

Current Situation and Issues of Education Equity in China

Jialin Cai^{1,a,*}

¹College of Life Science, Fujian Normal University, Fuzhou, Fujian, 350108, China

^aCaijl0511@163.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract: *With the continuous progress and development of Chinese society, people's understanding of education has gradually deepened and their expectations of the quality of education have become higher and higher. As a prominent issue in the field of education, equity in education has been widely concerned by the education sector and even by all sectors of society. Equity in education has three main dimensions: equity at the start of education, equity in the process of education and equity in educational outcomes. Equity at the start of education refers to the opportunity to start a learning career regardless of gender, race, origin, economic situation, living environment and other circumstances. The current situation in each of these three areas is different because it builds on the previous two areas to ensure that learners of different abilities have access to an appropriate level of education.*

Keywords: *equity in education, equity in educational starting points, equity in educational processes, equity in educational outcomes*

1. Introduction

Equity in education is a goal pursued by most national public policies, and governments generally have two basic understandings of equitable educational development: first, to ensure that every citizen of the country receives a certain number of years of basic education so that he or she acquires the basic knowledge and abilities to survive in society; second, to ensure that every citizen of the country has equal access to school, regardless of socio-economic status, class, ethnicity, geographical location, physical For basic education beyond compulsory education, fair and effective admission criteria are applied, and students are not subject to conditions other than these criteria. [1] Education plays an important role in the movement of people from the bottom to the top. It helps to break down class divisions and achieve social equality. But at the same time, education is also an important means by which dominant groups in society pass on this dominance to their children. The dominant group has more economic, social and political capital than the weaker group and can provide better quality educational resources for their children. This social reproduction function undoubtedly hinders social mobility. As the economy grows, the demand for education increases and the education market takes its place in the wider market of the country.

The importance of the study of equity in education is that the study can develop the identity of the theoretical value of equity in education. By studying the relevant literature on equity in education, we can further explore its theoretical value, improve the identity of the theoretical value of equity in education in the new era, and strengthen our cultural self-confidence. This study also helps to improve the quality of education in China. In the new era, the emergence of many educational inequalities in our society has raised general concerns and caused negative social consequences, so China's departments in charge of education need to be very careful and take necessary measures to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy educational justice, Protect and maintain equity in education by implementing educational equity initiatives and reduce inequalities in educational equity to meet public demand for higher education The Government will continue to promote the improvement of the quality of education by implementing educational equity initiatives, ensuring and maintaining equity in education and reducing inequalities in educational equity to meet public demand for higher quality and fairer education.

In order to achieve equitable educational development, we need to recognise the key issues and policy implications of equitable educational development. Educational attainment, educational resources and the origin of students are three key elements of equitable educational development. The relationship between these and educational equity forms the three core issues of educational equity.

2. Equity in the starting point of education

Equity in the starting point of education begins primarily with the pursuit of equity in compulsory education and the assurance of quality, which is the prerequisite and foundation of educational equity in general and a symbol of educational equity; this applies above all to equity in educational opportunities and conditions. In other words, everyone has the opportunity to embark on a career in education, regardless of gender, race, origin, economic situation, life environments and other circumstances, and the distribution of teaching materials and teachers is equal.

There are still some problems with the starting point of education equity in China, such as the gap between urban and rural education needs to be narrowed. The contradiction between the urban and rural dichotomy is prominent, and there is a large gap between urban and rural education. The academic performance of students in some schools in rural areas fails to meet the standards set by the state, and they gradually lose their interest in learning and their thirst for knowledge as they progress through the grades. In many of China's mountainous rural and ethnic minority areas, people's economic living standards are low, and many areas have just solved the problem of food and clothing, lacking economic capacity and ideological awareness, and many children do not have the opportunity to receive education. Therefore, in all rural areas, there are problems of insufficient teacher capacity, poor home-school cooperation, and a disconnection between school education and students' actual life experience, to varying degrees, which have a negative impact on school education and quality. This has had a negative impact on the improvement of school education and quality. [2] And in urban areas, the uneven distribution of high-quality educational resources does not well meet the educational needs brought about by new urbanisation, while phenomena such as large class sizes have become a pressing problem to be solved.

3. Equity in the educational process

Equity in the educational process means being treated fairly in the process of accessing education, enjoying the same educational rights as other participants in the educational process, and sharing educational resources. This is mainly reflected in the content of education, teacher-student interaction and fair evaluation.

In the education market, educational institutions are becoming the main market structure and the education they provide is mainly non-formal based on formal education. It has become a common phenomenon worldwide that students are educated outside the school system, not to obtain qualifications, but to improve their skills and competitiveness. The most direct way to judge the quality of schooling is to compare the process and outcomes of schooling with the aims of education. The process of education includes the 'teaching' of teachers and the 'learning' of students. The educational outcomes are mainly the learning outcomes of students, which can be divided into two parts: academic performance and overall quality performance. This is the most objective and closest to the actual quality of education, as it is based on direct inferences about the overall state of schooling [3]. In reality, however, parents judge the quality of schooling primarily on the basis of their students' academic performance in the subjects they study and make extra-curricular tutoring more popular by hoping that it will make up for the shortcomings of the curriculum and improve children's academic performance at a time when they perceive the quality of schooling to be poor at this stage.

If students receive the same quality of education, the final educational outcome is closely linked to their family's economic situation: students from poorly-off families can only rely on conventional education to access educational resources, while well-off families have the opportunity and the will to purchase social education. They can improve their children's academic performance by purchasing high quality learning resources in order to maintain their educational advantage. This hinders the distribution of educational resources and the implementation of educational equity. While public investment in education helps disadvantaged and poor families achieve upward mobility, class differences in household education costs lead to an inequitable distribution of resources in the education process, thus posing a challenge to educational equity. Of course, educational inequity in this context refers to the inequity of parenting scores. Because education in China aims to promote the all-round development of students, the extra-curricular tutoring referred to in this paper is biased towards academic extra-curricular tutoring, which focuses on improving students' scores and concentrates more on the cultivation of students' wisdom. Therefore, the educational inequity caused by extra-curricular tutoring here is generally an inequity in the education of scores, rather than the education of people. The economic constraint thesis (ECT) developed by French sociologist Raymond Bouton also clarifies the role of household economic

conditions in shaping educational inequalities. He argues that education as a costly activity requires economic support from the family, and that access to education is structurally differentiated because of the different costs of education that different families can afford [4]. This phenomenon essentially reflects social stratification: children at the bottom of the ladder do not receive the same quality of educational resources, and only a few students end up being able to move to the top.

At the same time, educational resources can be divided into a broad and a narrow sense. In a broad sense, educational resources are all the elements that can be used in the learning process. This includes not only those that serve teaching and learning, but also property and material; in a narrower sense, educational resources mainly include teaching tools and the learning environment. On the one hand, there is a need to improve the wages and salaries of teachers in China as they are not well paid. In contrast, the high salaries and generous packages that many teachers receive after leaving school are an irresistible 'lure'. Teachers from prestigious schools have become the 'signature' teachers, attracting more parents and students to extra-curricular activities. On the other hand, some teachers encourage students to participate in extra-curricular activities both in and out of school for higher pay, even with reservations in the classroom, creating an imbalance in the use of educational resources for students and inadvertently exacerbating educational inequities.

4. Equity in educational outcomes

Equity in educational outcomes is based on a fair educational starting point and an equitable educational process that ensures, in particular, that learners of different abilities have access to an appropriate level of education. Upon completion of the appropriate stage of education, each learner will be able to reach a minimum level of knowledge, competence development and moral education appropriate to his or her educational and intellectual level, allowing for the full development of his or her personality and potential and providing the ideal platform for a career or higher academic achievement or other development.

While the proposal for equitable education is idealistic, its implementation must take full account of the realities of the situation. At present, there are still many inequitable educational outcomes in China. Due to regional differences, investment in education is higher in the eastern regions than in the central and western regions. This directly leads to an imbalance in the quality of education, especially in the western regions. On the other hand, for low-income groups in China, the equal right to education for their children is often limited by objective circumstances and cannot in principle be guaranteed.

There are also two aspects of equity in educational outcomes: theoretical and practical. In theory, the ultimate aim of education is to promote the all-round development of the individual and to realise the potential of each person; in other words, education is ultimately an opportunity for human development. As such, equity in educational outcomes is also possible. It is an opportunity for individuals to gain access to the same body of knowledge and to achieve equal success in their learning.

However, the reality is that in the development process, people are influenced by factors such as personal commitment, the quality of education in different regions and individual capabilities, making development different for each individual. In terms of outcomes, firstly, different academic achievements and, secondly, different personal preferences lead to different choices. At the end of compulsory education, pupils enter the relevant secondary, general and vocational schools according to their academic achievements and choices; after secondary school, pupils choose to enter the labour market or enter a vocational or general university; after university, another option is to work or continue their studies or to continue their studies after work. This educational transformation is the expression of educational justice at the practical level, allowing students to do what they can and get what they need.

Therefore, at a time when general education is growing rapidly, the state should focus on the development of vocational education so that every student who wants to pursue a career has access to the right level of quality education and the right skills. Educational redirection can work and can lead to a degree of equity in educational outcomes if each learning pathway achieves a certain level of individual potential.

5. Suggestion

5.1 Increase investment in rural education and improve the quality of education

To improve the quality of rural education, we must first increase investment in education funding and ensure that education funding is really put into practice, and also improve the mechanism for monitoring and guaranteeing rural education funding to ensure that rural compulsory education funding is used rationally. Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the teaching force, to ensure that there is a high-quality and high-level teaching force, to approve the teacher establishment according to the actual needs of education development, and to ensure that teachers are fully staffed; in the teacher recruitment examination, teachers of special subjects such as English, music and art are gradually recruited. Finally, it is important to improve the business standards of rural teachers and to ensure that a certain number of rural teachers receive further training for a fixed period. Schools in rural areas are small, their hardware facilities are backward, most schools have no or incomplete multimedia classrooms, the number of books in libraries is small and outdated, and there is a shortage of sports equipment. [5] Schools should increase their library collections, guarantee the use of hardware facilities for construction, ensure the adequacy of investment in education, and improve the overall quality of education.

5.2 Scientific and reasonable introduction of excellent educational resources to shorten the education gap

Make use of advanced educational concepts to improve the level of education and teaching in schools. Through a series of studies such as teacher training, teachers' theoretical level and practical ability will be improved to ensure a high quality and high level of teachers. Actively reduce the gap in education and teaching between urban and rural schools to create quality educational resources comparable to theirs, attracting students to the school and increasing their student population. Enrolment is strictly in accordance with the admissions policy, based on the student's domicile location, using the principle of admissions in close proximity to the school, eliminating the phenomenon of indiscriminate enrolment and achieving balanced development of education. Drawing on university education resources and education models, we actively include curriculum building, community organization, teacher training, education management, feature creation, party and group building, volunteerism and many other aspects in rural basic education. Ensure the quality of the teaching staff, improve the level of campus culture and art, and guarantee the comprehensive and integrated nature of rural education to avoid a single, boring education.

5.3 Adhering to the ethos of being a teacher and viewing every student fairly

Teachers bear the heavy responsibility of cultivating talents, so they must constantly adjust themselves to have a good working style and teaching style. A good teacher is a good teacher, and all students are good students if they are good at teaching. Teachers need to put themselves in the shoes of their students and consider their feelings and behaviour, be understanding and tolerant. When dealing with some bad behaviour in students, teachers need to use tolerance and patient guidance to help students realise their mistakes and shortcomings and actively help them improve. In classroom teaching, students should be given full autonomy so that they can get rid of the idea of "container indoctrination" and exercise their ability to think independently and solve problems independently. [6] Because students have differences in thinking, ability and personality, teachers should psychologically face up to these differences and accept them, and treat every student fairly.

6. Conclusion

As social resources are limited, there must be competition in the distribution of educational resources and absolute equality in education can never be achieved. The extent and depth of inequalities in education are also determined by the uncontrollable nature of the conditions and factors involved in the teaching and learning process. As education and teaching reform progresses, we will be able to explore new ways of addressing inequalities in education, but how to ensure that every pupil receives a fair and harmonious educational development is still a topic for long-term reflection. Educational development is still a subject for long-term reflection. Therefore, we can only ensure that the starting point, process and outcome are fair in order to achieve educational equity that satisfies the majority of the population by striving to optimise the allocation of educational resources under the guidance of the concept of

educational equity, while respecting historical differences and real differences.

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