

A Study on the Impact and Countermeasures of Regional Income Inequality in the Distribution of Educational Resources

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Abstract: As China's economy developed and residents' living standards improved, people tended to pay more attention to education. At the same time, under the supervision and implementation of relevant policies from the government and relevant departments, making education compulsory for children has become a consensus for most people. However, the problem of the uneven distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas and between the eastern central and western regions has always existed and has become more and more serious. At the same time, the inequality of income of workers in different regions has gradually become a topic of concern. In this regard, this paper explores the impact and corresponding countermeasures of the uneven distribution of educational resources on regional income inequality through the literature review method. It concludes that under the influence of institutions and different economic development levels, a gap between the quality and skills of workers is caused by the uneven distribution of educational resources, thereby aggravating the economic growth imbalance and regional income inequality. Based on these analyses, this paper aims to put forward targeted policy recommendations to improve the problem of educational resources' unequal distribution and accelerate the balanced development of the regional economy and the fairness of income distribution.

Keywords: Institutions, urban-rural ratio, human capital accumulation, industrial structure.

1. Introduction

Accessing to education equally is the right of every citizen. The student years are an important period for the formation of people's personalities and world outlook, and educational equity is conducive to the improvement of students' cognition and has a profound impact on their future learning and development in society. Therefore, it can say that equity of education is the prerequisite for achieving social justice. Also, it is important for social development. The uneven distribution of educational resources is still a serious problem in China, mainly reflected in the gap between urban and rural areas and between schools, which is an important factor leading to educational inequality [1].

The Gini coefficient is an important analytical indicator used internationally to comprehensively examine the differences in income distribution among residents. The higher the Gini coefficient, the greater the gap in per capita income among residents. In 2008, China's Gini coefficient reached 0.491, indicating that income inequality gradually became urgent. Regional income differences are caused

by multiple factors. Geographical location, resources, economic development environment, and adjustments in national policies will affect the economic development and income level of residents in different regions, resulting in a widening income gap between residents in different regions [2].

Educational resources represent all investments in education during the process of education, including a variety of resources like educational funds, teacher resources and educational equipment. The rational allocation of educational resources affects both the quality of education and the future of the country, which is in long run [3].

Educational equity starts with the fair distribution of educational resources. Relevant research shows that although the Chinese government's budget for education investment has increased year by year, there are still large differences in the allocation of basic education resources in different areas, mainly reflected in the teaching staff (teacher scale, academic qualifications, professional titles), the school conditions (school assets, libraries and digital resources) and the teaching funds[4]. These above factors have a vital impact on education and largely lead to the gap in academic literacy levels between urban and rural students.

There is a certain connection between education and economic development. Education enables workers to have higher quality and promotes the development of human capital. Human capital is an important factor that can promote economic growth. At the same time, it is a potential source for economic growth [5]. The quality and ability of workers determine the structure and evolution of the economy. The continuous accumulation and reorganization of knowledge form new ideas, thereby improving productivity and product quality. Higher human capital also encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. The combined effect of these two factors leads to economic growth. At the same time, relevant studies show that investment in primary education has the strongest correlation with national economic growth, and only for countries with high economic growth expectations can the accumulation of high-level human capital promote economic growth [5]. Therefore, effective education investment is the decisive factor of economic growth, and as the economic environment shows an upward trend, the income of workers with lower education levels will also increase further, and the problem of regional income imbalance will also be alleviated to a certain extent.

Therefore, this article will focus on China's educational resource allocation and explore how it affects regional income imbalance.

2. Analysis of the Status of Educational Resource Allocation

2.1. Regional Differences when Distributing Educational Resources

The regional differences in educational resource allocation in China mainly exist in city and rural regions, developed and underdeveloped areas. It is mainly reflected in the scale of development, teaching quality, and teachers [6]. In the same region, city students can always gain a better quality and a larger scale of education than rural students. Looking at China as a whole, the eastern area usually has a much higher level of educational resources than the central and western regions, and there exists a clear gap in teachers and teaching quality.

2.2. Analysis of the Reasons for the Uneven Distribution of Educational Resources

The main factor for the uneven distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas is the system. China's government had set a dual system of urban and rural areas. The core of the dual system is the urban-rural household registration system, that is, residents are divided into agricultural and non-agricultural households, and dozens of related systems have been built on this basis, including the compulsory education system. Relevant policies show that China's nine-year compulsory education needs to be promoted step by step, and this policy implies that urban compulsory education takes precedence over compulsory education in rural regions. In the 1990s,

70% of the funds for rural compulsory education came from the education fees paid by farmers to the countryside, and on this basis, farmers also had to pay their children's personal school expenses. The compulsory education cost in cities is taken by the state, and students only need to pay their expenses [7]. This not only increases the economic burden on farmers but also slows down the development of rural education. On this basis, education in rural areas has been marginalized and the gap in educational resources between urban and rural areas gradually became wider.

The key school system introduced by the government is also a factor that cannot be ignored. In the compulsory education stage, almost all key schools, which often enjoy the most and best educational resources, are located in urban regions or county seats. On the other hand, relatively scarce educational resources can be gained by ordinary schools, especially those in the countryside [7]. Parents will choose to send their children to key schools or relatively high-quality ordinary schools, and the gap in student sources has continued to widen. Besides, there are different treatment of teachers in urban and rural areas. Urban teachers are often treated better than rural teachers in all aspects, for instance, salaries and housing funds. At the same time, urban schools always have a higher teacher-student ratio than rural schools, which means that rural teachers pay less attention to each child than urban teachers. Under the dual influence of student sources and teachers, rural schools' educational levels would be behind that of urban schools. In this case, the gap between the two is still widening.

At the same time, an informal system has been derived from the Chinese social system - the "hierarchical flow of educational resources" [6]. The system believes that education should be implemented from top to bottom, and educational resources flow downward unevenly in the order of capital-provincial capital-central city-county town-township-rural area [6]. This ensures that educational resources in cities are guaranteed by the government, while educational resources enjoyed by rural areas are constantly decreasing, which strengthens the difference in educational resources that can be enjoyed between different levels and further leads to a bigger difference in urban and rural areas' educational resources.

One of the main reasons for the uneven distribution of education in the east and the central and western regions is the difference in urban and rural proportions and educational funding. The Engel coefficient is the proportion of food expenditure to total personal consumption expenditure. When a family's income is low, food expenditure takes a large proportion of the family income, and with the increase in family income, the proportion of food expenditure will continue to decrease. Therefore, the Engel coefficient is usually used to judge the economic status of a family. The smaller the Engel coefficient, the richer the family, and vice versa, the more difficult the family's economy is. Relevant data show that urban families often have a smaller Engel coefficient than rural families, which means that urban residents often have better economic conditions to support their children's education. The central and western regions usually have a greater proportion of the rural population than the eastern region. It means that families in the central and western regions have worse economic ability to support their children's education than families in the eastern region. Family support is one of the important factors affecting educational development, especially after completing compulsory education, the family's economic situation largely determines whether the child can continue to study [6]. Therefore, the difference in the proportion of the rural population between the East and the West leads to differences in their educational resources.

Investment in education funds is also an important factor that affects the level of educational resources. Although the investment in education funds in various regions has increased year by year, there is still a certain gap between the eastern region and the central and western regions [6]. The economic level of a region itself and the degree of attention paid by local governments to education will have a certain impact on the investment in funds for education. Education funds usually

determine the quality of education hardware and software facilities and the strength of teachers, which ultimately affects the education level of a region.

3. The Impact Path of Educational Resource Allocation on Regional Income Imbalance

3.1. Human Capital Accumulation Effect

Human capital is a concept in Western economics, which refers to the capital shown in workers, for instance, their knowledge and skills, cultural and technical level, and health status. The relevant theories show that the sum of the expenditure and opportunity cost of producers' education or vocational training is generally manifested as the sum of their various knowledge, health quality, and related skills. Education enables workers to have more knowledge and skills and higher moral standards and accumulate stronger human capital. The high-quality human capital level is the key driving force for the growth of residents' income. Therefore, the regional educational resources' uneven distribution leads to differences in the education level of workers in different regions, that is, differences in human capital levels, which will further lead to income differences between regions.

3.2. Employment Opportunities and Industrial Structure

Structural unemployment represents the unemployment caused by the mismatch between the skills, experience, or geographical distribution of the labor force and the demand for existing jobs in the market due to adjustments and changes in economic structure, industrial structure, or technological level. Frictional unemployment is a type of unemployment that is caused by technical reasons. It is a phenomenon that occurs when people are waiting to change jobs. It often occurs when the economy is adjusting or when resource allocation is unbalanced. Workers can gain more skills and knowledge through the education and training that they receive before or during the working stage. It can help them to adapt to the economic structure change and have more career choices during economic transformation. At the same time, it is easier for them to obtain more and more comprehensive information when they change jobs, which increases employment opportunities for the labor force and reduces the unemployment rate [8].

Education enables people to have more professional knowledge and skills. The productivity of the labor force continues to improve while guiding people's career development direction, enabling human resources to be more effectively allocated, and accelerating industrial structure's optimization and upgrading. Higher education has cultivated more innovative talents and high-tech and high-skilled talents, accelerated technological progress, provided a continuous source of power for the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries and the development of emerging industries and boosted economic development. For example, the rapid development of the Internet industry has driven economic progress and increased the per capita income of labors. In addition, educated workers with higher labor skills can adapt to industrial transformation more quickly, further accelerating economic development.

Therefore, education increases employment opportunities for the labor force by improving its quality, stimulates the majorization and upgrading of the industrial structure by cultivating talents, accelerates economic development and thus increases the income of workers.

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the relevant reasons that contribute to the uneven allocation of educational resources between different regions and concludes that the difference in the allocation of educational resources between the city and the countryside is mainly affected by the urban-rural dual system, the key school policy, and the hierarchical flow of educational resources. In the different parts of China,

the economic development situation determined by the proportion of urban and rural areas and the investment of regional governments in education funds has led to the unequal allocation of education resources, which will lead to the gap in educational levels between regions, which will further affect the gathering of high-quality human capital, employment opportunities, and industrial structure's majorization and upgrading through the differences in the educational level of the labor force, leading to the divergence in economic growth and salaries of workers between regions.

Therefore, the country should accelerate the process of urbanization to reduce the negative impact caused by the urban-rural dual system policy; the government should reduce private schools during the compulsory education period and promote policies for students enrolling in schools near their place of residence. Weaken the prestigious school policy to reduce the gap in funds used for education and teaching staff caused by it, so that children in cities and rural areas will have the same level of rights to study. At the same time, the state should increase education funding for the undeveloped regions, and reduce the personal expenses that students' families need to pay while ensuring the quality of education. The government are recommended to introduce relevant policies to encourage teachers from the eastern region to go to schools in the Midwest regions to teach, to drive the improvement of Midwest areas' education. The above policies will help promote educational equity, narrow the difference in the level of human capital between the Eastern and Western labor forces, and further narrow the gap in economic growth and per capita income in various regions, to reach the goal of economic development.

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