



## REVIEW

# Research on the Concept of Fairness in the Practice of Higher Education

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history

Received: 6 November 2018

Revised: 30 November 2018

Accepted: 3 April 2019

Published Online: 16 April 2019

#### Keywords:

Higher education

Practice

The concept of fairness

### ABSTRACT

With the continuous development of society, the problems related to education have become the focus of people's attention, especially the equity of higher education, which can affect not only the sustainable and steady development of higher education, but also the stability of society. This paper mainly discusses the present situation of higher education equity in China and the analysis of factors affecting higher education equity, and summarizes some trends of the development of higher education equity and then puts forward some measures to promote the development of higher education equity.

## 1. Introduction

One of the important components of our education system is higher education. With the progress of the popularization of higher education in China, the problem of equity in higher education has been gradually revealed. With the expansion of the popularization of higher education, these problems have not been completely and effectively solved. These problems have gradually raised people's concern in the world today. The reason is that they not only affect the fairness and justice of society at different levels, but also affect the construction of socialist harmonious society with the time. Therefore, in order to promote a healthy and all-round development of higher education in China, it is very necessary to study the unfair problems existing in higher education and find solutions, which also contributes to the development of socialist harmonious society in China.

## 2. Inequality in Higher Education

### 2.1 Unequal Allocation of Educational Resources

The distribution of higher education, the investment of education funds and the quality of education obviously reflect the unfair allocation of higher education resources. In terms of the distribution of colleges and universities, there are a large number of universities and key institutions in the economically developed regions of China, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Jiangsu Province. However, in the western part of China and other economically underdeveloped regions, there are few universities and key institutions. Some cities like Qinghai, Tibet, and Ningxia are short of higher education institutions. The distribution of such colleges and universities has led to a widening gap. In terms of investment in education, it is not difficult

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to understand that the colleges and universities that have received the maximum support are undoubtedly the “211 Project” and the “985 Project” thanks to the financial support of the state policy. In order to cultivate high-end talents, the country has constantly tilted toward key universities and key disciplines in terms of policies. However, if we continue to move forward, there will be a “Matthew effect” in which the strong will become stronger while the weak will become weaker. The result is that the level of education in economically underdeveloped areas and general colleges and universities is low, teaching facilities are old and backward, and the quality of teaching is declining so that it cannot keep up with the development of the times, which has seriously affected the development of education.<sup>[1]</sup>

## **2.2 Unequal Access to Education**

At present, the access to higher education is mainly restricted by the regional and urban and rural differences. The number of colleges and universities in the East is relatively large, the reason why they can provide sufficient funds and attract outstanding students is that the economic strength of the eastern region makes education relatively advanced. The western region does not have enough funds to ensure its maximum development; In addition, there is a gap between urban and rural areas, The conditions for running schools in rural areas and the level of teachers have not kept pace with the development of the times, the knowledge learned by rural students is only a preliminary understanding and they have not mastered a deeper level of understanding. It is difficult for rural teaching equipment and teachers to ensure that a person’s potential is maximized.

## **2.3 Inequalities in the Status of Private Colleges and Universities**

Although the important component of higher education also includes private institutions of higher learning, because of the unequal treatment of the status of private institutions of higher learning in China for a long time, their development prospects and situation are not all bright, and they are far from public institutions of higher learning. At present, many recruitment units have a discriminatory attitude towards graduates of private colleges and universities. They do not recognize the university diplomas of private colleges and universities, resulting in the difficulties of students graduated from private schools finding satisfactory jobs. Since private colleges and universities do not receive the attention of the state, they do not have any extra funds to expand their scale. In fact, private colleges

and universities can provide more opportunities for young people to study, thereby reducing employment pressure, has a positive role in the harmonious development of society, and can play a pivotal role in optimizing the allocation of educational resources.

## **3. Analysis of Factors Affecting the Equity of Higher Education**

### **3.1 Economic Unbalance of the Underlying Causes of Inequality in Higher Education**

With the rapid development of the economy, higher education in developed regions has also gained a superior environment; However, due to the inconsistent development of various regions, it has also had a great impact on the development of higher education. At present, in addition to the modernization that has accelerated the development of prestigious universities, with the formation of national policies demonstration projects and window projects have also flooded into developed regions, thus widening the gap between institutions and urban and rural areas, resulting in excessive concentration of resources. Due to the historical conditions and market-driven influence of the developed provinces in the central and eastern regions, most universities have concentrated here. In addition, the government has allocated the best teachers and a large amount of funds to schools. As a whole, which fails to give consideration to fairness. Development, coupled with the gap between regional economies themselves, increases the development difficulty of underdeveloped regions, which makes it difficult to provide support and guarantee for the development of higher education.

### **3.2 The Lag and Dislocation of the Educational Concept Which Is the Main Cause of the Unfairness of Higher Education**

The summary of education’s development is concept first. At present, many people think that the investment of higher education resources is the key to the development of higher education. In fact, the correctness of education concepts is the prerequisite for a series of successful achievements. Therefore, in terms of the concept of fairness in higher education, what to some extent restricts the harmonious development of higher education is actually the backwardness and dislocation of the government, society, and individual education concepts, such as the “211 Project” and the “985 Project” key institutions. The government’s preference for them is getting stronger and larger. For ordinary colleges and higher vocational colleges, the government’s investment is relatively small, and

private colleges and universities are hardly invested, some parents have given up the idea of sending their children to higher education institutions. This is due to economic pressure, gender discrimination, and feudal ideas that exist in rural families.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **3.3 The Imperfect System of University Funding For the Important Causes of Unfair Higher Education**

At present, the vast majority of colleges and universities have established funding systems, but they are not yet perfect enough to meet the needs of poor students. Despite some outstanding achievements, some outstanding problems remain unresolved, such as: Some students have a close relationship with teachers through methods of proximity and opportunism, and teachers or leaders determine the object of donation based on the subjective impression of the students. This makes it difficult for students who are often economically difficult to obtain donations opportunity; At present, most of the funding system is only limited to students with financial difficulties as the donation target is too narrow, so that some family conditions are only enough to ensure that students who have completed their studies cannot complete academic research through their own efforts. The existence of similar problems has further exacerbated the inequality of higher education.

## **4. Measures to Promote the Equitable Development of Higher Education**

### **4.1 Strengthening the Concept of Equity in Higher Education**

#### **4.1.1 People-centered**

Since the starting point and destination of education is the person, and the person is the foundation, center and purpose of education, it is necessary to adhere to the people-oriented education concept. This idea is reflected directly in the admission system of higher education, the employment system of two-way choice, and the investment system of cost-sharing. Pay attention to the people-oriented, guarantee the educatee's opportunity fairness, so as to reasonably allocate the educational resources reduce the educational gap make the government tilt to the university in the economically underdeveloped areas, and then promote education fairness.

#### **4.1.2 Equity, Efficiency and Balance**

Under the government's leadership, the distribution of resources is mainly reflected in the fairness of higher education. To ensure equitable access to higher education for

all, governments need to exercise reasonable control over the resources allocated to higher education and to regulate market mechanisms. In addition, the government cannot intervene too much in the market; Although it is said that the market-led resource allocation form is educational efficiency, too much intervention will lead to an uncoordinated development of economic resources, and it will not be able to balance the fairness and efficiency of education. Therefore, we must first establish the idea of fair efficiency from the concept, and then advocate the principle of equality, principle of difference and principle of compensation in the allocation of educational resources, in order to aggravate the value orientation of higher education equity.

### **4.2 Promoting the Financial Security System**

To promote a fair financial security system for higher education, it is necessary to improve the investment system and funding system of higher education so as to gradually reduce the inequality in higher education until it is eliminated.

A standardized transfer payment system for higher education is established according to the regional layout of universities, the source structure of students, financial status, employment destination, education costs, and family conditions, and objective factors such as the support of universities and the actual financial capabilities of local governments are combined. In order to reasonably compensate for the cost of higher education in economically backward areas, we must design scientific transfer payment standards for higher education, the amount of transfer payments per student's public funds, and improve the target of transfer payments, so as to ensure the public welfare of higher education and the basis for educational equity. Ensure its funding for the development of higher education. In addition, the system of transfer payments for higher education needs to be regulated under the joint efforts of the central and provincial governments. This requires that the central government should focus on higher education issues that affect the overall interests of the country. For example, subsidies for defense research projects, subsidies for basic disciplines, and subsidies for education funds for ethnic minorities, while provincial government subsidies need to pay more attention to how to meet the regular needs of local education and balance the level of education development between the provinces and between urban and rural areas.

In addition, the school's education funding system still needs to be improved. The source of the funding system for higher education is the principle of fairness proposed by Rawls. The concept is based on the establishment of an

equal system for disadvantaged groups. At present, China needs to improve the current system of “award, loan, aid, supplement, and reduction” funding for education in the following aspects. First, the system of student loans for college students should be improved, and the basic guarantee system for tuition fees and living expenses for poor college students should be strictly implemented in accordance with the standards; Second, we need to seek truth from facts, improve the policy of subsidizing scholarships, and grant them in strict accordance with the standards; Third, a temporary subsidy system can be established for the replenishment of loans; Fourth, social support funds can be divided into many forms. At present, if we want to implement policy reforms and expand the target of funding, we can only draw on the experience of developed countries to compensate the disadvantaged groups, reduce the institutional obstacles at the operational level, and then give full play to the financial security system and promote the equitable development of higher education.<sup>[3]</sup>

## 5. Trends in Equity in Higher Education

### 5.1 Direction of Teaching Evaluation Review and Assessment

Chinese higher education has entered the era of quality and fairness after the continuous expansion of college enrollment. At present, the important way to promote equity in higher education and the effective means to improve the quality of education and teaching are mainly the development of teaching evaluation. That is, every student has access to a fair and high-quality higher education, and every school becomes a high-quality school. Therefore, we must strengthen the system of teaching evaluation in colleges and universities through periodic evaluation, establish a quality assurance system for higher education with Chinese characteristics, and then carry out this strategy in depth so that the catering workers in colleges and universities are more standardized and of better quality; Comprehensive reform of higher education is more dynamic.

The evaluation of undergraduate teaching work in ordinary colleges and universities in 2003 was the source of China’s teaching evaluation process. At that time, remarkable results were achieved, such as the standardization of teaching management, the promotion of changes in educational thinking in universities, and the improvement of education quality. However, due to the lack of scientific and reasonable design, there are also many problems, the most prominent of which is the “three without distinction”, that is, no distinction between grades, categories, and branches. Institutions that measure different levels by a fixed

level are not graded, colleges and universities of different levels use the same set of indicators to measure this is not categorized, and disciplines with different characteristics are measured by the same ruler. This kind of evaluation hinders the outstanding performance of colleges and universities in their respective fields, leading to the convergence of teaching and research, research and teaching, and other universities. It is unfair to the development of different types and levels of colleges and universities, and thus restricts the expansion of high-quality resources in higher education. Therefore, after the evaluation was over complaints and criticisms from all walks of life came.

In view of the fact that the evaluation system must be reformed, evaluation must always exist. Therefore, the government has issued relevant policies, namely *improving the teaching quality guarantee system and improving the teaching evaluation in colleges and universities* (from the *Outline of Planning*). Immediately afterwards, the Ministry of Education officially issued the *Notice on the Review and Evaluation of Undergraduate Teaching Work in Ordinary Institutions of Higher Education*, which removed the original excellent grading evaluation fees and proposed a review and evaluation of only qualified grades, marking the formal transformation of university teaching evaluation. This “Circular” pointed out that “the review and evaluation of undergraduate teaching work in ordinary universities should be fully carried out to promote the construction of quality assurance systems in universities.” The evaluation focuses on the degree of protection of university resources for the training of talents in schools, the degree of adaptation of talents training goals and social needs, the satisfaction of students and employers, and the effectiveness of the teaching quality guarantee system, namely the “four degrees”. Thus, quality assurance has become the most important issue in the teaching work of colleges and universities.

### 5.2 Open up to an Orderly Opening

Under the background of the globalization of education, the important way to realize the rapid and better development of Chinese higher education is to open up the school with the help of foreign high quality and “characteristic” higher education resources. This kind of school is to introduce foreign educational resources with high quality and characteristics on the premise of maintaining localized higher education. Active opening and cooperation in running schools is conducive to accelerating the development process of higher education; By studying foreign teaching methods, educational ideas and scientific management systems, we can narrow the international and regional gaps in Chinese higher education, raise the level of Chi-

nese higher education as a whole, and train more talents for China.

Since the founding of new China, China's open school pursuit in the absolute sense of fairness, and thus fell into the quagmire of "Suhua", that is, completely transplanted the Soviet model without abandoning its own essence, so that China's higher education has taken a lot of detours. After the reform and opening up, the door of higher education in China was opened. With the entry of high-quality higher education in Western countries such as the United States and Britain, China's higher education has made rapid progress. However, due to the different political systems and values of the East and the West, after a period of time, due to the large number of references in Western education, many fish and fish were mixed and unclear, making higher education lose its original characteristics. Therefore, we must deepen the comprehensive reform of higher education in an all-round way. Under the new situation and new requirements, we must choose to open in an orderly manner and choose to adapt to high-quality higher education. In this way, we can promote the integration of

the concept of quality education abroad and the concept of education in China. Therefore, when promoting international cooperation and exchanges in higher education, we must always take the best of it and discard its dross, so as to improve the quality and fairness of higher education through multiple channels. In addition, schools can also improve and improve mechanisms such as public education and study abroad. And thus contribute to the improvement of educational equity in China.

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Please find the information below for the declarations section (to be included in the manuscript or cover letter).

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**Contribution:** Researchers A and B researched literature and conceived the study. Researcher A was involved in protocol development, gaining ethical approval, patient recruitment and data analysis. Researcher B wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and edited the manuscript, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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