



The Analysis of Path-End or Potential-Buried Vocational Education in China

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Abstract. In recent years, China's top decision-makers have published a succession of recommendations and opinions on vocational education, indicating its importance on vocational education. As of 1949, when the People's Republic of China was established, Chinese people have experienced several intensive policy release periods. However, the reality is that vocational education is still regarded as the choice of the vast majority of students. This study will review the current state of vocational education, assess the realistic distinctions between vocational and general education, and forecast vocational education's future development approximately.

Keywords: Vocational Education · Disparities · Inequity

1 Introduction

Educational equity has been steadily enhanced and developed in tandem with a sense of fairness in China [1]. Significant changes have been made in the sphere of education since China's economy has shifted from pursuing quick rates to focusing more on high-quality development. When China slows down its economical rates, some solidification and social stratification also occur at the same time [2]. Additionally, people can witness an increase in class solidification and a decrease in class mobility. Furthermore, rising inequality has renewed interest in social mobility, which is defined as "the ability to move between different levels of society or labor, frequently from a lower to a higher social class," and is particularly widespread in developing countries. While there is disagreement regarding what constitutes social mobility, everyone in a fair society should "enjoy roughly equal prospects of achievement regardless of their family's economic status [3]." In China, the general consensus is that improving the appeal and quality of vocational education is a major issue that every country must address as part of its modernization process. Enhancing the attractiveness of vocational education is seen as a critical problem for the integrity of the system and the overall situation. However, the development of vocational education in China continues to face numerous obstacles and challenges, most notably widespread enrollment difficulties and a general lack of attraction in vocational schools, low employment quality of graduates and a lack of capacity for sustainable development, and a shortage of compound innovative and highly skilled talents in high demand by enterprises.

The contemporary challenge of vocational education in high school in China will be analyzed in the following sections from two perspectives: disparities and inequity.

2 Disparities Between Vocational Education and General Education

Education is divided into two types: vocational education and general education. General education provides whole-process knowledge education services to help people acquire knowledge-based skills and fundamental knowledge education services to help people grow knowledge-skilled abilities. Vocational education may offer whole-process skill education for highly skilled individuals and technical knowledge and skill training for knowledge-skilled individuals. A typical student must complete nine years of elementary and secondary education, according to the State Council's current plan in 2021 Vocational Education Law, which was promulgated in 1996. After completing six years of elementary school, most students go on to three years of lower secondary school, which may be academic or technical and vocational in character. Students would 'select' whether to continue their education for another three years in an academic or technical and vocational upper secondary school based on the results of entrance exams [4].

2.1 Disparities in Cultivating Students

In terms of education in high schools, vocational high schools are distinct from academic high schools, which often prepare students for further education rather than instant employment. In specialized education, vocational schools have historically been characterized by four-year colleges by their emphasis on job-specific training for students. They are frequently skilled workers rather than in academic disciplines that prepare students for their future pursuits.

Most high schools' goal in this situation is to urge students to understand rather than memorize the mathematical theorem. For example, Newton's Second Law is a necessary part of high school physics, and professors frequently encourage students to complete practice problems to help them remember the law's material.

Applied-minded persons, workers, and builders with a particular level of cultural understanding and competencies are the goal of vocational education in China. When compared to general education, vocational education places a greater emphasis on the learning of practical skills and the ability to perform in a practical setting.

2.2 School Funding Source

In China, financial aid is available to both vocational and general schools, but the amount granted varies. General senior high schools in China earned a governmental financial award of 16,336.23 yuan in 2019, an increase of 9% from the previous year's award of 14,955.66 yuan. It expanded at the fastest rate in Liaoning province (21%). Public secondary vocational schools received 15,380.52 yuan in funding, an increase of 8% over the previous year's 14,200.66 yuan. Liaoning province experienced the fastest growth at 27% [5]. There is an underlying issue. If the purchasing capacity of large equipment can

be computed per capita, it is likely that students in a single class will be able to purchase just 25% of the equipment, which is obviously detrimental to equipment renewal and will have a negative impact on school conditions and enrollment [6]. Specifically, because of financial assistance, general high schools concentrate on routine operations and teacher resource allocation. Vocational middle school teaching abilities are inextricably linked to current industry advancements and technology, which necessitating intimate ties to society. This intimated link also results in a diversity of school administration methods and a diversity of school learning environments.

2.3 School Management Strategies

General middle schools are managed according to academic performance, whereas vocational middle schools have a variety of organizational structures and aims [7].

Deng classified vocational education into five distinct divisions which are shown below. The school takes the lead, with primary educational subjects such as schools and training institutions taking the lead, while secondary educational subjects such as enterprises and employers are connected through formation, merger, joint venture, and collaboration.

- Through joint-stock financing, diverse social forces establish the share financing type.
- The local government coordinates the pooling of educational resources within a given administrative area in order to form an education group.
- The education group is formed around the training centre or employee school as the primary body, leveraging the enterprise's and other employing companies' resource advantages.
- The rolling development model is developed by individuals or small training organizations with the goal of gradually expanding the scale through the acquisition of operating schools [8].

At the moment, the majority of vocational high schools are conducted in collaboration with businesses. Smith and Chan pointed that by restructuring and privatizing vocational education, private firms were able to intervene and persuade local governments and schools to give interns in return for their investment in schools.

Vocational schools are critical in this aspect, since they provide an affordable supply of generalist labour. Numerous considerations demonstrate that a labour constraint paradigm is unsustainable in the long term. Students will increasingly seek out vocational education institutions that provide training and job options related to their academic topics. The interplay between student interns, their lecturers, and shop floor supervisors demonstrates the existence of 'dual control' over student workers (e.g., factory and school), thereby constituting a unique source of China's growing insecure labor force. From another perspective, student interns' organizational structure dilutes the educational significance of their internship as a method of developing their skills.

Students are placed in industries solely for the sake of employment instead of fulfilling their educational and training requirements. Rather than that, they earn low wages and perform low-skilled labor like normal general laborers [9]. As a result, vocational education will place a premium on practical courses and may even disregard academic

education entirely. Differentiation, fueled by disparate goals and methods of school administration, paves the way.

Specifically, because of financial assistance, generalist high schools prioritize everyday operations and teacher resource allocation. Vocational middle school teaching skills are inextricably linked to cutting-edge industry advancements and technology, as well as intimate ties to society. This intimated link also results in a diversity of school administration methods, which results in a diversity of school learning environments. Huang argues that the vocational education group, as a quasi-public entity, has established a market-based school-running consortium [10].

The vocational education category possesses the following characteristics: although the vocational education group does not have legal corporate status, it is a collaborative school administered by industry, university, and research. The group's organizational structure is diverse, multi-form, and multi-level, with a primary focus on assets, contracts, asset custody management, and preferred long-term contracts are all examples of preferred long-term contracts. While the organisation has common interests and is consistent, it must resist commercialization of education [11].

3 The Inequality Between Vocation Education and General Education

3.1 The Influence of Recruitment

Individuals were drawn in by the tagline 'learning equals earning,' which boosted their sense of responsibility and expectation. People who study neoclassical economics think that congestion problems of this kind are short-term events that will be solved by supply and demand laws.

The market, however, has not cleared due to a lack of economic flexibility options. While individuals have varying degrees of freedom in the market, the currency nexus forces everyone but the exceedingly wealthy to compete in education and the labor market [12]. Secondary vocational education has traditionally played an important role in the development of human resources and training, dating all the way back to the nation's inception. However, in contemporary Chinese culture, there is a strong instrumentalist tendency in secondary vocational education's emphasis on human resource development, which has created a dilemma impeding secondary vocational education's progress. This tendency in instrumentalist talent development, according to Wang's empirical research in Dalian, reveals itself notably in the three areas: employment-oriented training models, interest-driven school administration, and local conservatism in development planning [13].

However, due to a lack of economic flexibility choices, the market has not cleared. While people have varied degrees of market freedom, the currency nexus pushes everyone but the ultra-wealthy to compete in schooling and the labor market [12]. Secondary vocational education has long played a vital role in the development of human resources and training, dating back to the country's founding. However, there is a strong instrumentalist tendency in secondary vocational education's concentration on human resource development in current Chinese society, which has produced a quandary inhibiting secondary vocational education's advancement.

3.2 Social Value Influence

Students do not place a high premium on vocational education in the current social climate. The findings of Zhu's study of two rural junior high schools in the Central Plains suggest that all junior high school graduates initially enrol in general, junior high schools [14]. They are opposed to their children being diverted to vocational schools [15]. Among the many reasons given by those polled, low income was cited by 29.9% of respondents, followed by 25.3% by those who were led by government agencies, and 13.5% by those who had only bad marks in vocational schools (11.5 %) [16]. Students' long-term cultural and class perception influences may explain these outcomes.

3.3 Potential Intergenerational Inequality

The type of education a student receives is more heavily influenced by their background. As illustrated by Mookherjee and Ray, intergenerational inequality can persist and keep children of poor parents out of 'prized' professions (such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, and others) that need significant human capital inputs in school and training [16].

Several studies in Western contexts have looked at the credit constraint hypothesis, but none have come up with convincing evidence in support of it [17]. On standardised tests, students from higher-income families outperform their counterparts from lower-income families. Furthermore, they are more inclined to pursue a higher education. When it comes to explaining achievement inequalities between schools, socioeconomic status is also important. According to research conducted in the United States and around the world, student body composition is a powerful predictor of school-to-school achievement differences [18].

The three-part student learning model proposed by Sorensen and Hallinan, on the other hand, is based on the notion that accomplishment is determined by talent, effort, and educational opportunity [19]. If we follow this model, even when students put up comparable effort and ability, differences in learning chances produce variability in student success development. Opportunities to learn are formed of numerous components, including the quality of teachers, the quality of school resources, the arrangement of the curriculum, and the size of the classes.

Increased consistency in educational opportunities should result in more uniform school experiences for students and a reduction in overall performance disparities across the system. Poverty, according to Dalton, Gosal, and Mani's model, places additional external limitations on those in less fortunate situations, making them more prone to ambition failure. Little aspirations lead to low effort, reinforcing low aspirations and prolonging intergenerational inequality [20].

Additionally, when parents pass on their wealth to their children, the strength of the transfer is a big factor in how quickly they move up the social ladder. This could be genetic or non-monetary assets like ethnic or social capital, such as ethnic or social capital. For example, unrelated to parental wealth, cultural values passed down by parents may assist explain why offspring of low-income immigrants reach high salaries. Differences in cultural capital and learned habits between elite and non-elite households also have an effect on individuals' life prospects [21]. There is little chance of returning to the academic system once pupils have accepted vocational education as an option.

4 Conclusion

Both vocational education privatisation and the inclusion of select private schools in the functioning of the education system contribute to the overall effectiveness of the educational system. However, it will implicitly result in screening based on family history. This has the potential to exacerbate intergenerational inequality transmission. While policymakers place a higher premium on vocational education and support, which is beneficial for social development. The diversion in advance will result in certain people permanently losing access to academic research, increasing the society's polarisation. The future strategy for vocational school students is constrained by existing talent recruiting concepts and models, as well as their income. While there may be some difficulties, addressing these uneven inconsistencies will result in a fairly balanced scenario. Additionally, we may anticipate a bright future for vocational education.

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