

Reflections on the Equity and Efficiency of Chinese Higher Education

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Abstract: Based on the thinking and research on "Equity and Efficiency of Chinese Higher Education", we should first clarify the concepts and key relationships of educational equity and efficiency and then combine with the existing main problems in the equity and efficiency of Chinese higher education to analyze how to realize the fairness and efficiency of Chinese higher education. Therefore, it is concluded that relevant departments should pay more attention to cost sharing and education industrialization, choose the optimal educational resource allocation method, carry out reasonable level distribution from all aspects, and ensure the perfection of the education quality evaluation system. The above four countermeasures hope to provide some help for the improvement of the overall quality of Chinese higher education.

Keywords: Chinese education; Higher education; Education equity; Educational efficiency

1. Introduction

As the most basic value pursuit in the thousands of years of human social civilization and economic development, fairness and efficiency are also one of the most urgent goals to be achieved in the current reform of higher education in China and the world. In recent years, although the enrollment expansion measures of various colleges and universities in China have promoted the development of higher education to a certain extent, there are still problems of unfairness and low efficiency in various forms. Therefore, it is very necessary to actively investigate shortcomings in the equity and efficiency of higher education and formulate targeted measures to promote the spread of Chinese higher education as much as possible. Thus, higher education's economic and social functions can be brought into full play to the greatest extent based on effectively correcting some deviations in educational practice.

2. The Concept and the Main Relationship between Educational Fairness and Efficiency

2.1 The Concept of Educational Equity and Efficiency

The essence of educational fairness is a kind of value judgment, which covers a wide range of levels, factors, and disciplines, and has strong complexity. Normally, equity in higher education refers to the fair distribution of educational resources, and it is necessary to ensure that people from all walks of life participate in non-compulsory education in equal proportions. It is necessary to ensure that adolescents of roughly the same age, intelligence, and ability have the opportunity to participate in non-compulsory education and are not limited by race, gender, region, and social class. Young people in all sectors of society must be guaranteed equal opportunities to acquire academic skills. However, higher education efficiency refers to how higher education contributes to the personal growth of its students and the country's development. It is well known that governments and societies have limited resources to invest in higher education. Therefore, the quantity and quality of higher education could be greatly improved if these funds' rational use and allocation were ensured. Failure to use and allocate these limited resources wisely will inevitably reduce higher education's role, and the resources already in short supply will be wasted unnecessarily [1].

2.2 The Main Relationship between Educational Equity and Efficiency

Under the background of limited educational resources, it is easy to appear the contradiction between the efficiency and fairness of higher education. This means that major universities should be included in

the priority development industries to improve their academic standards more quickly. Or should we allocate resources equally to colleges and universities across the country or invest more in colleges and colleges that need more support to narrow the college-university gap as much as possible? What should we do? If the final decision is to open tertiary education to the public, many schools will open tertiary education to adults to provide greater opportunities for tertiary education to maximize educational equity or choose to open to secondary education institutions, etc. Consequences, such as dispersal of educational resources and a drastic decline in the quality of education, far outweigh the benefits.

However, if we analyze and understand different equity and efficiency aspects in higher education, we can easily establish an indivisible relationship between them. Firstly, the meaning of educational equity also includes the element of educational effectiveness, which embodies the value of educational equity. In other words, the world is not efficient without justice, and there is no justice without efficiency. Secondly, if the fairness of higher education can be enhanced, it can also play a certain role in promoting the growth of educational efficiency. Similarly, if the efficiency of higher education can be effectively improved, it will also be very helpful to the construction and improvement of educational equity. The two are complementary and key contents that must be continuously optimized and improved in the development of Chinese higher education in the new era.

3. Major Existing Problems in Equity and Efficiency of Chinese Higher Education

3.1 The Special National Conditions Lead to the Education Environment being Optimized

First of all, although the reform and opening up and market economy reforms have brought infinite vitality to the development of the country and society, after all, China has only just escaped from its semi-feudal and semi-colonial status for several decades. So even though the level of productivity has improved significantly, there is still a big gap compared with developed countries. Considering that the transition to modernization and development of Chinese education is relatively short-lived, we have not yet considered a higher education system fully compatible with Chinese conditions. Under the condition that the national financial investment in higher education is very limited, the environment of higher education will naturally be in a state of being optimized for a long time [2].

Secondly, China experienced a special development period in the late last century. At that time, a large population conducive to social progress pressured Chinese development after decades, leading to the decline of Chinese overall national strength. Although it has jumped to the forefront of the world, its per capita level is still very backward. This pressure is also fully reflected in higher education. With the number of colleges and universities in China and the number of college students far exceeding most countries in the world, the contradiction between effective higher education resources and people's demand for higher education has become increasingly prominent, which in turn makes the road to realizing the fairness and efficiency of higher education in China is even more difficult.

3.2 The Allocation of Educational Resources Needs to be Updated

Countries have limited funds to invest in higher education over the long term. Suppose the general principle of fairness is always followed. In that case, an equal distribution of resources should be carried out for all levels, regions and types of higher education institutions to ensure that all higher education institutions in China have equal access to resources. But this way, the advantages of rapid development and international competition will disappear if high-quality educational resources cannot receive significant support. This is undoubtedly unfavorable to the healthy development of Chinese higher education and the enhancement of national competitiveness. However, if the general principle of efficiency is always followed, the gap among various higher education institutions will inevitably become larger and larger, thus forming a destructive pattern [3].

3.3 Large Gaps in the Level of Local Development

During the period of reform and opening up, China invested different economic resources in different regions. For example, most western regions have abundant resources but a low level of the industrial economy, while most eastern regions have few resources but are highly industrialized. Different levels of economic development also greatly affect the quality of education. In addition, the economic gap between urban and rural areas cannot be ignored. This is the main reason why although the rural population is larger, the education quality and education opportunities are not as good as those in the

cities, and resources are seriously wasted in areas with developed education, while resources in backward areas are relatively insufficient. Suppose this phenomenon cannot be mitigated in time. In that case, the realization of equity in Chinese higher education will inevitably be greatly curtailed, further creating the problem of low educational efficiency and the inability to maximize resource utilization across the country [4].

3.4 Some Problems in Higher Education

In addition to the external factors that affect the equity and efficiency of higher education, many problems in the structures, systems, and institutions of higher education cannot be ignored, mainly manifested in the following two aspects: First, Chinese colleges and universities are still divided into key and general categories. The gap between these two types of universities is very significant in terms of school funding, faculty, and other aspects. Second, most colleges and universities still use exam scores as the primary admission criterion, and the disparities in admission scores across different locations also create a lack of educational equity.

4. Realization of Fairness and Efficiency in Chinese Higher Education

4.1 Increased Emphasis on Cost Sharing and Education Industrialization

First, when implementing a sharing system for higher education, it should be analyzed from a fair and objective point of view, and the sharing capacity determines the cost ratio that each party should share. Regarding the current Chinese higher education cost-sharing mechanism, the state still occupies the most critical dominant position, but at the same time, social fundraising, financing, and public investment are also effective measures that can be taken. Relevant departments can use the development of various industries, the economic benefits of various enterprises, and the economic capabilities of families or individuals as the basis and share the education costs according to the designed scientific proportion. To achieve society's harmonious and long-term development, it is also necessary to formulate cost-sharing policies focusing on poor areas to enhance the relative equity of higher education.

Second, suppose we want to solve the problem of waste of resources and funds in some colleges and universities and lack of resources and funding in some colleges and universities within limited resources of higher education. With the cooperation of various colleges and universities, the state needs to adopt macro-control measures to transition to marketization. It has been proved by practice that only by innovating the school operating system and management mode and improving the operational efficiency of higher education as much as possible can we break the current unfair higher education dilemma and provide more opportunities to more people [5].

4.2 The Choice of Optimal Educational Resource Allocation

Regarding the marketing of higher education in China, industry scholars can be broadly divided according to their views into those who advocate "predominant prejudice" and those who advocate "equal distribution." In particular, scholars of the "profit-oriented" school believe that China should invest its limited educational resources as much as possible to develop top universities and outstanding talents in comprehensive strength. Based on creating the best and most favorable learning and growth environment for them, they can grow at the fastest speed and contribute to the development of the country and society. However, scholars of the "Equal distribution school" believe that countries should distribute educational resources relatively fairly and not put the most important training subjects in special "flowerpots." It is to put all schools, subjects, and students on the same horizon so that everyone is on an equal footing before starting to compete. Subsequently, the state can promulgate a policy that links resource allocation to performance so that universities and personnel with stronger strength, faster knowledge absorption, and stronger creativity and innovation can obtain more resources. Therefore, according to its contribution and development level, the country can also give heavy rewards and key support non-blindly [6]. The author also believes that the latter is more suitable for the current situation of higher education in China than the former, but it must be very difficult to implement.

4.3 Reasonable Hierarchical Distribution from All Aspects

When dividing the objects of higher education, we can start from the following four aspects.

First, the various forms of higher education should be rationally divided. That is, China should provide institutions that can provide the masses with full-time formal higher education and have the freedom to choose other part-time and non-formal higher education. Second, all higher education levels should be reasonably distributed, even though college students can choose key universities, general undergraduates, junior colleges, or vocational colleges. Thirdly, various types of higher education should be distributed reasonably. Students can choose disciplines, majors, and academic systems according to their wishes. Fourth, we should do a good job in the rational diversion of higher education areas. Moreover, the state can assign different but appropriate diversion tasks to higher education institutions of different natures, levels, and types to achieve the sustainable development of the country and society in the new era, the purpose of cultivating all kinds of specialized talents at all levels, including elites [7].

4.4 Ensure the Integrity of the Education Quality Evaluation System

In addition, the state should provide universities of different natures, levels, types, and regions with different but rational Diversion tasks that can be assigned to the purpose of talent [7]. At the same time, this also put forward higher requirements for the advancement and perfection of the quality evaluation system of higher education. Taking reforms in various aspects such as levels, types, scales, and characteristics as the starting point, while truly realizing the fairness of higher education, So that the efficiency of education can be fundamentally improved under the joint reflection of university administrators, educators, and all walks of life [8].

5. Conclusion

Overall, the most important direction today for researchers and higher education stakeholders is to find the best combination of equity and efficiency in higher education. In other words, achieving equity effectively rather than improving efficiency should focus on equity; If efficiency is better than equity, then efficiency must be the priority so that society, individuals, and higher education can play a larger role.

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