

Educational Involution under the Background of College Entrance Examination

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Abstract. The issue of educational involution has received widespread attention in recent years. Despite numerous discussions and efforts from various sectors of society, there are still shortcomings in guiding students' comprehensive development, reducing exam pressure, and achieving educational equity. This article analyzes the reasons for the emergence of educational involution in the context of the college entrance examination and its negative impact on student's mental health, family relationships, and social development. It focuses on exploring the roles of key factors such as the current education evaluation system, parents' educational concepts, and the allocation of educational resources in educational involution. Through analysis, this article concludes that educational involution is caused by multiple factors such as the education system, society, family, and individuals. Excessive competition and a single evaluation standard are the main reasons for the intensification of educational involution. Based on this, this article proposes the following suggestions: Firstly, schools should reform the education evaluation system and establish diverse evaluation criteria. Secondly, the government, schools, and parents should reduce the academic burden on students. Thirdly, schools and parents should improve their talent development plans. Fourthly, the government should optimize the allocation of educational resources. Fifth, the government, schools, and parents should guide the establishment of correct educational concepts. Sixth, schools and parents should pay attention to the psychological health education of their children.

Keywords: College entrance examination, educational competition, evaluation standard.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the Chinese economy, there are more job opportunities in society, but at the same time, the employment threshold is constantly increasing. The increasing demand for higher education talents in society has made the college entrance examination a very important talent selection system in China and is regarded as an important way to change personal destiny and achieve social mobility. The rivalry in the college admission exam has gotten more intense because of the usage of uniform standards to evaluate candidates as well as the scarcity and unequal distribution of high-quality educational resources. Due to the large population of China, students excessively pursue test scores to get into good universities. The huge learning pressure drives them to sign up for various remedial classes to seek additional educational resources to improve their academic level. Even many students study future courses in advance, hoping to gain an advantage in educational competition. In this context, the increasingly serious phenomenon of educational involution has gradually become a social focus. The fierce competition in education and high tuition fees bring enormous psychological and economic pressure to students and families. This exam-oriented education gradually deviates from the direction of students' comprehensive development, reduces educational efficiency, challenges educational fairness, and damages students' mental health.

The term 'involution' was first proposed by the German philosopher Kant, and is used to refer to the phenomenon of things repeating the form of 'evolution' within themselves, but making themselves more complex [1]. Educational involution has been a hot topic in recent years, which refers to the phenomenon where students and parents invest a lot of time and money in pursuing scores to obtain more educational resources due to limited high-quality educational resources, leading to more intense competition.

With the increasingly fierce competition in the college entrance examination, the phenomenon of educational involution has become particularly prominent in China in recent years. There is intense

competition at every level, from the required schooling stage to the college and postgraduate entry exams. To achieve good scores, the burden on students and parents is becoming increasingly heavy. Although educational involution is a hot topic in China, there is also a widespread shortage of educational resources and fierce competition in South Korea, Japan, and some Western countries. At present, educational scholars' research on educational involution mostly starts from the allocation of educational resources. For example, Chen Cheng and Bao Lei pointed out that the root cause of current educational internalization lies in the mismatch between high-quality educational resources and the educational needs of middle-class children. The zero-sum competition and closed content of exams, represented by the college entrance examination, have led to the dual internalization of education [2]. Liu Yaqing pointed out that under the influence of Confucian cultural concepts and the constraints of uneven distribution of educational resources and increasingly fierce social competition, excessive competition in education is becoming more and more intense, and internal friction is constantly intensifying [3].

This study will analyze the current situation, causes, and impacts of educational involution in the context of the college entrance examination from multiple perspectives. This study aims to propose the phenomenon of educational internalization in today's society and to propose strategies and suggestions to alleviate this phenomenon.

2. Reasons for Educational Competition under the Background of College Entrance Examination

As an important exam in the Chinese education system, the college entrance examination has always been a focus of social attention. Due to the interaction of several interrelated factors, the internal competition in education within the context of the college entrance exam is a complicated and multifaceted issue. The following is a specific analysis of this issue.

2.1. Educational System Level

The current exam-oriented education focuses too much on exam scores, leading to students, parents, and teachers neglecting the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality education. High-quality educational resources are relatively scarce and often concentrated in big cities and prestigious schools, leading to students and parents having to invest more time and energy in competing for famous teachers [4]. The uneven distribution of educational resources exacerbates educational competition. The primary means of identifying talent, the college admission exam, has a significant effect on students' learning and growth. Due to the overly single evaluation criteria for the college entrance examination, students can only blindly pursue the improvement of their scores, leading to fierce competition [5].

2.2. Social Level

Higher education and the labor market are strongly related due to the growth of the economy and the escalation of social competitiveness, graduates of famous colleges are frequently more likely to find good career possibilities [6]. Society generally excessively pursues education, believing that high education and prestigious universities are symbols of a person's success and that high education is seen as a symbol of high social status. This traditional concept has led to fierce competition for the college entrance examination and exacerbated the phenomenon of social competition.

2.3. Family Level

The expectation of "expecting sons to become dragons and daughters to become phoenixes" in social and cultural traditions has also led to the intensification of educational competition. Parents generally hope that their children can achieve social class transition through education, which invisibly increases students' psychological pressure and academic burden [7]. Many parents place excessive emphasis on scores and rankings, viewing the college entrance examination as a key path

to their children's future success, and have high expectations for their children. They hope their children can enter prestigious schools through the college entrance examination and have a better future. To achieve this idea, parents have strict requirements for their children's learning and enroll them in various tutoring classes to improve their grades, while neglecting the cultivation of their children's comprehensive development. Moreover, families with better economic conditions may be more willing to invest in their children's education, exacerbating the inequality of educational resources.

2.4. Personal Level

Under the background of the college entrance examination, students are facing enormous pressure. Students all hope to achieve good grades, attend good universities, and have a better future. This expectation makes students feel anxious. To reduce anxiety and achieve their dreams, students have to invest more time and energy in learning and strive to improve their grades. Meanwhile, in the fierce competition, students' competitive consciousness is stimulated. Everyone hopes to work hard to achieve better results and surpass others [8]. This sense of competition has to some extent promoted students' learning, but it has also exacerbated the severity of internal competition.

3. The Impact of Educational Internalization

The phenomenon of educational involution has become increasingly prominent in recent years, which not only increases students' learning pressure but also brings many problems to families and society. The following text will delve into the different impacts of educational involution from the perspectives of individuals, families, and society.

3.1. Personal Level

Educational involution has caused certain negative impacts on students' physical and psychological aspects. In terms of physical health, students invest a lot of time in studying to improve their academic performance but lack sufficient rest and exercise. This exam-oriented learning sacrifices students' extracurricular rest time, leading to a decline in their physical fitness, an increase in myopia rates, and generally poor physical fitness, and may also cause a series of problems such as sleep disorders. In terms of psychology, people can feel the pressure brought by educational competition that cannot be ignored. Students who are exposed to high-pressure environments for a long time are prone to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. They are worried that their grades may not meet expectations, afraid of being blamed by teachers and parents, and even worried about their future. This psychological pressure makes students feel unbearable and may lead to psychological breakdown, affecting their mental health. In addition, educational competition may also cause students to lose interest and motivation in learning, turning to learning for the sake of learning, further affecting their learning outcomes.

3.2. Family Level

The internal competition in education has increased the economic burden on families and brought certain psychological pressure on parents. To help their children achieve ideal grades, families with better economic conditions will enroll their children in various tutoring classes, while families with relatively poorer economic conditions will also have to pay expensive tutoring fees for their children's studies [9]. This phenomenon has led to a significant increase in the proportion of education expenditure in household budgets, squeezing the spending space for other necessities of life. At the same time, some families have to borrow or use their savings to pay for high tuition fees, which increases their economic risks. Secondly, parents who place too much emphasis on their children's academic performance and neglect their physical and mental health and comprehensive development may lead to a lack of confidence, creativity, imagination, and other qualities in their children. Parents' high expectations and excessive intervention in their children often make them more anxious.

Children who feel excessive academic pressure may have conflicts and contradictions with their parents. This excessive education may lead to family conflicts and tense relationships among family members.

3.3. Social Level

The impact of educational involution on society is more profound. Firstly, educational internalization will exacerbate the imbalance of educational resources. It will further concentrate these resources in the hands of a few people, affect social equity, limit social mobility, and make it difficult for vulnerable groups to change their destiny through education. Secondly, educational internalization may lead to a decline in social innovation capabilities. The internal competition in education has immersed the entire society in an atmosphere of exam-oriented education, lacking a cultural atmosphere that encourages innovation and tolerates failure. The results of talent cultivation in this atmosphere do not meet the needs of social talent, which weakens the overall innovation ability of society and is not conducive to social progress and development. Finally, educational involution can hurt social norms. Society is immersed in the atmosphere of exam-oriented education, which not only hinders the all-round development of individuals and the progress of society but also may cause a series of social problems.

4. Suggestions

4.1. Reforming the Education Evaluation System

Schools should add other methods of evaluation to their assessment arsenal and focus on assessing students' learning processes in addition to the standard examination results. Teachers and schools should pay attention to the effort, participation, and progress of students in the learning process. Teachers can evaluate students more comprehensively by recording their performance and growth in project research, club activities, and other aspects. In addition, teachers collect students' learning data through classroom observation and homework feedback and use big data analysis and evaluation to timely understand students' learning situations. Based on the evaluation results, teachers provide targeted guidance and assistance to students. Students can also clarify their direction of effort based on feedback, develop improvement plans, and enhance learning efficiency. The government and educational institutions should actively establish a scientific evaluation mechanism, strive to avoid excessive competition and exam-oriented education, and ensure that the constructed evaluation system can truly reflect fairness.

4.2. Reducing Students' Academic Burden

The government should continue to promote and strengthen the "double reduction" policy, clarify regulations, and strengthen supervision [10]. At the same time, the government should encourage all sectors of society to participate in educational public welfare undertakings and provide more educational opportunities for vulnerable groups. The government and various sectors of society help economically disadvantaged students complete their studies through the establishment of scholarships, grants, and other means. Schools should arrange the number of courses reasonably, ensure that students have sufficient time for rest and entertainment, and avoid excessive learning and fatigue that may damage their physical and mental health. In addition, it is also important for schools to reduce the frequency of exams, as frequent exams can bring anxiety and pressure to students. Teachers should pursue efficient teaching methods, improve the quality of classroom teaching, reduce repetitive homework, and focus on the pertinence and effectiveness of homework [11]. At the same time, teachers should assign homework that can cultivate students' thinking and innovation abilities. Parents should guide their children to arrange their extracurricular time reasonably and avoid excessive participation in extracurricular tutoring classes and interest classes.

4.3. Improve Talent Development Plan

Schools should focus on improving students' comprehensive qualities, such as moral character, cultural literacy, artistic literacy, scientific literacy, etc. They should offer more diverse courses, such as art, technology, sports, etc., to provide students with the possibility of diverse learning choices. Based on social needs and student interests, the school adjusts its curriculum to reduce academic pressure and ensure that students have sufficient time for self-directed learning and interest expansion. Teachers can use heuristic and discussion-based teaching methods to stimulate students' interest and initiative in learning and cultivate their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities [12]. Parents and teachers should not only focus on students' academic performance but also attach importance to their comprehensive qualities, such as innovation ability, social practice ability, teamwork ability, etc. They should encourage students to develop comprehensively and not excessively pursue scores and rankings [13]. Encourage pupils to engage in extracurricular and social activities to develop their practical skills and feelings of social responsibility.

4.4. Optimizing the Allocation of Educational Resources

The government should increase financial investment in education to provide a solid economic foundation for optimizing the allocation of educational resources. The government should increase investment in schools in rural and remote areas through policy guidance and financial support, ensuring that every child can enjoy fair educational opportunities. At the same time, the government should strive to optimize the allocation of educational resources, narrow the education gap between urban and rural areas as well as between different regions, and promote the sharing of high-quality educational resources. The government should prioritize raising the standard of treatment granted to rural educators and encouraging exceptional educators to work in isolated and rural regions to raise the caliber of education in these places. Education departments should make full use of Internet technology to integrate high-quality resources for students to maximize the use of educational resources. At the same time, the education department should strengthen professional training for teachers, enhance their teaching abilities and quality, and thus improve the overall teaching level.

4.5. Guiding the Establishment of Correct Educational Concepts

The school helps parents recognize that every child they meet is unique through parent-teacher conferences, educational lectures, and other forms [14]. Parents should establish correct educational concepts, respect their children's individual development, not impose their expectations on them, avoid excessive intervention in their children, and encourage their children's comprehensive development. Parents should provide their children with a relaxed and harmonious family environment, allowing them to grow up in a loving and supportive environment. The government and public institutions should promote correct educational concepts, reduce students' and parents' excessive pursuit of prestigious schools, and emphasize the importance of personal abilities and comprehensive qualities. All sectors of society should work together to create a positive social atmosphere, encourage innovation and diversified development, and avoid overly utilitarian educational concepts [15].

4.6. Emphasize Mental Health Education

In quality education, mental health is also very important. Schools should provide psychological counseling rooms equipped with professional counselors to help students deal with issues related to learning and interpersonal relationships. At the same time, the school has incorporated mental health education into its curriculum system, helping students understand mental health knowledge and master methods for regulating emotions through course learning. Schools and teachers should establish a positive classroom atmosphere, encourage students to support and help each other, and face challenges in learning and life together. Parents need to keep a careful eye on their kids' mental health and communicate with the school. Parents and teachers should closely monitor changes in students' psychological states. Once students show signs of psychological problems, they should

intervene promptly and seek professional help. Parents, teachers, and schools work together to create a healthy and harmonious environment for students' growth.

5. Conclusion

Educational involution is a multidimensional social phenomenon with profound and complex roots and impacts. It not only hurts students' personal development but also exacerbates the drawbacks of exam-oriented education and poses challenges to the long-term development of society. At the student level, students face heavy academic burdens and excessive competition. At the family level, parents invest more time and money and have high expectations for their students. At the societal level, people excessively pursue evaluations based on scores, resulting in unequal distribution of education. This article deeply analyzes the phenomenon of educational involution under the background of the college entrance examination, reveals its impact on students, families, and society, and proposes a series of mitigation strategies, providing a reference for education policymakers, educators, parents, and all sectors of society. The solution to the problem of educational involution requires the joint efforts of the whole society. The whole society should work together to solve the problem of educational competition, reform the education evaluation system, reduce students' academic burden, carry out quality education, optimize the allocation of educational resources, and guide the establishment of correct educational concepts. By doing so, the author hopes to effectively alleviate the pressure brought by educational competition, promote educational equity, improve educational quality, and ultimately achieve the healthy development of education and the harmonious progress of society.

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