

A review of research on equity in higher education for minority students

Zixuan Ma, Jianzhan Wang*

School of Marxism, China Pharmaceutical University, Nanjing 211100, China;

luckymyy23@163.com

Abstract

In recent years, the issue of equity in higher education for minority students has been a hot topic in academic research. From the perspective of ethnic minority students, this study explores the issue of educational equity in higher education. The collected papers mainly focus on "Research on the equality of admission opportunities for Ethnic minority students", "Research on preferential admission policies for Ethnic Minority Students in college entrance examination" and "Research on solutions to problems in Ethnic minority education based on educational equity". This paper summarizes the existing problems in the development of higher education for minority students from three aspects: starting point, process and result of higher education, and puts forward corresponding effective measures.

Keywords

Minority nationality, Educational equity, Higher education.

1. Introduction

The main connotation of educational equity, in law, is that everyone enjoys equal educational rights; In the field of education policy, it is equal access to public education resources; In educational activities, everyone is treated equally in education and has the same opportunities for academic achievement and employment prospects. ^[1] In the real society, the balance of higher education has shown an imbalance, in which ethnic minority students are an important part of the higher education system, and the issue of educational equity in the higher education of ethnic minority students deserves more attention.

2. An analysis of the status quo of educational equity for minority college students

Education equity of minority students in higher education must be paid attention to from the starting point of education, while taking into account the fairness of education process and the fairness of education result. The three are progressive and interlinked, and the related issues of education equity should be explored from these three perspectives.

2.1. The starting point of education equity for minority college students

2.1.1. Ignoring regional economic differences, lack of equity in enrollment opportunities

Although the education equity of ethnic minority college students has been paid attention to by the state, its awareness needs to be further improved, and the primary problem is that the actual economic situation of the regions where ethnic minority college students live is not fully taken into account, and the implementation of non-discriminatory education. Most of the students live in remote areas, the modern information is blocked, the economic and educational

level is low, the competitiveness of students is weak, so the higher education enrollment opportunities are relatively few.

At the same time, there is a serious imbalance between urban and rural areas in the higher education opportunities of minority students in our country. Over the years, for other student groups, the admission rate of college entrance examination in urban areas has always been higher than that in rural areas, and there is a gap between urban and rural access to higher education [2], especially for ethnic minority students. Scholars believe that due to some regional policy factors and the long distance between schools and families, it is very difficult for families with poor economic status to complete the popularization of nine-year compulsory education, and the dropout rate of such students is high. [3] In terms of basic education and enrollment opportunities, some ethnic minority students have developed a gap with other students. With the growth of grades and the continuous improvement of social development level, the enrollment opportunities of these students at the stage of higher education will inevitably be unbalanced.

2.1.2. The foundation of cultural knowledge is weak, and students' self-identity is insufficient

Minority college students generally have weak cultural knowledge base, which is mainly influenced by the level of social and economic development and the management mechanism of urban-rural separation. In contrast, there is a certain gap between the academic level of ethnic minority students and Han students, such as language communication barriers, math or foreign language performance is not ideal. In addition, minority students are less active in obtaining skill certificates and professional competitive competitions. Li Shucui believes that students in Tujia and Miao Autonomous Region are seriously lacking in English education, and the so-called "useless theory of education" by locals, that is, "the theory that both educated and uneducated can earn money for their families" [4], has deeply influenced generation after generation, thus affecting the self-identity of local minority students.

Some scholars believe that "intergenerational effect" and "cultural disruption theory" affect the cultural foundation of minority students. Intergenerational effect refers to the fact that the later generation is influenced by the previous generation, and it is difficult to break away from the social characteristics of the previous generation. In terms of cultural knowledge and ability, due to the limited economic level and education level in some ethnic minority areas, many students are not able to receive good education, and many students will drop out of school, which will be "passed on" from generation to generation, and the latter generation will be deeply affected by the ideas and experiences of the previous generation, resulting in the weak cultural foundation of some ethnic minority students. According to the "cultural disruption theory", education is a process of cultural transmission and cultural adaptation. [5] The reason why ethnic minority students do not perform well in some subjects is that the values of their native families are inconsistent or incoherent with the values of the mainstream culture they receive in school. Ethnic minority students have been using ethnic language since childhood. For them, the school interrupts their traditional language and culture to some extent, and what they receive is a foreign language and culture, which will immediately produce a series of feelings of inadaptation. Therefore, the theory of cultural disruption is one of the important reasons for the weak cultural foundation of ethnic minority students and the unsatisfactory performance of some subjects.

2.2. Fairness in the education process of minority college students

2.2.1. The distribution of educational resources is uneven, and the supervision system needs to be improved

According to statistics, nearly 70 percent of ethnic minority areas do not have a complete education system, about 50 percent of areas lack teachers, and 30 percent of them can only rely

on external intervention, such as recruiting volunteer teachers. [6] Due to the lack of local economy and poor living facilities, many teachers are reluctant to participate in volunteer teaching. However, local teachers are unable to carry out comprehensive educational activities due to limited resources, for example, nearly 60% of the districts do not have multimedia teaching equipment, and even the poorer regions cannot meet the demand of the number of classrooms. Therefore, due to the uneven distribution of educational resources, some ethnic minority areas continue to be in educational poverty.

Some ethnic minority students who enjoy good education still enjoy the same preferential policies as those who cannot receive fair education due to the shortage of educational resources, which is caused by the incomplete supervision mechanism of preferential policies for ethnic minority college students. In addition, some students' parents conduct "immigration" before the college entrance examination, that is, change the residence registration location, "change the nationality" and other behaviors due to the inadequate supervision mechanism. In recent years, although the state has made great efforts to stop this kind of behavior, the phenomenon is still spreading in a small part of the country, which fully proves that the preferential policy and supervision mechanism of higher education for ethnic minorities need to be further improved.

2.2.2. The curriculum lacks national culture, and the problem of ethnic discrimination is prominent

Many scholars believe that the recruitment of ethnic teachers with a solid foundation of ethnic cultural knowledge and the refinement of teaching materials and curriculum are two important ways to make up for the equity of ethnic minority higher education. At present, the problem of the lack of ethnic cultural elements in the curriculum has gradually appeared in the developing process of our country's minority higher education. At the same time, the knowledge base of national culture of college teachers is weak, and most of them do not understand the relevant knowledge of ethnic minorities, which causes obstacles in the teaching and communication of ethnic minority college students, and thus forms a knowledge blind area in the teaching process. Throughout the countries, the existing problems of ethnic discrimination are mainly reflected in "micro discrimination". Micro-discrimination is a subtle and powerful form of discrimination, that is, subtle discriminatory behavior that is not easily detected by people, and does not have the meaning of explicit attack on the surface, intentionally or unintentionally belittling, denigrating or insulting specific objects (such as ethnic minorities). Foreign scholars have pointed out that teachers may try to influence students' ethnic or racial concepts by quoting pictures or languages with racial discrimination in the class slides. In the process of higher education for ethnic minorities, this kind of "micro discrimination" is common, and even sometimes, they are not aware that "some words and deeds are discriminating against students of a certain race or ethnic group", because of the subconscious existence of discrimination, some ethnic minority students cannot be treated equally, resulting in a certain degree of educational injustice.

2.3. Equality of educational outcomes for ethnic minority college students

2.3.1. Lack of policy and system guarantee, the educational result is fair and unbalanced

Compared with Han students, minority students are relatively backward in terms of economic development, teachers and learning foundation. If minority students and Han students are allowed to use the same set of college entrance examination papers and policy system, it is undoubtedly a substantial injustice to minority students. In order to remedy the inequity of the starting point of higher education for minority students and ensure the equal right of enrollment for minority students [7], our country has formulated a series of preferential policies for students from minority areas. According to the survey, scholars all believe that the

"preferential policy of college entrance examination enrollment" is the controversial preferential policy of minority higher education. A survey on the implementation of preferential policies for ethnic minorities in college entrance examination found that only 15 percent of students believe the policy is conducive to ethnic unity and the development of ethnic minorities, and about 33 percent believe that the policy has produced "reverse discrimination" against Han.

There are three types of students involved in the preferential policy of national college entrance examination for ethnic minorities: The first type is the students who come from ethnic minority areas and whose ethnic groups are also ethnic minorities; The second category is the students who come from minority areas, but the nationality is Han. The third category is the ethnic minority areas, the ethnic composition is also minority, but grew up in the economic development of the better big cities. Undoubtedly, the first class of students should enjoy preferential policies; The second type of students do not enjoy good educational resources and environment, and should enjoy the same preferential policies as local minority students. Therefore, some scholars believe that this policy needs to be adjusted, and extra points should be given to candidates in remote areas with scarce educational resources, rather than ethnic composition. [8] Regarding the third group of students, scholars believe that some ethnic minority students who have grown up in big cities and have enjoyed high-quality educational resources should not enjoy preferential policies for ethnic minority college entrance examination. Therefore, the lack of institutional guarantee for the relevant policies of minority students affects the outcome equity of minority students' higher education to a certain extent.

2.3.2. The deviation of employment concept is significant, which negatively affects academic achievement

Employment is the basis of people's livelihood. For a multi-ethnic country, it is obvious that the employment of minority college students is the most important issue. In terms of educational outcome equity, the employment rate of minority college students is one of the important indicators of educational equity. [9] Some ethnic minority college students have poor professional ability and comprehensive quality, unclear career planning, deviation in employment concept, and insufficient preparation for internship and employment experience, thus affecting employment competitiveness. In addition, language, diet, customs and local complex are all important factors affecting the employment goals of minority students. Teachers, parents or the so-called "experienced experienced people" on the "social determinism" of the relevant arguments have a profound impact on the minority college students to establish the wrong concept of employment, so that such students negative attitude to study, job selection and employment. Most scholars believe that ethnic minority college students tend to choose the western regions and more stable units of employment, self-employment awareness is weak. At the same time, the employment value orientation and cultural thinking mode of minority college students are labeled with ethnic labels, which is a direct factor affecting the fairness and imbalance of educational results.

3. The solution to the problem of education equity of minority college students

3.1. Increase economic input and distribute educational resources in a balanced manner

As we all know, the speed and quality of higher education development depends on basic education. Increasing investment in basic education is a necessary way to effectively promote the development of higher education. Scholars believe that in recent years, China's basic education tuition fees are expected to be substantially reduced or completely free, which will be a great encouragement for minority students to accept and choose to complete basic

education, ^[10] at the same time, lay a solid foundation for the enrollment rate of minority students in higher education, and alleviate the problem of educational injustice from the root. Some scholars put forward that in order to better solve the problem of education inequality in higher education in minority areas, measures should be taken to increase the allocation of education funds, and the way of state allocation and multi-channel financing in minority areas should be implemented in parallel, so as to ensure the material basis of the fair development of minority higher education.

Faced with the key problem of unbalanced distribution of educational resources, scholars generally believe that the mainland and minority areas should be jointly built to achieve the sharing of educational resources; Improve the living standards of volunteer teachers, attract more high-quality talents who love education, and make up for the shortage of teachers in minority areas. At the same time, strengthen the training mechanism of teachers in minority areas; The funds invested should also be used to build additional school buildings and multimedia teaching equipment. Increasing the state's economic investment in higher education for ethnic minorities and distributing educational resources in a balanced way can enable ethnic minority areas to have certain material foundation and school conditions, expand the scale of enrollment, and allow more local children to enjoy equal opportunities to enter school.

3.2. Improve the policy oversight system to avoid reverse discrimination

Most scholars believe that national policies should provide precise support to minority college students, and the support should involve policy tilt and "point-to-point" assistance from high-level universities. In terms of policy inclination, the "ethnic minority college entrance examination bonus policy" is undoubtedly very relevant to the higher education of ethnic minority students, and The State Council has always insisted on maintaining and continuously improving this policy. Some scholars believe that the state should set up more special assistance for students in a certain type of minority areas, and strengthen the real-time supervision system to protect the legitimate rights and interests of minority students. Intervention through legislation system is an important way to realize educational equity. China's "Education Law" and "Higher Education Law" are becoming more and more perfect, but they have not promoted the higher education of minority students. ^[11] Therefore, the establishment of "Minority Education Law" is a key step to improve the policies and regulations of minority higher education and promote the education equity of minority college students.

Clarify preferential groups, refine the bonus policy, and ensure the accurate implementation of the preferential policy system. In improving the preferential policy supervision system, resolutely resist all "one-size-fits-all" acts, crack down on fraud of ethnic composition, and avoid reverse discrimination. Scholar Li Chen believes that the relevant departments of the state should conduct multi-level investigation to understand whether the object of bonus points is eligible for preferential policies. It is a crucial issue to fully consider the economic level of the students' origin, the degree of education investment and the situation of teachers, and conduct bonus points according to the different actual conditions of minority students. In addition, it is necessary to focus on preventing the occurrence of "rewriting the ethnic composition for the college entrance examination".

3.3. Build a multi-cultural campus to enhance national cultural identity

Precisely optimizing the curriculum and promoting the integration of ethnic cultures are the core measures to solve the problem of education inequality in minority higher education. It is necessary to excavate more valuable intangible cultural heritage in minority areas, take its essence, integrate its traditional craftsmanship into college classrooms in the mode of "teaching inheritance", bring ethnic culture into the classroom, and make multi-ethnic culture become educational resources ^[12]. Colleges and universities are important bases for cultural

transmission, and the integration of multi-culture and educational resources is the only way for the development of higher education. Diverse viewpoints can enable students to break their familiar life experience, learn to question existing assumptions and test existing facts, deeply understand and grasp the complexity of the real society, fully train students' critical thinking, promote the cultural commonality between ethnic minority students and other students, narrow the differences between them, and further promote educational equity. Building a multicultural campus can not only enhance the cultural identity, exchange and mutual learning among different ethnic groups, but also help ethnic minority students achieve more fruitful results in higher education.

National culture exchange societies should be established in colleges and universities. Ethnic cultural associations are important organizations for colleges and universities to realize exchanges among students of different ethnic groups. Most scholars believe that promoting exchanges among students of different ethnic groups is the most direct way to achieve educational equity for ethnic minority students^[13], which not only enables Han students to better understand ethnic minority cultures, but also enables students of different ethnic minorities to learn from each other and solidified the sense of community of the Chinese nation. At the same time, it can also enhance the cultural identity of all ethnic groups, and then reduce the ethnic discrimination psychology caused by the inequity of education. In order to better meet the needs of building multi-cultural campuses, colleges and universities should employ more ethnic minority teachers and consciously train them, which can not only strengthen the integration of ethnic culture, let ethnic minority students have a sense of belonging in the new environment, but also alleviate the employment dilemma of ethnic minority students.

3.4. Improve the quality of education and effectively promote academic achievement

Firstly, some schools in the mainland support the construction of ethnic minority areas, including high school and university levels. In order to better ensure that ethnic minority students receive equal secondary education resources and reserve capital to win the college entrance examination, some regions in China implement "point-to-point" support construction in high schools, such as some high schools in Liaoning Province set up two Qinghai classes every year. In addition, many senior middle schools in developed areas have set up Tibetan classes and Xinjiang classes. In order to enhance the higher education opportunities of minority students, enhance their knowledge base level, set up minority preparatory classes in colleges and universities, and so on, the counterpart support construction has always and will continue to lay the foundation for realizing the educational equity of our country's minority higher education.

Secondly, pay attention to the training of ethnic talented teachers, and guide minority college students to return to their native places. Scholars generally believe that minority college students play the role of a link between minority nationalities and Han nationality, and are spreaders of minority culture and promoters of national unity. The state should consciously guide ethnic minority college students to engage in education and actively intend to return to their hometowns, which not only promotes the construction and development of ethnic minority areas, alleviates the employment difficulties of some ethnic minority college students, but also stores up a reserve force of teachers for education development.

Thirdly, in order to effectively improve the teaching quality and employment convenience, scholars believe that in the course setting process, the language problems and actual situation of ethnic minority college students should be fully considered. On the basis of completing the required content of the teaching syllabus, small class teaching should be realized as far as possible, teaching in the native language should be used, and the time of Chinese learning course should be appropriately increased. Further promote the learning enthusiasm of

minority college students. Some scholars have pointed out that the weak learning foundation of ethnic minority students has always been a key issue in the development of ethnic minority higher education and affecting the realization of educational equity. "The" re-education after enrollment "is carried out for ethnic minority students with poor learning foundation, mainly to supplement their knowledge in high school and make up the gap with other students. And this way of re-education effectively promotes students to adapt to the actual needs of college courses, improves the overall quality of education, and promotes the effective achievement of academic achievement.

4. Conclusion

In recent years, the academic circle has carried out a multi-dimensional discussion and research on the direction of "minority students" and "educational equity", and has achieved fruitful results. In the literature collection and reading, it is found that most of the articles focus on the research of "the equality of enrollment opportunities for ethnic minority students" and "preferential policies for ethnic minority college entrance examination". Although the enrollment opportunities of ethnic minority students are gradually increasing, showing a good trend, most scholars agree with Bourdieu's view that the expansion of educational opportunities does not mean the realization of educational equity, and some students constitute strong cultural capital due to family factors and school factors. And whether the preferential policies are implemented to the groups in need have a profound impact on the educational equity of minority students in higher education.

Firstly, in terms of policy and system guarantee, preferential policies for three types of students should be detailed. For example, the qualifications of students who "come from ethnic minority areas, but the ethnic composition is Han" are fully examined, and the system regulations are detailed according to the actual situation. Students who "come from ethnic minority areas and are ethnic minorities, but grew up in cities with better economic development" should not be given the opportunity to enjoy preferential education policies for ethnic minorities. Only in this way can we ensure the accurate implementation of preferential policies in order to achieve fair results in higher education. Second, in terms of solutions, most scholars mentioned the need to increase economic investment, but ignored the negative impact of blindly increasing capital investment. Some scholars have affirmed that the federal government of the United States has used a large amount of funding funds to open the door of higher education for ethnic minorities with economic stimulus, and believe that this has played a positive role in promoting the equality of education for ethnic college students. However, we should fully consider whether this fund is really used for people in need, so we should establish a sound supervision and management system. We should put an end to copying foreign methods, and reasonably invest funds according to the actual situation of various regions.

In the existing relevant research, the discussion of some scholars is worthy of reference. For example, one article gives the current reference policy in Hunan Province, which gives reasonable educational concessions to Han students living in ethnic minority areas, so as to achieve relative equality among different ethnic groups in the same area. Another scholar proposed that a parallel approach of state allocation and multi-channel funding should be adopted for ethnic minority areas to ensure the material basis for the development of higher education in ethnic minority areas from a multi-faceted perspective. In addition, it is suggested to call on entrepreneurs to "one to one" or "one to many" to fund, and gradually improve the various systems of educational charitable foundations. Some scholars use data tables, graphs, formula models and other ways to make the research results more convincing and valuable for reference.

References

- [1] Du Chengming, Edited by Zhiguo Xiao. Research on education equity guarantee in China from the perspective of rule of law[M]. National Library Press, 2021.01.
- [2] Zhang Min. Research on educational opportunity equity in China's higher education[J]. Journal of Jiamusi Institute of Education, 2013, No.123(01):141+159.
- [3] Li Shucui. Research on the countermeasures of minority education from the perspective of educational equity[J]. Journal of Hubei Correspondence University, 2017, 30(05):24-25.
- [4] Yu Haibo. The cultivation of minority students in colleges and universities: from the starting point of education to the process of education[J]. Chinese Ethnic Education, 2020, No.250(06):20-24.
- [5] Li Chen. Educational equity and preferential policies for ethnic minority college entrance examination[J]. Leading Edge, 2017, No.404(06):70-74.
- [6] Mai Xueyan. The development course, theme and trend of ethnic higher education equity research[J]. Contemporary Education and Culture, 2019, 11(04):98-103.
- [7] Peng Xiaomeng, Huang Shengqing. Research on equity in higher education of ethnic minorities in China[J]. Management Observation, 2014, No.533(06):109-111.
- [8] Wu Wuyunge'erle. Research on educational equity of minority college students[J]. Journal of Chifeng University (Chinese Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 2014, 35(06):249-250.
- [9] Li Shangqi. The deficiency and countermeasures of ethnic education in ideological and political courses in colleges and universities[J]. Journal of Changsha University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition), 2015, 30(01):65-69.
- [10] Chen Lipeng, Hao Xiaoming. Research on educational equity of minority students in colleges and universities[J]. University Educational Science, 2008, No.110(04):102-105.
- [11] Tang Ying. Research on the equality of higher education opportunities for ethnic minorities in China[J]. Education and Economy, 2003(02):17-20.
- [12] Wang Ailiang. On the way to realize the equality of minority education -- taking Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities as an example[J]. Ethnic Forum, 2011, No.289(24):54-57.
- [13] Zeng Ni, Tian Xiaohong. Literature review of equity research in higher education[J]. China power Education, 2013, No.260(01):1-3.
- [14] Zhang Jiping, Huang Qin, Ran Xiaoping. Evaluation of fair level of higher education entrance for ethnic minority examinees[J]. Ethnic higher education research, 2017, 5(03):19-26.
- [15] Sun Dongmei, Yin Lili, Wu Bin. The inequities in the higher education of our national minorities and the solutions[J]. China power Education, 2008, No.108(05):18-19.
- [16] Wang Bingqi, Jia Peng. Educational outcome Equity: the eternal pursuit of universities[J]. Chinese higher education, 2009, No.429(23):13-16.
- [17] Wang Bingqi, Qiu Bizhen. Educational outcome Equity: the necessary pursuit of universities to improve educational quality[J]. Journal of the National Academy of Educational Administration, 2013, No.188(08):11-15.
- [18] Zhang Baoshan, Jiang Degang. Exploration of Educational Equity[J]. Science and Education Literature (next ten-day issue), 2007, No.25(01):7+10.
- [19] Zhang Wenbin. Exploration of educational equity[J]. Education in Sichuan, 2011, No.476(09):28-29.
- [20] Cao Jun. Research on socialist educational equity view and its practical countermeasures[D]. Lanzhou University, 2017.
- [21] Fan Shuyang. A review of research on educational equity in France[J]. Teacher education forum, 2017, 30(03):92-96.
- [22] Wu Wuyunge'erle. Educational equity of minority college students under cross-cultural background[J]. Yinshan Journal, 2015, 28(05):100-103.
- [23] Li Defu. Study on the adaptation of ethnic minority college students in Mainland universities[J]. School party building and ideological education, 2014, No.474(03):58-60.

- [24] Huang Dan, Meng Linghong, Li Zhiyong. Study on learning adaptation of minority college students[J]. Yangtze River Series, 2018, No. 400(07): 250-251.
- [25] Wang Xuefeng, Cai Wenbo. An analysis of equity and efficiency of higher education of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang[J]. Journal of Yili Normal University (Social Science Edition), 2008, No. 95(02): 95-99.
- [26] Wu Kaiwen. Study on higher education admission opportunities of college students from different family backgrounds in Xinjiang[D]. Shihezi University, 2016.
- [27] Wang Feilan. Research on the policy of equalization of enrollment opportunities in higher education of ethnic minorities in China[J]. School (Education and Research), 2013(05): 42-43.
- [28] He Qian. Research on the policy of equal access to higher education for ethnic minorities in the United States[J]. Comparative Educational Research, 2012, 34(10): 6-11.
- [29] Marie Kiles T, Chisholm-Burns M. Five Essential Steps for Faculty to Mitigate Racial Bias and Microaggressions in the Classroom. Am J Pharm Educ. 2022 Nov; 86(8): ajpe8796
- [30] Berge B M, Chounlamany K, Khounphilaphanh B, et al. Reforming Lao teacher education to include females and ethnic minorities – exploring possibilities and constraints[J]. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 2016: 1-13.
- [31] Areti, Stylianou. Absenting the absence(s) in the education of poor minority ethnic students: a critical realist framework[J]. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 2017, 21(10): 975-990
- [32] Weber H. The educational divide over feelings about ethnic minorities: does more education really lead to less prejudice? [J]. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 2020(1): 1-20
- [33] Arday J. No one can see me cry: understanding mental health issues for Black and minority ethnic staff in higher education[J]. Higher Education, 2021(6)