

# Research On the Uneven Distribution of Educational Resources in China

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**Abstract.** Taking the current situation of education in China as the starting point, firstly this paper points out the healthy changes such as educational reform. It focuses on the analysis of the uneven distribution of educational resources in China's current education, which focuses on the uneven distribution of educational resources in the eastern and western regions and the uneven development of education in urban and rural area. Finally, the article concludes the imbalance of China's education development through the analysis of specific data such as the average salary of high school teachers and the overall national education expenditure. One of the most intuitive problems caused by the difference in educational resources is the huge difference in the illiteracy rate between the east and the west of China, with the illiteracy rate in most eastern provinces being less than 7%, while that in some western provinces is as high as 40%. It also puts forward suggestions for increasing investment in education expenditure, increasing teachers' salaries, and strengthening supervision.

**Keywords:** Education resource allocation; teacher income; inequality.

## 1. Introduction

During the process of history, education plays an important role in the development of nations. In this increasingly modern, technological world, education not only continues to contribute technical cutting-edge talents in various fields but improve the quality foundation of the national quality of a country. Worldwide, education experts agree that the important role of education lies in its importance to help discovering human potential and thereby promote social and economic development [1].

As the world's largest developing country, the development of China's education industry has shown extremely high complexity due to the huge population base, which mainly reflected in the current status of education in China and the change of existing educational policies.

On the one hand, China has heard a lot of criticism from around the world about exam-oriented education. Gradually transform the purpose of education into cultivating all-round personal development through educational reform [2], which alleviate the exam-oriented education such as Chinese language education in China hinders students' in-depth thinking and further development [3]. China's education policy reflects strong sustainability and equality, in recent years, China has been committed to exploring educational policies that can promote the development of compulsory education, hoping to improve the average quality of citizens through compulsory education, so as to improve social productivity [4]. Compulsory education is an education system uniformly implemented by the state whose implementation ensures that all young people of appropriate age in China have the right to receive education within the specified number of years. Thus, there is no need to pay tuition and miscellaneous fees during the nine-year compulsory education period. This social welfare undertaking has shown relatively good prospects for China's education by expanding the base of the educated population. Besides, to further promote the development of basic education, China has adopted a series of education reform measures. Thus, China vigorously promoted education reform in 1997, first encouraging local governments to develop their own education laws, and secondly changing traditional education methods to develop students' skills in all aspects [5].

On the other words, education in China faces many problems at this stage. First of all, education does not occupy a priority position in China's national development, data shows that in the nineties,

China's education expenditure was only less than 2.4% of China's total expenditure, and there were disparities between decision-makers and education experts [1]. The challenges faced by China's current education status are not only reflected in the overall decision-making of education and the proportion of education GDP, but also reflected in the phenomenon caused by the combination of the country's current education policy and economic development – uneven distribution of educational resources and uneven educational development in various regions. This uneven distribution of educational resources is mainly reflected in regional differences and differences between urban and rural areas. This article focuses on the current issue of uneven distribution of educational resources between the east and west and urban and rural areas in China, also analyzing the current relevant education policies and putting forward reasonable suggestions.

## **2. Analysis on Education Inequality**

### **2.1. Equality in Education**

Equality refers to the completely fair distribution of existing resources, opportunities, and rights to everyone according to their individual labor levels. Educational equality is a further subdivision of the concept of equality. This concept originated from the American philosopher John Rawls, who proposed the three principles of equal opportunity and believes that equity in education means providing the same educational infrastructure for those who should receive education, allowing everyone to have the right to receive basic education, and adopting special policies for those with weak abilities [6]. However, in modern society, absolute educational equality is almost impossible to achieve. The importance of education attached to an individual, the family's view of education, and the government and country's investment in education are all crucial factors that affect the degree of educational equity. Besides, China's overall socioeconomic level and family background have a greater impact on high school education [7]. Therefore, due to space limitations, this article only discusses the impact of differences between the east and west of China on education and the unbalanced development of urban and rural education at the stage of high school education.

### **2.2. Geographical Distribution**

First, the difference of education in the east and west constitutes an important factor in China's education inequality. For instance, gaokao, China's most important academic proficiency test, appears a situation where the relevant admission policies are more biased towards students from the eastern region [8]. The gap in educational resources between the east and west of China has always existed. This inequality in education is reflected in many aspects, including the overall population education level and the investment in education funds. Data shows that the illiteracy rate in western regions such as Tibet is 47%, while the illiteracy rate in eastern provinces is basically only less than 7%. The high illiteracy rate in the western region is not conducive to the formation of a good social atmosphere [6]. This causes more families to ignore the importance of education, thus further deepening the imbalance in education between the east and the west. In addition, there are huge differences in educational resources between the eastern and western provinces. There is a large gap in educational resources between the east and west, which leads to inequality in public educational resources, such as the use of computers and projectors. Most provinces and cities in the eastern region provide modern teaching for basic education. Compared with the western region, the average is relatively backward. The teaching environment and facilities undoubtedly contribute to the gap in average educational outcomes. In addition, the gap in education funding affects the income of teachers, which leads to the relatively higher teacher income in the eastern region being more capable of attracting talents, once again creating a gap in the quality of teaching in different regions, further causing inequality in education between the east and the west.

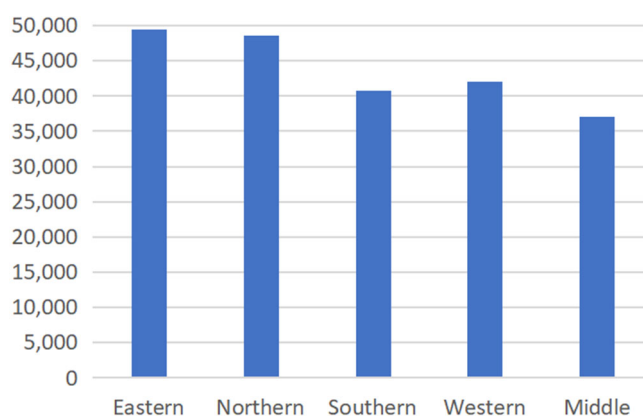
### 2.3. Rural Area vs. Urban Area

Differences between urban and rural areas and social classes are also important factors leading to educational inequality in China [9]. The uneven distribution of educational resources between the east and west is a major cause of China's education imbalance. In addition, the inequality in urban and rural education development is also a major problem leading to China's education inequality. According to data provided by the China Human Development Report, the illiteracy rate in rural areas was as high as 11.6% in 2000. In comparison, the illiteracy rate in urban areas was about 1/3 of rural areas. In addition, the average educational age in rural areas was 6.8 years old, almost 2/3 of the city [6]. Due to the implementation of China's nine-year compulsory education, the gap between urban and rural populations in primary and junior high school education is not obvious, it is apparent that the huge gap in education is mainly reflected in high school education [7]. The main reason for the unbalanced development of urban and rural education is the gap in educational resources and the difference in educational environment and payment. The former resulted in differences in educational infrastructure such as the construction of canteens and playgrounds. The latter is mainly reflected in the gap in teacher level. Due to the relatively poor living environment and relatively low wages in rural areas, it is difficult to attract high-level teachers and management talents, so it is difficult to achieve the same strict requirements for School Management and Teaching as in city. The above is a discussion of the two main reasons leading to the uneven distribution of educational resources in China. The main issues leading to the uneven distribution of educational resources in China are the treatment of teachers and the financial allocation of the education industry.

## 3. Analysis on Imbalanced Resource Allocation

### 3.1. Teachers' Income

In the education industry, teachers undoubtedly occupy a very important position. The most important responsibility of teachers in education is to not only provide students with academic knowledge related to basic education, but also to bring relatively correct values to young people and help them embark on the right way. Therefore, China's education imbalance problem is deeply related to the average teaching ability of teachers. That is to say, the teaching quality of teachers is closely related to the differences in education between the East and the West and the development issues of urban and rural education analyzed above. The average level and quality of teachers in a place are closely related to the preferential policies for teachers in that place. For example, an increase in teacher wages attracts more talents in the education industry with a higher average level. This view can be determined by the education quality and average teacher wages in various provinces and cities' data to prove.



**Fig. 1** High School Teacher Salaries across Regions of China (Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China)

Researchers have collected data on the average salary of high school teachers in each province of the country. The national average salary of high school teachers in 2011 was about 40,000 yuan. Most provinces in the eastern region exceeded this value, and it reached 85,806 yuan in Shanghai. However, in western regions such as Gansu, it was far below the average [10].

Besides, Figure 1 shows the average high school teacher income in the east, west, south, north, and central regions of China. According to the histogram, the average wage in eastern China and surrounding areas is significantly higher than in the western region and surrounding areas. In addition, most education funds are invested compared with the average teaching quality and results of the eastern region, the eastern region is more significant, the previous point of view can be proved, thus an increase in teacher wages attract more talents in the education industry with a higher average level.

### 3.2. Government Budget on Education

The imbalanced development of Chinese education is also related to the country’s promotion and investment funds in the education industry.

**Table 1.** Chinese GDP and education expenditure

| Year       | 2016      | 2017      | 2018      |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| GDP        | 746,395.1 | 832,035.9 | 919,281.1 |
| Education  | 26,964.9  | 30,208.4  | 34,001.4  |
| Proportion | 3.61%     | 3.63%     | 3.70%     |

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

Table 1 above shows China’s GDP and China’s total expenditure on education from 2016 to 2019, as well as education expenditure as a percentage of GDP, China GDP in 2016-2019 and China’s related data in the education industry show that in the past four years, education funds in China account for only about 3.7% of GDP, which is far lower than other industries such as industry and the proportion of the transportation industry. The country’s proportion of investment in the education industry is far lower than the average standard for the proportion of education industry investment in developing countries in the world, which inevitably leads to a series of issues such as the shortage of funds in China’s education development, the lack of talents in the education industry, and the imbalance of the development of the education industry.

### 3.3. International Schools

While most students choose nine-year compulsory education, a small proportion choose the path of studying abroad. Unlike traditional Chinese schooling, students who choose to study abroad will continue their studies at international schools, such as K12 International School. This education pathway, which is different from the nine-year compulsory education, has obvious advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, students who choose international schools have easier learning tasks and less pressures in study than students within the nine-year compulsory education scheme, and they pay more attention to all-round development and personal improvement in the context of universal examination-oriented education. On the other hand, the tuition fees of international schools are more expensive, which leads to a much higher proportion of students choosing international schools in the eastern region than in the western region, which means that the average number of students in the eastern region is higher than that in the western region, further aggravating the uneven distribution of educational resources in the eastern and western regions.

## 4. Evaluation and Suggestions

### 4.1. Evaluations of Current Policies

In response to the inequality of urban and rural teachers, the Chinese government has adopted relevant policies, thus in order to alleviate the problem of less teachers in poor areas, large cities have

founded enterprise group schools to share teachers' resources with poor areas [2]. This policy alleviates the problem of inequality of urban and rural teachers to a certain extent, but since it has not helped rural and poor areas to establish its own teacher and talent introduction system, the situation where teachers' resources are short in rural areas still exist. However, the proposal of another policy undoubtedly alleviates the problem of shortage of high-level education talents in rural areas to a certain extent.

Public funding teacher refers to select and train several excellent high-level teachers to teach through the college entrance examination and give these students related policies during college [2], which greatly make up for the scarce vacancy of teachers in the development of rural education, and improve the average teaching level of rural teachers, which fundamentally reduced the differences in urban and rural education.

#### **4.2. Suggestions**

Data shows that compare to the other industry, the wages of teacher are relatively low that only occupy almost 1.2% among GDP [10], leading to teachers' life quality remain at a relatively short level if they only depend on their wages in school. That is the reason why many teachers choose to provide tutoring classes outside the school, receiving considerable income. Due to the relatively expensive charges of off-campus tutoring agencies, this phenomenon increases the degree of imbalance of education, so that educational resources will be further tilt to the east and tilt to the urban areas. Therefore, while the state should introduce relevant policies to improve the wages of teachers to higher standards, strengthen the supervision and evaluation of the quality of teachers in the school, and prohibit the schoolteachers provide private tutoring outside the school. This can not only improve the quality of life and teaching results of teachers, but also effectively reduce the inclined educational resources. In addition, the state should increase investment spending on the education industry, especially for educational subsidies for poor areas in the west and reduce the degree of imbalance in east-west education as much as possible.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This article takes the current situation of Chinese education at this stage as the starting point. While pointing out good phenomena such as education reform, it focuses on analyzing the problems of uneven distribution of education resources in China. The problem of inequality in development, through analysis of specific data such as high school teachers' average salary and national overall educational expenditure, finally concluded that the imbalance of education in education in China, further evaluating existing policies such as free teachers, and proposed to increase educational expenditure Investment and increase the salary of teachers and strengthen the rationalization suggestions of supervision.

This article only analyzes the inequality of educational resources in the east and west regions and lacks specific analysis of other parts of China. Secondly, the analysis of free normal students' policies and education group made schools lack specific cases and related data. Besides, the specific details of the policy and the description of the current national education status quo are not detailed, lack of specific case analysis, and lack of changes in the number of people applying for the project after the college entrance examination after the college entrance examination. In addition, the impact of the differences between the level of education levels on the family and the social environment does not provide related theories and the quantitative analysis of the calculation formula. In the future, it will continue to analyze the impact of family and social environment on student education. Methods make analysis more detailed. Besides, research will be committed to providing specific models and quantitative equations, and transforming family happiness, family and individuals that are not easy to quantify into numbers such as family and individuals, which make the analysis of inequality in educational resources more detailed and more scientific.

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