



Research on Child-Friendly Expenditure in China

—Based on Data Analysis of Provincial Capital Cities from 2019 to 2022

Meiduo Zhou, Jiaxin Wang*

University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, Chengdu, Sichuan, 611731, China

*Corresponding author. Email: 1076821884@qq.com

Abstract. Child-Friendly expenditures are measured and analyzed in 28 provincial capital cities in China. According to the definition of Child Friendly expenditure by UNICEF and in combination with departmental budget report in China, the Child-Friendly expenditures in provincial capital cities are first measured in three steps. To study on the total amount, structure, characteristics of various types and sources of Child-Friendly expenditure, the method of comparative analysis is used. Finally, the research finds that the level of child-friendly spending in various cities in China is constantly improving, the structure is constantly optimizing, and departments are constantly diversifying, but there are clear gaps between different cities.

Keywords: Child-Friendly City; Child-Friendly expenditure; Comparative analysis method; Chinese cities

1 Introduction

As an important human capital for social development, children play a decisive role in promoting a prosperous future for societies. Since the last century, the movements around "children's rights" constantly emerged in the world. Then international treaties were promulgated, such as Declaration of the Rights of the Child and so on. The normative awareness of protecting children and safeguarding their rights has been widely formed throughout the world. However, the international organizations and child rights protection agencies found that policies cannot solve problems such as child rights violations. Therefore, the related institutions require governments to expand public expenditure on children and report it. Based on this, scholars have conducted extensive research on Child-Friendly expenditure.

Child-friendly expenditure refers to all government expenditures to ensure children's rights to survival, protection, development and participation ^[1]. Foreign scholars' research on Child-Friendly expenditure mainly focuses on three aspects. Firstly, research on the scope, including whether to include education expenditure ^[2], tax credit ^[3], and healthcare expenditure ^[2]. Secondly, research on the influencing factors, including social economy, political behavior and Incrementalism ^[4]. Thirdly, research on the

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benefits, such as reducing abuse rates ^[5], reducing mortality rates ^[6], and increasing fertility willingness ^[7]. However, Chinese scholars on Child-Friendly expenditure focuses more on child welfare expenditure and education expenditure. For example, scholars research the types of child welfare expenditure ^[8], policy support ^[9], and the scale structure of educational investments ^[10].

To sum up, compared to research in other countries, Chinese scholars conduct more studies on child welfare expenditure and education expenditure in child-friendly expenditure. Therefore, in accordance with UNICEF's definition of Child-Friendly expenditure and the budget reports of various departments at the municipal level of Chinese capital cities from 2019 to 2022, we calculate Child-Friendly expenditure and analyzes the financial efforts made to build Child-Friendly Cities.

2 Research Design

UNICEF recommends identifying Child-Friendly expenditures in three aspects: the name of the budget account, institutions and administrative systems and expenditure classifications are used for children in the table of accounts. Based on UNICEF's definition and budget reports of Chinese Departments, the steps to measure Child-Friendly expenditures in China are divided into three steps: firstly, all expenditures of secondary institutions that directly benefit children are included; secondly, the expenditure of the budget report containing children should be directly included; thirdly, child-related expenditures are screened from the "Program Expenditure Performance Table". If a program contains multiple beneficiaries, Child-Friendly expenditures will be included if they can be inferred.

In addition, Child-Friendly expenditure is divided into six categories: health, education, welfare, family, environment and legal protection on the basis of the China National Program for Child Development (2021-2030). Due to the abundant research on education expenditure, only the other five categories of expenditure are statistically analyzed. Through the analysis of the age of the beneficiaries, it is found that the five categories of expenditure are mainly for "children aged 14 and below", so we adopt the population number of "0-14 years old" in the Seventh National Population Census to calculate the average.

Therefore, through comparative analysis, we analyze the overall situation of Child-Friendly expenditure in China's capital cities during 2019-2022, and analyzes the current situation of child-friendly expenditure from five categories of expenditure: health, welfare, environment, family and legal protection. In addition, the amount and categories of Child-Friendly expenditure in each city are compared and analyzed to understand the key areas and differences of child-friendly expenditure in different places.

3 Result Analysis

3.1 Total amounts of Child-Friendly expenditure

The total amount of Child-Friendly expenditure in 28 provincial capitals is obtained by statistics on Child-Friendly expenditure (Fig. 1). It is found that Shanghai's Child-Friendly expenditure shows a cliff lead, at more than 1.2 billion, while Urumqi's total expenditure is about 50 million, and the gap between the first and the last is relatively large. In addition, the total amount of Child-Friendly expenditure in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hefei and other cities changed greatly in the four years. Overall, the total amount of Child-Friendly expenditure is on the rise from 2019 to 2022, but there is a large gap in the total amount across regions.

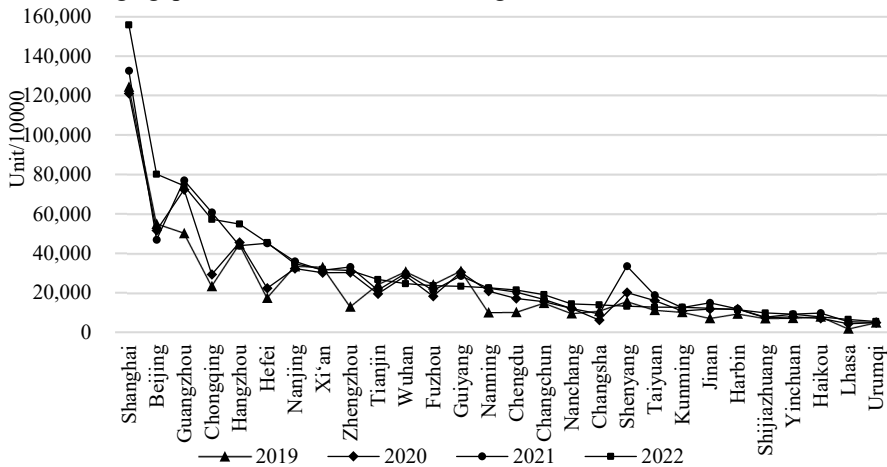


Fig. 1. Total Child-Friendly expenditure in provincial capitals 2019-2022

The calculation of Child-Friendly per capita expenditure in 2019-2022 shows that the per capita expenditure of children in each city has increased from 153.43 in 2019 to 197.96 in 2022, with a relatively large growth rate. A comparison of per capita expenditure in 2022 shows that nine cities have higher per capita expenditure than the average level. Shanghai's Child-Friendly expenditure per capita is 639.77, which is consistent with the total Child-Friendly expenditure in Shanghai, Shijiazhuang is 44.84 in last. Shanghai's Child-Friendly per capita expenditure is 14 times higher than Shijiazhuang's. As a result, there is an upward trend in Child-Friendly per capita expenditure across cities, but there are still large gaps between cities.

3.2 Structure of Child-Friendly expenditure

Child-Friendly expenditure is divided into five categories: health, welfare, family, environment and legal protection. Fig. 2 depicts the structure of Child-Friendly expenditure in 28 cities in 2022. Lhasa, Nanning, Changchun, Zhengzhou, Harbin, Kunming, Xi'an, Wuhan, Fuzhou, Tianjin, Beijing and Shenyang have the highest proportion of

health expenditure in Child-Friendly expenditure. Chongqing, Taiyuan and Urumqi account for the highest proportion of welfare expenditure, which reflected that these cities pay more attention to the protection of special children. The cities of Nanjing, Nanchang, Yinchuan, Jinan, Guiyang, Guangzhou, Haikou, Shijiazhuang, Shanghai, Changsha, Hefei, Hangzhou and Chengdu have the highest proportion of environment expenditure, indicating that these cities pay more attention to the construction of Child-Friendly environment.

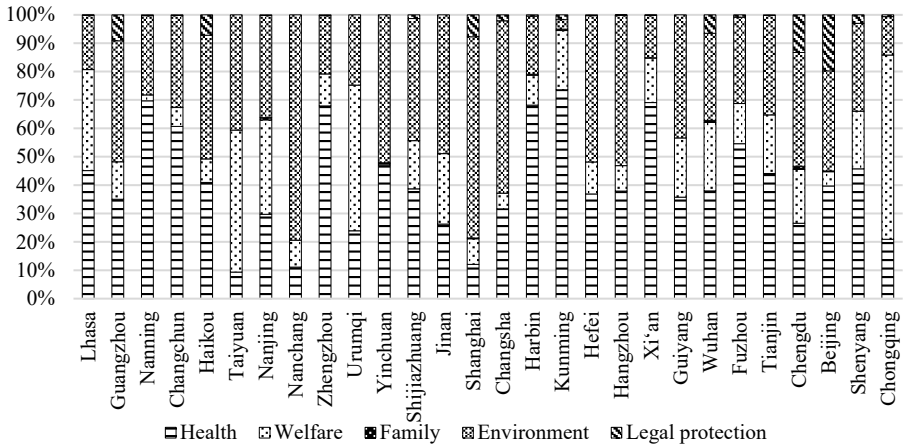


Fig. 2. Child-friendly expenditure structure by city in 2022

3.3 Characteristics of various types of Child-Friendly expenditures

To understand the level of each category of expenditure, five categories of expenditure are averaged. Each category of expenditure per capita in 2019-2022 is compared, and five categories of expenditure are health, environment, welfare, legal protection, and family from highest to lowest. The per capita expenditures on health and welfare show an upward trend from 2019 to 2022, while environment expenditure shows an increasing trend from 2019 to 2021, and slightly decreased from 2021 to 2022. In family expenditure, this expenditure is relatively small, and, this kind of per capita expenditure is the highest in 2020, only 0.66, mainly because there is also a certain "invisible" expenditure of children's families.

To further understand the characteristics of Child-Friendly expenditure, the mean of each category of expenditures is calculated for each city (Fig. 3). In health expenditure, the per capita expenditure on children's health in two-thirds of the cities exceeded 50, and Xi'an accounts for a relatively high position in the total expenditure on children in the four years. In addition, the per capita expenditure on health in Lhasa has increased the most, from 12.25 in 2019 to 203.32 in 2022. The increase in per capita spending on child health between 2019-2022 reflects the government's increasing focus on the area of child health. In welfare expenditure, the total amount of child welfare in most cities from 2019 to 2022 shows an upward trend, and the proportion of child welfare expenditure also shows an upward trend, which is consistent with the improvement of the

"improve the level of protection for lonely and poor children" advocated by local governments. In family expenditure, it is found that no such expenditure is found in the departmental budgets of 17 cities during 2019-2022. As family expenditure does not exist in the budget subject, more exists in the form of departmental projects, so there is a great "hidden" in family expenditure. In cities with such expenditure, "project discontinuity and instability" leads to higher fluctuations between 2019 and 2022. In environment expenditure, it is found that 85% of urban children environment per capita expenditure showed an upward trend compared with 2019. At the same time, the proportion of child-friendly expenditure in the four years was analyzed, and it is found that the proportion of environment expenditure continued to increase, especially the proportion of environment expenditure in 2022 is much higher than that in 2021, which reflects the government's attention to child-friendly environment work. In legal protection expenditure, from 17 cities in 2019 to 22 cities in 2022, it shows that legal protection plays an important role in children's development, and legal protection is an area that local governments gradually pay attention to in the process of children's city construction.

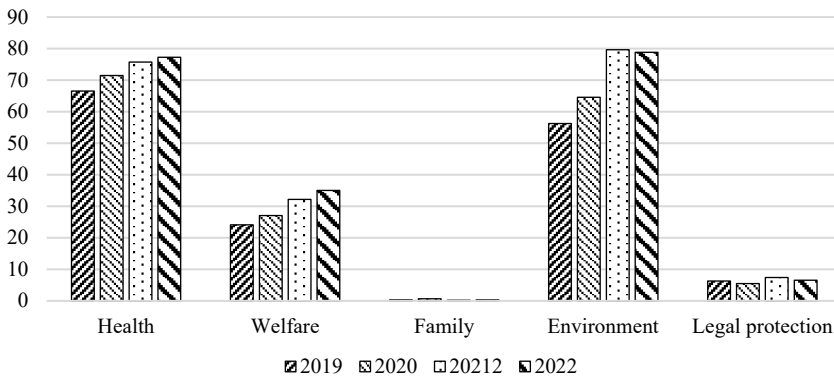


Fig. 3. Per capita expenditure by category 2019-2022

3.4 Analysis of various sources of Child-Friendly expenditures

By tracing the departmental sources of the five categories of expenditure, it is found that the health expenditure is mainly concentrated in children's hospitals, women's and children's hospitals and other institutions that provide special medical services for children. The welfare expenditure mainly comes from the children welfare institutes under the Civil Affairs Bureau, and some local social organizations, such as women's federations and disabled persons' federations, also provide relevant services. The family expenditure and environment expenditure come more from social organizations. In legal protection expenditure, the expenditure comes more from the Communist Youth League, the Propaganda Department, the spiritual civilization office and other departments with a strong ideological education nature.

4 Conclusions

From 2019 to 2022, Child-Friendly expenditure shows an upward trend in both total and per capita terms, but there is imbalances between cities in China. From the perspective of the expenditure structure of each city, Child-Friendly expenditure of each city has gradually expanded from single expenditure to multifaceted expenditure. From the expenditure departments, government departments and social organizations have invested in providing a variety of service support. Therefore, Child-Friendly expenditure shows the characteristics of continuously improving levels, optimizing expenditure structures, and diversifying expenditure departments in China. A Child-Friendly expenditure system with Chinese characteristics has gradually been formed.

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