


EDUCATION IN BRAZIL AND CHINA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PEDAGOGICAL POLICIES <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2025.019-010>

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ABSTRACT

This study compares educational policies and pedagogical practices in Brazil and China, with an emphasis on the adoption of active methodologies and technological integration. The research, based on an integrative literature review based on the PRISMA 2020 protocol, analyzes 18 studies published between 2008 and 2025, mostly from the last five years. The objective is to identify convergences and divergences in educational models, considering governance, teacher training, evaluation and social inclusion. The results indicate that both countries invest in innovative practices such as PBL and gamification, promoting student protagonism. In Brazil, the main challenges involve technological infrastructure and teacher training; in China, the barriers are linked to cultural resistance, despite structural advances and government centralization. Technological integration is more consolidated in China, while in Brazil regional inequality hinders modernization. It is concluded that, although they share similar goals, the two countries adopt different strategies, shaped by their political and cultural specificities.

Keywords: Brazil. China. Education. Comparative Analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Education has been consolidated as one of the main pillars of social and economic development in several nations, directly influencing public policies and pedagogical practices adopted. In the contemporary global context, educational quality emerges as a strategic factor for international competitiveness. In this sense, comparatively analyzing different educational systems becomes fundamental to understand the different approaches adopted in countries such as Brazil and China, which, despite their cultural, political, and economic differences, face similar challenges related to improving the quality of education, reducing inequalities, and adapting to the demands of the twenty-first century.

According to UNESCO data (2023), China leads in educational investments, especially in technological modernization, while Brazil still faces significant gaps in school infrastructure and teacher training. Recent studies indicate that China has made consistent progress in centralizing and strengthening its universities through the "China Education Modernization 2035" plan (CHINA, 2024), consolidated in the "Double First-Class" project, which aims to transform strategic universities into centers of academic and scientific excellence (CHINA, 2022). On the other hand, Brazil seeks to overcome the structural challenges of higher education, marked by political fragmentation, regional disparities, and insufficient regulation (ANDRADE, 2024).

The concept of "Double First-Class" refers to a government project that sets goals to transform universities and specific disciplines into global references, promoting internationalization and scientific innovation. In contrast, the Brazilian scenario is characterized by the search for active methodologies that encourage student protagonism, such as problem-based learning (PBL), but which come up against structural limitations and the continuing education of teachers (HAAS & APARÍCIO, 2019; SILVA & MOURA, 2021). Chinese modernization, based on a centralized state model, enables long-term strategic planning, while Brazil's decentralized system has difficulties in maintaining consistent and lasting pedagogical practices (UNESCO, 2023).

The choice of these two countries for a comparative analysis is justified by the geopolitical relevance and the global impact of their educational policies. The present study seeks to comparatively investigate the educational policies and pedagogical practices adopted in Brazil and China, with emphasis on the most recent guidelines and innovations. The research focuses on educational modernization initiatives and the implementation of innovative methodologies, especially those that promote student protagonism and technological integration, adopting the methodology of integrative literature review.

The guiding question that guides this investigation is: how do educational policies and pedagogical practices in Brazil and China compare in terms of effectiveness, innovation and social impact? Through the analysis of the 18 selected studies, it is expected to identify the main convergences and divergences between the educational systems of these countries, reflecting on the implications for global educational development in the twenty-first century.

METHOD

This research adopts the methodology of integrative literature review, a robust approach that allows the synthesis of previous research results, integrating scientific evidence to consolidate a comprehensive panorama on the topic investigated. The choice for integrative review is justified by its ability to combine qualitative and quantitative studies, promoting a critical and multidimensional analysis of educational policies in Brazil and China (Souza, Silva and Carvalho, 2010).

Unlike conventional systematic reviews, which exclusively use rigid protocols such as PRISMA, integrative review allows for some methodological flexibility, but still seeks to ensure scientific rigor and transparency. To align the methodological steps with international review standards, the PRISMA 2020 protocol (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) was adopted, which guides clarity in the presentation of results and the systematization of processes.

The methodological process followed six stages: (1) identification of the theme and formulation of the research question; (2) definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria; (3) extraction and categorization of information from the selected studies; (4) critical evaluation of the articles; (5) interpretation of the results obtained; and (6) presentation of the synthesis of the findings.

The formulation of the research question was based on the PICO strategy adapted for comparative studies: Population (educational contexts in Brazil and China), Intervention (educational policies and pedagogical practices), Comparison (differences and convergences between countries) and Outcome (impact on pedagogical effectiveness and innovation). This adaptation was necessary given the nature of the investigation, which does not involve experimental interventions.

The five-year time frame (2021-2025) was established to ensure the timeliness and relevance of the data, considering the rapid evolution of educational policies in both countries. Studies prior to the period were included only if they were characterized as classic, with significant theoretical impact (e.g., Saviani, 2008; Moran et al., 2013).

Data collection was carried out in May 2025 in the SciELO, Google Scholar and CAPES Journal Portal databases. The descriptors used included "educational policies", "pedagogical practices", "Brazil", "China" and "comparative education". The combination of terms was performed with Boolean operators (AND, OR) to increase the accuracy of the results. The screening of articles included critical reading of titles, abstracts and full texts, following previously defined methodological criteria.

The inclusion criteria included studies published in Portuguese and English, freely available and presenting empirical results or theoretical analyses relevant to the theme. Reflective texts, grey literature, monographs and dissertations were excluded to ensure methodological consistency. However, the inclusion of dissertations with proven impact was justified (Andrade, 2024).

To minimize selection bias, data extraction was performed by two independent reviewers, with discussion to resolve divergences. The organization of the data took place in a Microsoft Excel 365© spreadsheet, where information such as year, authors, country, objectives and main findings were categorized. The evaluation of the methodological quality of the studies followed criteria established for integrative reviews, including analysis of methodological clarity, internal validity, and theoretical consistency.

The results were synthesized in a descriptive table, ensuring clarity and precision in the presentation of the data. In addition, to increase transparency, a PRISMA flowchart was developed that illustrates the process of selecting the articles, from the initial search to the final composition of the sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this integrative review were obtained through a rigorous screening in the selected databases (SciELO, Google Scholar and CAPES Journal Portal), using controlled descriptors related to "educational policies", "pedagogical practices", "Brazil", "China" and "comparative education". The search initially resulted in 87 relevant studies. However, after a careful reading of the titles, abstracts and full texts, the exclusion process based on strict methodological criteria was followed, as recommended by Souza et al. (2010) for systematic reviews.

In the first phase of screening, 19 studies were excluded that, although addressing educational themes, did not present the guiding question as the central focus of the investigation. Subsequently, 12 studies were discarded because they were inaccessible free of charge, which would compromise the reproducibility of the findings and methodological transparency (Gomes et al., 2025). In addition, another 10 studies were

excluded because they dealt with themes that did not fit the scope of this research, revealing a thematic breadth that differed from the established objective.

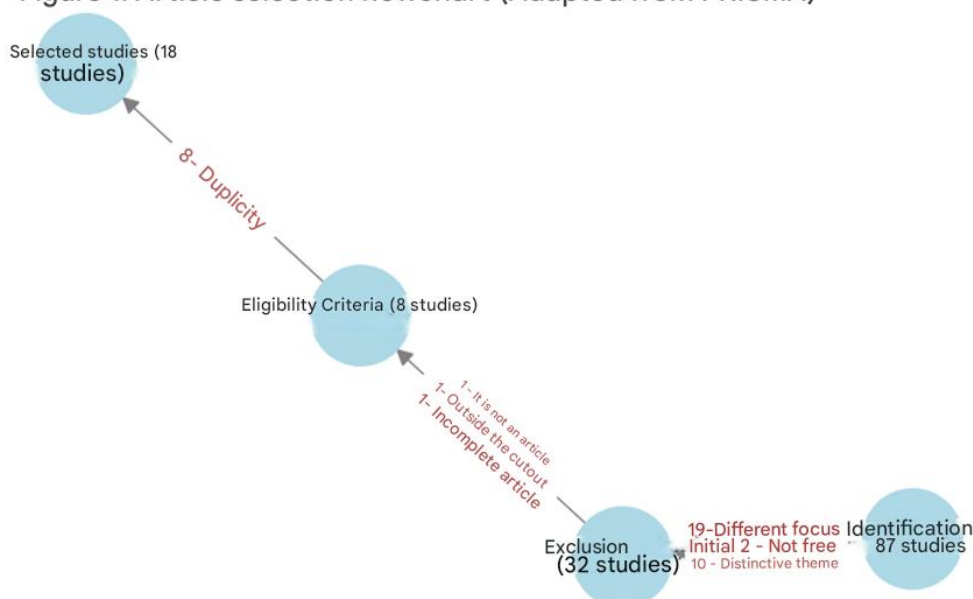
In a more in-depth process of reading and analysis, it was found that one study did not have the characteristics of a scientific article, one was outside the proposed time frame, and another did not have the complete structure to be considered an academic article. In addition, eight studies were identified as duplicates among the databases and therefore eliminated to ensure the uniqueness and completeness of the results.

After applying all the exclusion criteria, 18 articles were selected to compose the final version of this integrative review, including both classic studies and more recent productions.

These 18 studies were carefully organized and categorized according to the principles of the PRISMA protocol (Page et al., 2022), ensuring the necessary transparency and scientific rigor. Figure 1 illustrates the flowchart of the article selection process, highlighting the stages of inclusion and exclusion, while Table 1 presents a summary of the studies, with detailed information on the year, authors, country, objectives, sample, and main findings.

From the systematization of the data, it was identified that the studies mostly address contemporary educational policies, with emphasis on active methodologies, pedagogical modernization and technological integration, reflecting both international trends and the local specificities of the Brazilian and Chinese educational systems. The comparative analysis reveals convergences in the search for innovation and qualified training, but also significant divergences related to the governmental structure and the pedagogical strategies adopted. This critical perspective makes it possible to understand the advances and challenges faced by both countries in the educational field.

Figure 1. Article selection flowchart adapted from PRISMA.
Figure 1. Article selection flowchart (Adapted from PRISMA)



Source: Survey data, 2025.

From the critical analysis of the selected studies, it was observed that the methodological diversity and the theoretical focus of the works contributed to a broader and more integrated understanding of the educational policies and pedagogical practices compared between Brazil and China. The systematization of the data, carried out in a rigorous manner, allowed the identification of common patterns and particularities that reflect both the historical contexts and the modernization strategies adopted in each country.

Table 1, presented below, summarizes the main aspects of the 18 selected studies, highlighting year, authors, country, objectives, sample, and main outcomes. This organization allows us to view the most recent scientific contributions and identify trends in academic production on educational policies in Brazil and China, offering critical subsidies for the subsequent discussion.

Table 1: Summary of Selected Studies

N	Authors	Year	Goal	Result	Main Idea
1	Andrade, B. C. C. de	2024	Quality and regulation in higher education	Measuring educational quality	Data envelopment analysis applied to higher education
2	China Ministry of Education	2024	Educational modernization by 2035	Consolidation of the system of excellence	Strategic plan for educational modernization
3	China Ministry of Education	2025	Off-campus education management	Promotion of educational quality	Strengthening management by educational platforms
4	China Ministry of Education	2022	Double First-Class Promotion	Strengthening higher education	Academic excellence at top universities

5	China Ministry of Education	2025	High-quality education system	Support for Chinese modernization	Strategic planning for modern education
6	Gomes, J. M. et al.	2025	Digital entrepreneurship education	Integration of active methodologies	Gamification and PBL for entrepreneurial training
7	Haas, C. M.; Aparício, A. S. M.	2019	Challenges of academic management	Regulation and quality in higher education	Critical analysis of educational management
8	IFCE	2021	Lesson plans with active methodologies	Meaningful learning	Collection of innovative pedagogical practices
9	Mancebo, D. et al.	2022	Crisis of science in Brazil	Impact of austerity on education	Critical analysis of the Brazilian academic context
10	Moran, J. M.; Massetto, M. T.; Behrens, M. A.	2013	Pedagogical mediation with technologies	Mediation and blended learning	Integration of new technologies in pedagogy
11	Saviani, D.	2008	Pedagogical ideas in Brazil	History of education in Brazil	Historical reflection on pedagogical practices
12	Silva, T. F.; Moura, C. C.	2021	Active methodologies in teaching	Application of active methodologies	Systematic review on innovations in teaching
13	Soares, A. M. J. et al.	2024	Gamification in entrepreneurial education	Future prospects	Review of the application of gamification in education
14	Stange, C. E. B. et al.	2022	Higher education and institutional evaluation	Educational multidimensionality	Academic management with an evaluative focus
15	UNESCO	2023	Technology in education	Pedagogical tool	Use of technology for educational innovation
16	UNESCO	2025	Educational Strategy for Brazil	Educational development	Public policy aimed at the quality of education
17	UNESCO	2023	Inequality in education	Global disparities	Comparative study on educational inequality
18	OAPEN LIBRARY	2025	Education in China and the world	Current Educational Issues	Comparative analysis of education systems

Source: Survey data, 2025.

Table 1 presents a summary of the 18 selected studies, organized in descending chronological order. The articles were distributed according to the year of publication, country of publication, journal of origin, objectives, sample characteristics, interventions performed, and main results observed. This organization facilitates the identification of the most recent contributions and allows you to visualize trends in academic production on educational policies in Brazil and China.

There is a concentration of publications in the years 2024 and 2025, which indicates a recent growth in academic interest in the topic. Although the studies include different geographical contexts, Brazil and China stand out, evidencing the international relevance of



the pedagogical discussions analyzed. The methodological diversity — which ranges from theoretical studies to systematic reviews — expands the scope of the comparative analysis proposed in this work.

Graph 1 below shows the distribution of articles by type of study and year of publication, evidencing the thematic intertwinings between the works and contributing to a broader understanding of the convergences and divergences in the pedagogical practices examined.

Chart 1 brings together the main findings of the reviewed studies, highlighting the points of convergence and the most significant methodological innovations identified in the critical analysis.

Table 1: Synthesis of the Main Findings of the Included Studies

Thematic Axis	Convergences	Differences	Critical Analysis and Examples
Active methodologies and pedagogical innovation	Both contexts adopt active methodologies to promote autonomous learning and critical skills.	In Brazil, encouraging PBL/PBL faces challenges in teacher training; in China, there is cultural resistance and limited infrastructure.	The application of active methodologies in Brazil, such as PBL in Engineering courses, promotes autonomy, but faces difficulties due to the lack of continuous training (Silva and Moura, 2021). In China, although PBL has proven efficacy, teacher resistance limits its use (Gomes et al., 2025).
Technological integration and modernization	Investments in educational technology, such as digital platforms and AI, to modernize teaching.	Brazil faces inequality in technological infrastructure; China adopts robust policies and mandatory AI in the curriculum.	PISA data (2023) show that Brazil has about 10 students per computer, while China has implemented AI teaching in all basic schools (China Ministry of Education, 2025). This reflects the difference in public policies and execution capacity of the two countries.
Quality and evaluation of learning	Concern with school quality and use of standardized assessments (PISA, national exams).	China performs highly in international assessments; Brazil seeks improvements with policies such as the BNCC and PNE goals.	The rigorous examination system in China, such as the Gaokao, promotes academic competitiveness. In Brazil, regional disparity and the lack of consistent policies reduce the positive impact of assessments (UNESCO, 2023).
Governance and educational policies	Both have regulatory bodies and national policies to direct education.	China: centralized model with state control; Brazil: decentralized system with shared responsibilities between the Union, states and municipalities.	Centralization in China allows uniform implementation of policies, such as the 'Double First-Class', while in Brazil decentralization generates heterogeneous policies and standardization difficulties (Andrade, 2024).
Teacher training and development	Recognition of the importance of qualified teachers for	China invests in continuous and standardized teacher	An OECD report (2023) points out that the Chinese model, with centralized certification of

	the quality of teaching.	training; Brazil faces low attractiveness and gaps in initial and continuing education.	teachers, guarantees higher quality, while in Brazil the lack of continuing education programs weakens pedagogical practice.
Inclusion and social equity	Policies for school inclusion and expansion of educational access.	China has structured national programs; Brazil, although with comprehensive legislation, faces structural challenges for implementation.	In China, policies such as the One Plus One Disability Group promote effective inclusion, while in Brazil, despite the LDB and the PNE, the precariousness of resources limits school inclusion (UNESCO, 2023).

Source: Survey data, 2025.

The systematic analysis showed that both Brazil and China have invested in active methodologies and pedagogical innovations with the objective of qualifying their educational systems. Although they share the intention of modernization, the challenges faced by each country reflect distinct sociocultural and political specificities.

Studies such as those by Silva and Moura (2021) and Soares et al. (2024) indicate that strategies such as problem-based learning (PBL) and gamification have been promoting student protagonism and the development of critical skills, especially in the Brazilian context. However, the application of these methodologies comes up against obstacles such as the scarcity of technological infrastructure and the lack of continuing education for teachers, with a greater impact on less favored regions (Gomes et al., 2025).

In China, the main challenges are not related to infrastructure, but to cultural and teacher resistance to new approaches. The research by Gomes et al. (2025) points out that, although the articulation between entrepreneurial education and active methodologies is promising, it still encounters institutional barriers in both countries. This reveals that, even with advances in Chinese educational policy, the consolidation of these practices depends on cultural changes and investments in specific teacher training.

This comparative approach allows us to understand how Brazil and China face, each in their own way, the challenges of educational modernization. While Brazil seeks to consolidate innovative practices in a scenario marked by inequalities, China invests in centralization and institutional strengthening, with a focus on building universities of international excellence.

Thus, it is essential that public policies in both countries consider not only technological and methodological advances, but also the cultural and structural realities of their educational systems. Only in this way will it be possible to promote innovative, quality and socially inclusive education.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The recent transformations in the educational systems of Brazil and China reflect different paths in the face of contemporary challenges in education. Although both countries share the effort to modernize and qualify education, their approaches are underpinned by profoundly different logics and structures, influenced by specific political, cultural, and economic contexts.

China implements a centralized, technocratic educational model guided by long-term goals, standing out for the "China Education Modernization 2035" plan, which establishes guidelines to consolidate the country as a global reference in quality education. The strategy of the "Double First-Class" project seeks to elevate universities and specific disciplines to world-class status, promoting internationalization and technological innovation (CHINA, 2022). However, studies indicate that, despite structural advances, the system faces challenges related to cultural adaptation and teacher resistance to the use of innovative methodologies (Gomes et al., 2025).

On the other hand, Brazil has a decentralized and fragmented system, marked by regional inequalities and difficulties in implementing modern pedagogical practices. The adoption of active methodologies, such as problem-based learning (PBL) and gamification, has shown potential to promote student protagonism, but faces structural barriers, especially in peripheral regions, due to insufficient technological infrastructure and the lack of continuing teacher training (Silva and Moura, 2021; Soares et al., 2024).

The comparative analysis reveals that, while China takes advantage of state centralization to ensure uniformity in educational policies, Brazil faces obstacles to maintain the continuity and standardization of innovative practices due to administrative decentralization (Andrade, 2024). This structural difference implies that centralized policies such as the Chinese ones are able to implement initiatives in a more coordinated and uniform way, while in Brazil pedagogical practices are more heterogeneous and depend on local contexts.

Among the limitations of this study, the restricted temporal scope (last five years) stands out, which may have excluded relevant research carried out previously. In addition, the choice for free articles may have generated publication bias, limiting the inclusion of paid access studies that could enrich the analysis. Another limitation refers to the absence of primary empirical data, since the review was based exclusively on academic productions available in the consulted databases.

It is recommended that future research consider expanding the time frame and integrating field studies that directly investigate the application of innovative methodologies



in school contexts in both countries. Comparisons with other educational systems that also adopt modern pedagogical practices could enrich the understanding of global innovation strategies in education.

The findings of this review suggest that both Brazil and China need to balance pedagogical innovation with strategies that consider the sociocultural and structural particularities of each context. To strengthen its educational policies, Brazil must invest in continuing education and infrastructure, while China needs to make pedagogical practices more flexible to engage teachers more actively. These advances require sustainable public policies, capable of integrating innovation, quality, and inclusion in a coherent and contextualized way.

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