# An Exploration of Study the Education Policy of Study Travel in China

Ke Qiuyi, Wei Hui-Suan, Roselan Baki, and Lee Keok Cheong

Abstract - In 2013, a stepwise policy on study travel has been carried out in primary and secondary schools in China. China's government has issued some policies to support the implementation of study travel, and yet it comes with a lot of problems. However, the policy hasn't explicitly stipulated the education objective, education approach and education conditions of study travel in detail for the implementation of study travel in policy. In fact, there are only a few researches on the study travel policy supported by theories and scientific research methodology of education. Thus, the study of study travel policies is in need. In order to explore the above problems, this study adopts qualitative research method of education and textual analysis approach to analyse study travel policies. The study uses document research and Java SDK to collect and analyse the study travel policies from 2013 to present. An interview will be used to collect the opinions of these policies from secondary schools' teachers. UNICET, ROSTCM will be used to classify, coding, hermeneutics and analyse the collected date. Through the analysis of study travel policy by systematic and scientific methods, it will put forward constructive countermeasures for the improvement of study travel policy, which can promote the implementation of study travel smoothly to achieve the practical educational goal.

 ${\it Keywords}$  – education policy, study travel, policy analysis, countermeasure

# I. INTRODUCTION

Study travel has emerged under the background of Chinese education reform, especially the curriculum reform in the field of basic education, which is consistent with quality-oriented and moral-oriented education, so as to cultivate the core competencies and values for Chinese students' development. Since 2013, the release of some important policies on study travel has had a profound impact on study travel, which are the data for this research.

In 2013, General Office of the State Council [COSC] has released the policy, *Notice on the National Tourism and Leisure Outline (2013-2020)*, study travel has been mentioned for the first time "Study travel should been carried out for primary and secondary school students step by step"(Tasks and Measures, para.2). At the seminar on the pilot of study travel, Director, Wang (2013) proposed that "Study travel should be used as a lever to instigate quality-oriented education, a breakthrough for the curriculum

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reforms, and a new growth point for quality-oriented education" (Ding, Y.C. and Ding, Y.C.,2016), which has given study travel full play to the value of education in policy. Afterwards, China's government has released a series of policies to support the implementation of study travel, and some achievements have been made in primary and secondary schools in China. However, it has come with a lot of problems in the process of implementing study travel. The deficiency of study travel policy is the root cause of the above problems. In order to solve these problems and difficulties, it is urgent to improve these policies of study travel in China, which is the most important purpose to carry out this study.

### II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The implementation of study travel policy is not in place, and it's difficult to carry out study travel smoothly in primary and secondary schools. Among those reason, the lack of specific implementation rules in policy has led to these problems, difficulty in organization and management, great pressure on safety guarantee, difficulty in raising expenses, difficulty in teaching arrangement, difficulty in getting parents' understanding and support, and the large gap between the quality of services provided by study bases and tourism institutions and the expectations of the schools (Li, 2017, p17). The guideline should be provided to solve the above problems of study travel, while there are lots of deficiencies in policy as following.

Firstly, it doesn't clearly stipulate the nature, orientation and educational objectives of study travel in policy. About the nature of study travel, it's just stated in the policy, Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students, "Study travel should be integrated into the school education and teaching plans, and considered with comprehensive practical activity course as a whole " (Ministry Of Education Of China [MEPRC], 2016, main tasks, para.1). Although the comprehensive practical activity course has been specified as a "compulsory course stipulated in the national compulsory education and general high school curriculum plan" (MEPRC, 2017, course nature, para.2), study travel can't be directly recognized as a compulsory course, and it hasn't been generally recognized. Therefore, the nature and orientation of study travel is not clearly defined in policy. In addition, although study travel has been highly approved of its role in practical education, it hasn't been totally accepted in the field of education. The key reason is that there is no specific objective of study travel in policy. In the policy, Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students, it states that study travel is "an innovative form of connection between school education and off-campus education, an important content of education and teaching, and an effective way of comprehensive practical education" (MEPRC, 2016, great significance, para.1). Although the opinion has showed the great significance of study travel of implementing quality-oriented and moral-oriented education, as well as the development of students, it's lack of the specific and actionable objectives of study travel for school education and teaching, especially curriculum implementation. Therefore, it's difficult for the education departments and schools to set specific education objectives of study travel, which further affects the formulation of evaluation criteria of study travel.

Secondly, it doesn't clearly stipulated approaches to implement study travel in policy. As a way of practical education, study travel must rely on specific and feasible approaches to give full play to its role in practical education. In the policy, Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students, it is mentioned that "It needs to develop a number of study travel activity courses with outstanding educational effects and create a number of influential high-quality study travel routes" (MEPRC, 2016, main objectives, para.2), and "take overall consideration with comprehensive practical activity course" (MEPRC, 2016, main tasks, para.1). Obviously, the curriculum construction of study travel has been given directional guidance in policy, while it hasn't been provided the specific implementation means and methods for the curriculum construction in policy. In addition, due to the current situation in the field of basic education in China, it's difficult to implement comprehensive practical activity course, let alone rely on it to carry out study travel. Furthermore, tourism institutions supported by policy, which may lead to the dominance of education has been transferred to tourism institutions, and the practical educational effect is poor, can implement study travel. Thu, the curriculum construction of study travel needs to base on its own characteristics, and the premise is to formulate relevant policies to realize the curriculum construction of study travel.

Thirdly, it doesn't provide necessary conditions for the implementation of study travel in policy. The curriculum construction of study travel has become a general trend. However, due to the lack of specific policy guidelines, it faces with many difficulties in the curriculum construction, which are caused by the failure of the allocation of study tutors, the construction of study bases and camps, the financing of study travel and the establishment of safety and evaluation mechanisms. In the policy, Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students, it indicates that "To strengthen the construction of study base, to standardize the organization and management of study travel, to improve the fund-raising mechanism and establish a safety responsibility system" (MEPRC, 2016, main tasks, para.2-5), which just provides guideline or requirement, but fail to provide specific guidance on how to achieve it. In addition, in order to further standardize the study travel market, in the policy, Service specification for study travel, it regulated the service providers' the basic requirements related to staffing, study travel products, service items and security management in detail. However, all above still need to be further specifically guided in policy.

To sum up, the deficiency of study travel policy is the fundamental reason leading to these problems mentioned in above of the implementation of study travel in primary and secondary schools. Thus, it's urgent to research the study travel policy and put forward some countermeasure to improve these policies.

### III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Study travel policy is the most important guidance to promote and implement study travel smoothly and effectively in China, which faces with lots of deficiency. In order to improve the Chinese study travel policy to enhance the effect on practice education of study travel. In view of the above research problems, this study sets the following research objectives.

- (1) To explore the education goal of study travel in Policy. The nature of study travel directly determines the attitude of education departments and schools towards study travel, that is, actions, inaction or coping actions. In addition, the education departments and schools need to be provided the reference related to the goal of study travel in policy to formulate specific education objectives to organize and implement study travel, which is also the key reference to evaluate the effect of practice education of study travel. Thus, it's necessary to improve the situation that the nature and education goal of study travel are unclear in policy.
- (2) To explore the education approach of study travel in policy. The curriculum construction of study travel has become a general trend. To comply with this trend, we can carry out study travel more smoothly and achieve the expectant effect in practice education of study travel. This study is to put forward the model of implementation approach, which is mainly based on the curriculum construction and supplemented by other implementation approaches. This not only ensures the dominance of education department in study travel, but also makes study travel play a role in other fields that further enhance the effect on practice education of study travel. In view of these problems existing in the process of curriculum construction, such as the difficulty in the formulating the curriculum objectives, implementing the curriculum and evaluating the curriculum, this study will put forward countermeasures to realize the curriculum construction of study travel in policy.
- (3) To explore the education conditions for the education approach of study travel in policy. The realization of the curriculum construction of study travel must be guaranteed by necessary conditions. Among them, the equipment of study tutors, the construction of study bases and camps, the raising of funds and the establishment of safety and evaluation mechanisms are important conditions for the realization of curriculum construction, and these conditions need to be supported from relevant departments and organizations. In order to ensure that relevant departments and organizations can play their due roles. It's urgent to formulate relevant policies to achieve it.

According to the research problems and research objectives, the research questions are determined as following.

Question1: What's the education goal of study travel in policy?

Question2: What's the education approach of study travel in policy?

Question3: What're the education conditions of study travel in policy?

### IV. UNDERPINNING THEORY

### **Education Policy Analysis Theory**

The research on Chinese education policy emerged in the middle of 1980s, and its emergence and development was to meet the urgent need of the Chinese education reform and the legal construction of Chinese education. Based on the Chinese national conditions, this study mainly cites the local education policy theory to analyze the study travel policy. This study mainly quotes the education policy theory by pprofessor Sun to determine the research variables and form the conceptual framework of this study. Based on the research of Flemish S. Coburn, Sun (2019) has taken the following policies as the basic education policies that are necessary for Chinese education reform and development, including education quality policy, education system policy, education funding policy, and teacher policy. The above basic education policies are to solve the key problems of "why" and "what to do" in Chinese education reform and development. Education quality policy belongs to the category of education goal policy related to the quality standard of talent training; Education system policy belongs to the category of education approach policy, which is to meet the prescribed quality standards of talent training; Education funding policy and teacher policy belong to the category of education condition policy, which are to ensure that education is given full play to its educational function (pp.55-57). The above education policies are constituted the logical structure of Chinese national education policy system.

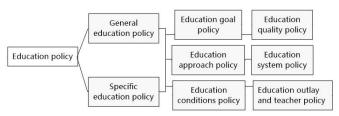


Figure 1. Logical Structure of Chinese National Education Policy System

### Policy Tools Theory of Public Policy

This study also quotes the policy tools of public policy to analyze study travel. In the 1980s, policy tools began to be paid attention in the research field of public policy in western, and it gradually flourished in the 1990s. Policy tools are the means for the government to implement policy, which service for the political objectives by bringing the government resources, funds, rules and authority, and by using these resources to affect the behavior of individuals and organizations (Chen, Lin & Tu, 2010, p318). This study takes policy tools selection as one of the entry points for the research on study travel policy, which is to analyze the policy tool selection of the goal policy, approach policy, and conditions policy to find out the characteristics and problems of the selection of study travel policy tools, and lay the foundation to improve study travel policy. This study takes authority tools, incentive tools, symbolic and hortatory tools,

capability-building tools, system-changing tools and learning tools as policy tools to analyze study travel policies (McDonnell and Elmor, 1987; Schneider and Ingram, 1990), which combine the policy tools by McDonnell and Elmore, Schneider and Ingram. On this basis, combining with the research variables, this study constructs the three-dimensional analytical framework of study travel policy tools as following.

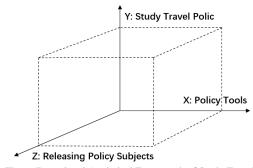


Figure 2. Three-dimensional Analytical Framework of Study Travel Policy Tools

### V. LITERATURE REVIEW

At present, there are few achievements in the research on study travel policy. A total of 14 articles were retrieved related to the study travel policy mainly related to the connotation, value, and curriculum construction and study base of study travel as following.

### Research on the Value of Study Travel in Policy

The study travel policy clearly stipulates that study travel is an effective approach for practice education. In order to give its full play to the value in practice education, it is necessary to analyze its own value in policy, so as to avoid the deviation of value in the process of organization and implementation of study travel. The analysis of education policy should not be limited to policy text, but pay more attention to the value orientation behind the text. Through the analysis of the policy text, it finds that study travel policy takes changing students' learning style and broadening students' horizons as the real value, that is, the direct value. Meanwhile, it takes enhancing students' practical ability and cultivating students' innovative spirit as the development value, that is, the essential value. Besides, the ideal value is to narrow the gap of off-campus education and promote the educational equity (Wan, 2019).

# Research on the Curriculum Construction of Study Travel in Policy

The curriculum construction of study travel is an inevitable approach to realize the value of study travel, and only the standardized curriculum construction is based on the study travel policy, can the educational goal of study travel policy be achieve. Zhu (2017) studied the policy basis of curriculum design and implementation of study travel, that is, the curriculum reform of basic education, the reform of senior high school and college entrance examination, and the

proposal of core competencies and values for Chinese students' development, which are also the policy basis of the policy, Opinions on promoting study travel for Primary and secondary school students. On this basis, the operation model of study travel activity course is put forward. Wu et.al (2019) took the policy texts that have a key impact on the study travel curriculum as the analysis objects according to the two index of instruction and influence, which is to gain a prescriptive understanding of study travel curriculum. On this basis, they extracted the core elements and basic principles of the implementation of study travel curriculum. Furthermore, they took the influencing factors of curriculum implementation as the analysis perspective, and connected with the characteristics of study travel and the stipulation in the policy text, which is to reconstruct the implementation framework of study travel curriculum. The policy, Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary schools students, shows that study travel is a part of comprehensive practical activity course, but it is not directly defined as a course. That is, study travel has been involved in the scope of curriculum construction, but it still needs to further carry out standardized research on curriculum construction. These researches about curriculum construction of study travel are only based on the background of study travel policy. At present, there is no alone policy related to curriculum construction of study travel, or other policies can provide a reference for the curriculum construction of study travel.

### Research on the Evaluation of Study Base Policy

The quality and level of the study bases or camps that are the quiet important implementation carrier of study travel curriculum that directly affects the implementation effect of study travel curriculum. Therefore, the state and some provinces have issued alone policy on the construction of study travel bases and camps. By analyzing the policy terms of the construction of demonstrative study bases of 14 provinces (cities), Zhong and Liu (2018) divided relevant influencing factors into 7 dimensions and 49 points as following: hardware facilities, software facilities, service value, satisfaction, emotional value, willingness to pay and security issues. On this basis, they selected these factors of more than 7 provinces (cities) concerning in common to analyze to evaluate these government policies. Based on the above, according to the stakeholder theory, the priority factors of the construction of demonstrative study bases are obtained. The above research outcomes lay the foundation for the improvement of study travel policy related to the construction of study bases and camps.

# Research on the Implementation Plan of Study Travel

MEPRC (2016) issued the policy, *Opinions on promoting study travel for primary and secondary school students*. In order to actively respond to the national policy, some provinces issued the policy, *Opinion on the implementation of study travel for primary and secondary school students*, in their own region according to this policy. Zhang (2019) mainly combed and analyzed the implementation opinions or plans of study travel in 21

provinces, and found that the legal effectiveness of the study travel policy was low, and the policy content was lack of pertinence, which led to the weak implementation of the policy. In addition, there are still some problems in these policies, such as imperfect safety system, unclear rights, responsibilities and interests relationship between all parties, unclear supervision and evaluation mechanism leading to low effectiveness. Bao and Li (2021) also studied the implementation plans of study travel of 15 provinces, and focused on analyzing the problems of these study travel policy texts from the aspects, curriculum construction, time arrangement, base construction, charge, security and so on, and further proposed that it needs to constantly improve the supervision and evaluation mechanism of study travel. In addition, the above researches mentioned the funds, security and supervision and evaluation mechanism required in the implementation of study travel, which are indispensable for the smooth implementation of study travel, which are the research content of this study meantime.

## Research on Policy Texts from Policy Tools Perspective

To analyze the study travel policy from the perspective of education policy analysis is conducive to scientifically and accurately understand and grasp the goals of the study travel policy, the value behind the policy text, and the approaches and measures to achieve the goals in policy. According to the policy tools theory, Jiang (2020) has formed the three-dimensional analytical framework of study travel policy tools based on the classification of policy tools by MacDonald and Amour. On this basis, he coded the specific provisions related to study travel of the national policy texts published from 2013 to 2019, and classified relevant provisions into the three-dimensional analytical framework to finish data statistics. Finally, he conducted texts quantity analysis, keyword analysis and policy tools analysis to reveal the selection of policy tools of study travel, so as to put forwards some countermeasures for the improvement of study travel policies, which provides a important reference for this study.

The above researches except for the research by Jiang have not been adopted the theories and methods of education. Therefore, the above analysis on study travel policies is lack of the scientificity and preciseness, but the research outcomes show that the research on study travel policies has attracted the attention of scholars, and the adoption of the theories and methods of education also has been gotten attention. Based on the education theory by Sun, the conceptual framework has been constructed as following.

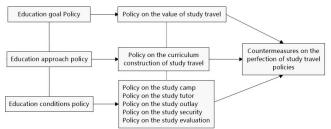


Figure 3. The Conceptual Framework of Study Travel

VI. METHOD

In order to solve theses research problems and achieve these research objectives, it is necessary to formulate scientific and rigorous research design, and use scientific research methods and technologies to collect and analyze data to ensure the scientificity and effectiveness of data collection and analysis. This study adopts the qualitative research method, text analysis approach. This study analyzes the policy texts of study travel using a combination of qualitative and quantitative forms. Accordingly, this study adopts document research and interview technologies to collect data, as well as classify, open coding, hermeneutics technologies to analyze data. In addition, it also uses software, Java SDK, UCINET, ROSTCM, to collect, sort out and analyze the policy texts of study travel. Based on the research questions of this study, the research design is developed as follows.

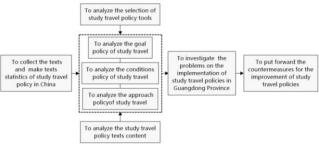


Figure 4. Research design of study travel

### Data Collection

There are two kinds of data need to be collected in this study. One is the policy text of study travel, and the other is the opinion related to study travel policies and its implementation. This study uses document research and Java SDK software to collect policy texts. And interview is used to collect the opinions.

The following principles and steps are followed to collect the policy texts of study travel. The first step is to determine the releasing subject of the study travel policy. The second step is to determine the sources of policy texts. The third step is to determine the keywords and releasing time limit for the retrieval of policy texts. The fourth step is to filter the collected policy texts, and eliminate the texts that only mention relevant words but do not elaborate and make specific provisions on the study travel policies. Through the above steps, ensure the comprehensiveness, systematicness and accuracy of the collected policy texts. In addition, based on the research objectives and research variables, this study mainly uses the interview to collect opinions related to the study travel policies and its implementation. The following steps are followed to collect the opinions. The first step is to design the interview outline. The second step is to determine the interview objects. The third step is to conduct the on-the spot interview to collect data.

### Data Analysis

The policy texts of study travel are the main analysis data of this study. This study mainly uses textual analysis and social network analysis approaches to analyze the policy texts combining qualitative and quantitative forms, which is to mainly analyze the goal policy, approach policy and conditions policy of study travel based on research variables.

The first is to conduct texts statistics of study travel policy. It involves the following parts: (1) To sort out the policy texts. This study is to use classify technology to sort out the collected policy texts according to the comprehensive, systematic and accurate standard based on the research variables. (2) To code the policy texts. This study is to use open coding technology to code these policy texts. (3) To conduct policy texts statistics. It includes quantity statistics and form statistics of these policy texts. (4) To analyze the releasing policy subjects. Firstly, it is to analyze the composition of releasing policy subjects and the number of policies released by them. Secondly, the social network analysis method and the analysis software of UNICEF and ROSTCM are used to realize the visualization of the network relationship mode of the releasing policy subjects, so as to analyze the network structure relationship of the releasing policy subjects. Finally, it is to analyze the relationship between the releasing policy subjects and policy themes. It is to draw a network diagram between the releasing policy subjects and policy themes by using UNICET analysis software, so as to discover the association properties of the releasing policy subjects and policy themes.

The second is to analyze the policy tools selection of study travel policy. This study uses the content analysis approach of public policy, combined with the theory of policy tools, to analyze the policy tools selection of study travel policy. It involves the following parts: (1) To construct an analytic framework of policy tools. This study is based on policy tool theory and combines the characteristics of study travel policy to construct the three-dimensional analytical framework of study travel policy tools. (2) To code the analysis units of policy tools, namely coding units. Firstly, it needs to determine the analysis units of the study travel policy tools and coded them, and the coding of analysis units also need to be examined for reliability and validity. Secondly, according to the three-dimensional analytical framework of study travel policy tools, the analysis units with coding need to be categorized into three dimensions respectively. (3) To conduct the analysis of the frequency statistics of policy tools selection. Based on the threedimensional analytical framework of study travel policy tools, frequency statistics were conducted on the use of policy tools to analyze the characteristics and existing problems associated with the policy tools selection of each study travel policy.

The third is to conduct the content analysis of study travel policy. In this study, it uses social network analysis approach and content analysis approach of public policy to deeply dissect the texts content of study travel policy, in combination with software such as UNICET and ROSTCM. It involves the following parts: (1) Keyword analysis of policy texts. Firstly, this study extracts and sorts out the keywords of policy texts by combining the analysis software, ROSTCM, and the judgment by man. Secondly, the analysis of the frequency statistics of keywords of policy texts will be conducted. Finally, the analysis of keyword social network

structure of policy texts also will be conducted. (2) The content analysis of study travel policy. Firstly, it needs to determine the standard of content analysis of study travel policy. This study takes clarity, consistency, rationality, continuity and legitimacy as the standard of content analysis. Secondly, according to the above analysis standard, this paper makes an in-depth analysis of the goal policy, approach policy and conditions policy of study travel, in order to find the problems and deficiencies of study travel policy.

The fourth is to analyze the interview data. Based on the research variables and research objectives, this study is to collect the opinions on the goal policy, approach policy and conditions policy of study travel, as well as the problems encountered in the implementation of study travel policy. Through these data analysis, this paper puts forward constructive countermeasures for the perfection of study travel policies.

### VII. CONCLUSION

Study travel emerged under the background of Chinese education reform in the field of basic education which advocates the quality-oriented and moral-oriented education. The release of study travel policy promotes the implementation and development of study travel. While it comes with lots of problems that are the roots to carry out this study, which is to analyse the deficiency of study travel policy that is hardly been researched by using the theory and methods of education. In order to solve these problems, it's necessary to determine the education goal, education approach and education conditions of study travel. Therefore, this study is based on the theory and method of education to analyse the goal policy, approach policy and condition policy of study travel to improve the study travel policy.

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