based on their own positions and interests. However, there is no case study that has been conducted to examine the development of the Offsite NCEE policy from both sides. To this end, the present study not only focuses on the development of the Offsite NCEE policy at the national level, but more importantly, it chooses two specific provinces, one inbound

province and one outbound province, to investigate how Offsite NCEE policy is conducted in practice. This study thus fills the gap by investigating the development of Offsite NCEE policy in a systematic way.

As discussed in Chapter 7, this research reveals that Offsite NCEE policy has not been effectively implemented. The cultural value of harmony guides the central government carefully balance the relationship between migrant families and local residences. The implication of this is that the central government aims to protect migrant children's right to education, and meanwhile, it also give full discretion to local governments in order to protect the interests of local residences. Discretionary power enables the local governments to interpret the Offsite NCEE based on their own interests. In the inbound province, the local governments set up their own school admission regulations to exclude migrant children from schools. In this way, the number of migrant students who meet the conditions of the Offsite NCEE is strictly controlled, resulting in the ineffectiveness of the Offsite NCEE policy in the inbound province. In the outbound province, the funding allocation mode and exam-oriented educational system make schools and local educational departments' attempts to intervene in student school transferring procedures, resulting in ineffectiveness of the Offsite NCEE policy in the outbound province.

This thesis suggests that the central government needs to provide concrete goals and actions for policy implementation. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) argue that concrete objectives and targets should be provided for policy implementers. This is exemplified with this research. With regard to Offsite NCEE policy, the central government did not provide any concrete action for the policy implementation, but gives full discretionary power to the local governments. The ambiguous policy goals and room for discretion in the policy process enable the local governments to interpret the Offsite NCEE based on their own interests, undermining the effectiveness of the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy. This implies that the overall goals made by the central government were thus not fully translated into practice. This research suggests that policy goals made by the central government need to be clearer. Clear requirement may restrict the local governments in interpreting the Offsite NCEE policy based on their interests. Central government needs to provide concrete action for the policy implementation and make it clear

what the local governments are supposed to do. For example, what actions should be taken in order to protect migrant children's right to access schools? What are the consequences if the local governments fail to effectively implement the Offsite NCEE policy?

The Offsite NCEE policy is being selectively implemented. This means that the Offsite NCEE policy is an on-going issue that needs more policy action. As discussed in Chapter 7, the results of the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy are systematically produced. It is difficult to completely change the situation only with a new policy. The implication of this is that the central government needs to take action to break down the old system. For example, this thesis suggests that the central government should be more focused on the fixed quota admission policy, and take measures to deal with the inequity issues of a fixed quota admission policy. It might be helpful if the policy in the future could protect the migrant children's opportunity to access schools in the inbound province. For example, it may be decided that schools must recruit a certain proportion of migrant children. It might also be helpful if the central government could take actions to weaken exam-oriented education. The existing school assessment regulation places focus on the academic achievement of schools. The implication of this is that schools and the local educational departments tend to prevent students who have the best prospects of accessing to university from moving out. Perhaps the central government could make an effort to weaken the importance of academic achievement for school assessment. After all, the Offsite NCEE policy should be well coordinated. Multiple supportive policies should come into force in the future.

8.3 Limitations of this study

The limitations of this study must be examined. This first limitation concerns the main criticism of a case study that its inability to provide generalization (Yin, 2009). A case study provides very litter basis for generalisation since it depends on limited sampling cases (ibid). However, in this research, the validity of the findings is based on the data collected. It aims to investigate the two provinces by using a multiple

case study, but not to provide generalised findings of the development of Offsite NCEE policy across the country.

Moreover, one limitation of this research is derived from the methods used for data collection. With regard to the questionnaire survey, all the questions were tested through the pilot study to minimize the limitations. And the questionnaire was explained to students before each questionnaire survey was conducted. However, there is a possibility that students might not understand every question or might not answer every question carefully. With regard to the interviews, some interviewees did not provide all the information they know. Although all the interviewees were assured that the interviews would be anonymous and their responses would only be used for academic purpose, they might still feel uncertain about the consequences of telling the truth. For example, in an interview with an officer in the inbound province, when I asked the difficulties he met in the policy implementation, the officer did not answer this question.

The third of limitation of this study is the issue of translation. This research was conducted in China, all the data collected were originally in Chinese. Translation has the potential to affect the validity of the findings, and is thus important to this research. There is possible difference in connotations of words between two different languages. Although I have done my best to ensure the accuracy of the translation, and also had the translations checked, however, it was not possible to eliminate the limitations of translation completely.

8.4 Personal significance and Suggestions for future research

I decided to explore the unequal issues of the NCEE at very beginning of my PhD study. Before 2013, all students were required to attend the NCEE where their original household is registered, regardless of their current residence and school location. This means that migrant students were not allowed to take the NCEE in the outbound province. The Offsite NCEE policy has been published at the end of 2012 when I just started my PhD study. The Offsite NCEE policy has been seen as an important action to promote equity of access in higher education. I was attracted by this policy and decided to do research on it.

This research helped me to develop my views and understanding of the higher education admission and the whole education system in China. Before doing this research, I knew that students from different regions do not have equal access higher education. But I was not aware of how such an unequal access is produced. By doing this research, I understand that the causes for geographical inequity in China's higher education admission. Moreover, I gained a deep understanding of the relationship between the higher education admission and the whole educational system. For example, this research discusses that there are three main drivers behind the unequal distribution of admission quotes: preferential policy, distribution of HEIs, and different exam modes across the country.

In addition, I now understand that the Offsite NCEE policy is not only a solution for an issue, but relates to various factors. For example, in terms of the programming of the Offsite NCEE policy, the cultural value guides the policy makers to carefully balance the relationship between different groups. The mismatch between educational demand and supply, school funding allocation mode and exam-oriented education system has great impact on the implementation of the Offsite NCEE policy.

As noted in Chapter 4, this study is based on a limited sample size. Future researchers could extend this study into larger or different samples. For example, future research might focus on the development of the Offsite NCEE policy in other provinces. In particular, future research might focus on provinces with a large number of migrant children, such as Shanghai and Guangzhou. In doing so, different patterns and issues of the Offsite NCEE policy may be identified. Another possible direction for further research relates to children that are excluded from the schools in the inbound province. The migrant students interviewed in this study are those who study in schools. This study did not involve any migrant children who failed to get into schools in the inbound province. Further studies may be conducted from another perspective, focusing on the migrant children's school accessing policy. Another group of stakeholders in this study, left-behind children who do not move with their parents, has not been given much attention in this research. Future research could thus further explore the education for left-behind children.

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Appendix 1: Officers interview

Section 1: Basic information

Q1.1Position

Q1.2 What are you responsible for in your daily work? Please explain

Q1.3 What is your level of education

Section 2: Context and background

Q2.1 How do you understand 'educational equity'?

Q2.2 What do you think about current higher education admission?

Section 3: Questions for officers in policy programming

Q3.1 What would you say is the purpose of this policy? Why we need this policy?

Q3.2 Do you participate in this new policy? How? In policy-making, implementation or evaluation?

Q3.3 Can you explain in detail the process of policy-making?

Q3.4 What affects your decision in the process of policy-making? (Why did you design the policy in this way?)

Q3.5 What are the difficulties and challenges in the policy-making? Why? Are there any measure taken to address the issue? What are they? Why?

Q3.6 To what extend do you think the design of this policy is reasonable? What are the strengths and weaknesses in terms of design?

Q3.7 Who do you think benefits from this policy? Does anyone suffer? Why?

Q3.8 What are your expectations of this policy and HE admission?

Q3.9 Are there any new plans or trends?

Q3.10 Please evaluate this policy. What are its strengths and weakness? (Design, implementation, affects).

Section 4: Questions for officers in policy implementation

Q4.1 Can you explain in detail the process of students transferring?

Q4.2 What are the difficulties and challenges in policy implementation? Are there any measures taken to address the issue? What are they?

Q4.3 How does this policy affect HE admission in your province? What are the outcomes of this policy?

Q4.4 Does anyone benefit and suffer? Why?

Q4.5 What are your expectations of this policy and HE admission?

Q4.6 Are there any new plans or tends?

Q4.7 Please evaluate this policy. What are its strengths and weakness? (Design, implementation, affects)

Appendix 2: Student interview

Section 1: Basic information

Q1. Parents' occupation and level of education

Q2. Students' course

Q3. Hukou registration place and type

Q4. Where did you take NCEE, or where are you going to take NCEE?

Section 2: Personal view

Q5. Do you think education is important? Why?

Q6. Are parents strict on students' study? Do parents hold any expectation for students?

Q7. What do you think about current higher education admission in China? Is it fair? Are you satisfied with it?

Section 3: Offsite NCEE (for students who had taken Offsite NCEE or would take offsite NCEE)

Q8. Why did you choose to take Offsite NCEE?

Q9. To what extent do you think the design of this policy is reasonable? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Q10. Is it difficult to apply to take Offsite NCEE? What happened?

Q11. What were the certificates required when students applied for Offsite NCEE? What do you think of these certificate requirements?

Q12. How this policy affects you? Do you think this policy benefits you? In what way?

Q13. Please evaluate this policy. What are its strengths and weakness? (Design, implementation, affects)

Q14. What are your expectations of this policy and HE admission?

Section 4 'Offsite NCEE' (students who were not take Offsite NCEE)

Q8. In your opinion, do we need this policy? Why or Why not?

Q9. Do you think this policy benefits/suffers you? In what way?

Q10. Would you like to move to other province to take NCEE? Where? Why?

Q11. Please evaluate this policy. It's strengths and weakness? (Design, implementation, affects)

Q12. What are your expectations of this policy and HE admission?

Appendix 3: Zhejiang (inbound province) student questionnaire

Structure

Section 1: Basic information

Section 2: Personal experience (local student)

Section 3: Personal experience (non-local student)

Section4: Personal view: Higher education admission; Offsite NCEE policy

Section 1: Basic information

Q1.1 Gender

Q1.2 Age

Q1.3 School year

Q1.4 Parents' occupation and work place

Q1.5 Parents' levels of education

Q1.6 Hukou registration place and type

If your hukou is registered in Zhejiang, please answer Section 2.

If your hukou is registered in other province, please answer Section 3.

Section 2: Personal experience (Local student)

Q2.1 What level of education did you receive in Zhejiang? (Multiple choice)

Kindergarten b. primary school c. junior high school d. senior high school d. other (please specify_____)

Q2.2 Would you like to study in other province in Zhejiang? If yes, where? Why?

Q2.3 Would you like to take NCEE in other province rather in Zhejiang? If yes, where? Why?

Q2.3 My parents are strict with my study.

                    1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q2.4 My parents have expectations for me to enter universities.

                    1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Section 3: Personal experience (non-local student)

Q3.1 Where is your hukou registration place?

Q3.2 When did you come to Zhejiang?

Q3.3 what level of education you received in Zhejiang? (Multiple choice)

a. Kindergarten b. primary school c. junior high school d. senior high school d. other (please specify_____)

Q3.4 Do you like to study in Zhejiang or your hukou registration place? Why?

Q3.5 Do you like to take NCEE in Zhejiang or your hukou registration place? Why?

Q3.6 My parents strict on my study.

                    1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.7 My parents have expectations for me to enter universities.

                    1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Section 4: Personal view

Q4.1 I know the HE admission system and policy well.

           1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q 4.2 I satisfied with the current HE admission system.

           1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q4.3 The current HE admission is fair.

           1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q4.4 I know 'Offsite NCEE' policy well.

           1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q4.5 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy is needed.

           1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q4.6 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy should be conducted and promoted immediately.

           1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q4.7 How reasonable do you consider the design of 'Offsite NCEE' in Zhejiang to be?

	1	2	3	4	5	

Reasonable_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Unreasonable

Q4.8 How do you consider 'Offsite NCEE' impacts on you?

	1	2	3	4	5	

Not at all _____ _____ _____ _____ _____A very great deal

Q4.9 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy benefits me.

	1	2	3	4	5	

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q4.10 I suffered by the 'Offsite NCEE' policy.

	1	2	3	4	5	

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Appendix 4: Jiangxi (outbound province) student questionnaire

Structure

Section 1: Basic information

Section 2: Personal experience

Section 3: Personal view: Higher education admission; Offsite NCEE policy

Section 1: Basic information

Q1.1 Gender

Q1.2 Age

Q1.3 School year

Q1.4 Parents' occupation and work place

Q1.5 Parents' levels of education

Q1.6 Hukou registration place and type

Section 2: Personal experience

Q2.1 what level of education you received in Jiangxi? (Multiple choice)

Kindergarten b. primary school c. junior high school d. senior high school d. other
(please specify_____)

Q2.2 My parents strict on my study.

             1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q2.3 My parents have expectations for me to enter universities.

             1   2   3   4   5

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q2.4 I like to take NCEE in Jiangxi.

<p style="text-align:center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q2.5 Are you going to take NCEE in Jiangxi? If no, where? Why?

Q2.6 If you can move to other province to study, where do you want to go? Why?

Q2.7 If you can move to other province to take NCEE, where do you want to go? Why?

Section 3: Personal view

Q3.1 I know the HE admission system and policy well.

<p style="text-align:center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.2 I satisfied with the current HE admission system.

<p style="text-align:center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.3 The current HE admission is fair.

<p style="text-align:center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.4 I know 'Offsite NCEE' policy well.

<p style="text-align:center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.5 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy is needed.

<p style="text-align:center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.6 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy should be conducted and promoted immediately.

	1	2	3	4	5	

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.7 How reasonable do you consider the design of 'Offsite NCEE' in Jiangxi to be?

	1	2	3	4	5	

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.8 How do you consider 'Offsite NCEE' impacts on you?

	1	2	3	4	5	

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.9 The 'Offsite NCEE' policy benefits me.

	1	2	3	4	5	

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Q3.10 I suffered by the 'Offsite NCEE' policy.

	1	2	3	4	5	

Strong disagree_____ _____ _____ _____ _____Strong agree

Appendix 5: Ethical Approval Form

MPhil, PhD, EdD Research Students and Masters by Research: Ethical Approval

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

CENTRE FOR
EDUCATION STUDIES

All research undertaken by the students and staff within CES must conform to the University's ethical guidelines. There are separate procedures for staff and students. This guidance addresses the latter.

All students receive training in research ethics and are required to complete the appropriate form before undertaking research, including small projects, dissertations and theses as appropriate. The completion of the form is an opportunity to discuss ethical issues with your supervisor/tutor and is intended as a learning exercise as much as an administrative process to ensure compliance with CES policy.

The amount and type of training in research ethics is proportionate to both the qualification and the research project; the content of the forms varies accordingly. In general, undergraduates will be expected to undertake research projects which give relatively common and straightforward ethical issues while doctoral studies may raise complex, challenging ethical issues. As most studies involve children and young people, research ethics pertaining to vulnerable participants is a common issue.

You should complete the ethical approval form for the research project appropriate to your programme. These may be obtained from the CES website.

For *EdD* students, separate forms are required for each specialist study (8000 words) and the thesis.

You should complete the form, which should then be signed by yourself and countersigned by your tutor/supervisor. Completion of the form will be guided by your tutor/supervisor and is intended to help you consider the ethical issues concerned, so you must provide full details. The form should then be returned to the Research Office (WE1.33) for processing. Please note: as the form requires signatures you should not email it – the paper original is required.

The form will then be reviewed by the relevant member of staff. The proposal may be approved, approved subject to minor amendments, or declined. The form will then be returned to the Research Office for recording and then returned to your course secretary who will report the outcome to yourself and your tutor/supervisor. If any changes are required you should undertake these in consultation with your tutor/supervisor. The form should then be resubmitted to the Research Office, when it will be reviewed.

Further Guidance

Further guidance and support is available from the University's website:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/services/ethics/statement/guidance/

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/services/ethics/governance/codeofconduct/

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/services/ethics/statement/guidance/#

and from the ethical codes of appropriate organisations including the British Educational Research Association, British Psychological Society and the British Sociological Association:

www.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss

www.bera.org.uk

www.bps.org.uk

www.britsoc.org.uk

NB: doctoral Students

Doctoral students are initially registered for an MPhil/PhD and transfer to the PhD subject on the completion of a successful Upgrade. Ethical approval should first be sought early in the MPhil and certainly before any fieldwork. The Upgrade provides a second opportunity to review the ethical issues of your research. A completed ethical approval form should therefore accompany your Upgrade   paper.

Application for Ethical Approval

for Research Degrees

(MA by research, MPHIL/PhD, EdD)

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

CENTRE FOR
EDUCATION STUDIES

Student number: 0935719

Student name: Xianglu Liu

PhD

Project title: The Offsite National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) policy in China

Supervisor: Ian Abbott

Funding body (if relevant):

Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

Methodology

Please outline the methodology, e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.

This research employs a multiple case study approach. Questionnaire survey, individual interview, focus groups interview, and Documentary analysis are adopted as instruments for data collection.

Participants

Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; as a result of learning disability.

A sample of 800 students was used in the questionnaire survey. 400 of them were final year senior high school students, while 400 of them were final year junior high school students.

40 students participated in the individual interviews, including 20 junior high school students, 10 final year senior high school students, and 10 first year undergraduate students. 40 students participated in the focus groups interviews. Five students in one group. 20 of them were final year senior high school students, and 20 of them were final year senior high school students. 24 officials participated in the individual interviews.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

In this research, participants were freely choose to take part or not. Participants had been given full information about the research, and asking everything they wanted to know. In the course of the interviews, the interviewees have the right to stop talking and withdraw at any time if they wanted to. After finishing all questions, the interviewees were asked whether they wanted to add anything else.

All interviews were taken in a friendly way. I build a friendly relationship with the interviewees. I rarely gave comment in the interviews. No offend words or disparaging comments were used.

Privacy and confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

The interviews were promised to be anonymous if the research was to be published. And students were not asked to write down their names in the anonymous questionnaire. All the participants are anonymous at the stage of data analysis. Each interviewee was assigned with a code in the course of data analysis and findings, but rather then report their names.

Consent

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

From participants:

Before taking each interview and questionnaire survey, I introduced myself and explained the purposes of this research. The participants were asked whether they willing to be take part to ensure the informed consent of participants.

From others:

During the course of data collection, I did not contact the students directly, but asked the local educational authority to contact schools. Teachers or headteachers were explained and had been given full information about the research. After the schools confirmed their willingness to take part in the research, questionnaire survey and student interviews were taken in the schools. Students were invited by the schools to take part in the research.

If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason:

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status?

The researcher explicitly introduced her status and explained the purposes of this research to all participants.

Competence

How will you ensure that all methods used are undertaken with the necessary competence?

I made detailed plans for data collection and data analysis.

Protection of participants

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

In this research, participants were freely choose to take part or not. In the course of the interviews, the interviewees have the right to stop talking and withdraw at any time if they wanted to.

Child protection

Will a CRB check be needed?   No (If yes, please attach a copy.)

Addressing dilemmas

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

I discuss the arsing ethical dilemmas with my supervisor and listen to his advises.

Misuse of research

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

The transcripts of interviews are saved carefully. The data only used for this research and not able to use for any other purpose.

Support for research participants

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

I ensure they can skip the question or stop the interview if they feel uncomfortable. The participants have the right to stop and withdraw at any time if they wanted to.

Integrity

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

The participants were informed that the data would be used for academic purpose only and not for any other purpose. And none of the participants' personal information would be revealed to the public and would be anonymous if the research was published. This was to dispel any fear or doubt that participants might have and to improve the probability of the participants presenting the truth. And it is believed that the anonymous questionnaire survey and interview encouraged honesty of the participants.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

The PhD thesis will be submitted in my name only. But any additional reports or publications will be negotiated with my supervisors.

Other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.