



Gaokao Examination Influences Senior High School Education to Some Extent, resulting in the Senior High School Education Bringing Many Negative Effects to Its Students

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Abstract. Examination-oriented education in China has resulted in the deterioration of students' health and academic development. Chinese Ministry of Education is aware of the negative implications associated with Examination-oriented education and has issued policies dedicated to reducing the homework burdens and off-campus training for students ranging from primary school to senior high school. However, the policies primarily focused on primary and junior high school students. Chinese senior high school students still experience stress and the burden of exam-oriented education in China. Therefore, in this paper, the main objective is to analyze the problems associated with the Chinese high school education system and the negative impacts these problems have on students. This paper's main finding is that most Chinese high schools focus their energy exclusively on Gaokao, believing that Gaokao is the only measure of high school success, ignoring students' hobbies and personality development and suppressing students' individuality. This article aims to provide education policymakers with a better understanding of the plight of Chinese high school students and to inspire future reforms in the field of education.

Keywords: Gaokao, education, negative effects, personality development

1 Introduction

The purpose of education is to train talents for the nation as part of its centennial plan. As a result of the thriving of a country's education, its comprehensive national strength is exceptionally muscular. As a result, the country's education system is being built from this point forward. On the new journey of accelerating the modernization of education, we should continue to place a high priority on education, educate people for the Party and the country, and train new people to take up the primary responsibility of national revitalization.' [1]. In conjunction with education and talent selection, one policy has emerged as a response to the demand of Chinese government. This policy is known as 'the Gaokao Examination Policy' that was adopted in 1952 by the newly founded People's Republic of China [2]. Gaokao, the Nationwide

Unified Examination for Admissions to General Universities and Colleges or College Entrance Exam, is a test that "tests students' mastery of the subjects taught in high school" [3] based on six required courses. According to Tsegay e Ashraf (2016) [4], this two-day exam is taken by millions of high school students each year. In addition to its role as an important source of stress, it is also a crucial turning point in the lives of young Chinese students [5]. In order to establish China's modern college entrance examination system, two steps are necessary: one is the value of Confucian-heritage learning inherited from the imperial examination system [6], and the other is the mode and means used by western modern examination systems. Now the college entrance examination generally adopts the '3+3' model. The "3+3" model means that the total score of the examinee is composed of three subjects in the national college entrance examination, namely Chinese, mathematics, and foreign language, and three subjects in the senior high school Academic Proficiency Test. The subjects of the high school academic level examination that are included in the total score are independently selected by the examinee from subjects such as ideology and politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, and biology, according to the requirements of the registered university and their own specialties. The original intention of middle school education is to encourage students to develop morally, intellectually, physically, and aesthetically in a comprehensive and balanced way [7]. However, the "3+3" model of college entrance examination has restrained the choice of examination subjects. Schools, society, and students' families have prejudice and contempt for some subjects, such as fine arts, sports, and music, which inhibits students' all-around development and thus violates the original intention of education. As Dong (2018) [8] mentioned, Chinese high school education has for so many years emphasized cultural courses while ignoring the beauty and art education.

This paper devotes a significant portion of its attention to analyzing the problems that exist in high school education and which negatively affect students to some extent. The research questions of this paper are as follows: 1) In China, what are the problems with high school education? 2) How does Chinese high school education negatively affect students? Identifying these problems provides enlightenment to education policymakers, thus making this study significant. It can also more accurately reflect the demands of students based on the findings of this study and the critical analysis of previous literature.

2 Research study and analysis:

When it comes to Gaokao, the first thing people will think of is competition, pressure, hardship, and honor. Although from the point of view of society, the college entrance examination is just a test, the public is experiencing various tests every day, and after the college entrance examination, students will also face various tests in the future. But from everyone's point of view, especially those from ordinary families such as the middle and lower classes, gaokao is a significant life-changing turning point. People with higher Gaokao scores have a greater chance to be admitted to prestigious universities, such as 211-985 universities in China. They have a greater chance to find a

better job, become the social elite, and have the opportunity to break the class barrier. This is also the reason why Chinese society and families attach importance to Gaokao.

However, such college entrance examination is designed for the benefit of society and families [9]. For society, the college entrance examination is a way to select excellent talents, while for families, the college entrance examination is barely the only chance to break the class barrier and make their children become social elites. Although the original intention of such education is for the good of children so that children can become elite and better people, behind such education, the concept of the gradual growth of children is ignored, only the concept of success can be seen [10]. The number of candidates in China for the national college entrance Examination in 2022 is about 11.93 million [11]. "How do you stand out from millions?" This is the problem facing Chinese high school students. There are too many people taking part in China's college entrance examination. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the test and better screen out excellent students, the questions in Gaokao are planned extremely difficultly, because only difficulty can distinguish students. If the questions were easy and all the students got close to full marks, there would be no way to separate the students and choose the best. The probability of being admitted to Tsinghua University and Peking University is 5.94 out of 10,000, and the probability of being admitted to 211-985 and other famous universities is about 6% [12]. The pressure of competition is very great for students [13]. "Competition, selection, elimination, winner takes all", is the current situation of China's college entrance examination. Teenagers do need some pressure, but when the pressure becomes unbearable, they will gradually become depressed and even despair [14]. Fierce competition leads to comparisons, distrust, hatred, and other emotions among high school students. In the fierce academic competition, close friends often become rivals and enemies of the competition [15]. Chinese teenagers are at higher risk of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. According to Work [16], Gaokao can even be overwhelming for some students, as a way of "releasing themselves" and escaping Gaokao, they decide to commit suicide.

College entrance examination pressure, the one-sided pursuit of enrollment rate. Scores almost become the sole criteria for admissions evaluation, and college entrance examinations almost become the only purpose of high school education [17]. Although people have generally accepted the concept of quality-oriented education over the long term, in reality, the pursuit of higher education remains the main educational value orientation driven by people's interests. One of the more critical aspects of the gaokao is that in many schools in many regions, it is used as a de facto baton for high school teaching. Due to the wrong positioning, local governments, education departments, schools, teachers, and students, layers of college entrance examination indicators, signed the responsibility: Schools are rated based on the enrollment rate of college entrance examinations; Bonuses for teachers, teaching management, and school administrative leaders are determined based on the enrollment rate; Students are ranked based on their scores in various gaokao models.

There is no interaction between students and teachers in high school in China because of the time constraints and academic pressures, and there is no shared progress

between teachers and students to learn from each other. As a result, Chinese students prefer to recite, memorize, and solve problems rather than innovate. There is a perception among foreign teachers that Chinese students are overly dependent on textbooks or are incapable of working together in a team [18]. As students' progress through primary school, they learn on an individual basis. While they may have their own unique opinions, they do not have the opportunity to express them in class. As a result, Chinese students do not have a good sense of teamwork because their classmates regard them as competitors.

In high school, many Chinese students lead ascetic lives. There is even a saying in Chinese high school that if you don't get sick because of hard work in high school, you are not considered to have passed high school. Even parents consoled themselves that their children had survived high school without committing suicide.

Selection improves the efficiency of teaching but destroys the diversity of education. Because the selection of students requires exams and standards, the exam content is set in a limited number of subjects. The three major subjects are Chinese, mathematics, and foreign language. In addition, the three subjects can be chosen by themselves among the six subjects, but they are very limited and do not involve subjects related to art, sports, and other aspects [19].

Education should conform to children's nature and respect their hobbies [20]. According to the education model of Shouguang No.1 Middle School [21], students go to the classroom at 6:20 in the morning to start their morning reading and finish their evening self-study at 10 in the evening. The remaining time is students' own disposable time. According to the school's requirements, the rest of the time is also for students to sleep. Larmer [22] interviewed some students in some high schools in Shanghai, and according to one student, he had to attend classes every day from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., including weekends, during his final three years of study. Additionally, if all of that student's transcripts were collected during those three years, they would circle the globe. Generally speaking, there are not many hours to meet students' sleep and entertainment needs, let alone develop their own hobbies. Student expenditure, especially emotional expenditure, psychological expenditure, and repair and feedback are not proportional. And studies have shown that sleep deprivation may also contribute to some levels of depression, with people who don't get enough sleep being more likely to magnify negative emotions. This is one of the reasons why Chinese high school students tend to have depression. During a questionnaire, Pires mentioned [23] that the students stated that they only studied and slept, adding that their teachers prohibited them from reading books not related to the exam content or engaging in any other activities.

Chinese education advocates core Chinese socialist values and presents students with a glorious and perfect image of the Communist Party [24]. And to a certain extent, students are required to reflect the core socialist values and promote the positive image of the Communist Party when they learn Chinese, that is when they write essays for the college entrance examination. This is of course a good thing for society and the Communist Party, but for students, it inhibits their critical thinking and consciousness to some extent.

About the problem of the university entrance exam, from the perspective of cultur-

al sociology to think, there are two explanations: the first kind of explanation is that the individual rational explanation, is simple, the student has been aware of the importance of the college entrance examination of his life, so he is going to elaborate planning his exams can score points, he might make her exam preparation system planning. He wants three years of college entrance examination five years of simulation to brush questions. The second explanation, family class, is that different families invest differently in their children's education, which further influences what kind of school children go to, how they prepare, and the psychological burden. Maybe the rural kid would do more housework, so he would have less time to invest in learning and influencing the schools that he could get into. Moreover, according to the China Population and Employment Statistics Yearbook [25], 49.03 percent of China's population lives at or below the county level, however, according to the survey, only 21.9% of the non-municipal students at elite universities A and B were from county-level high schools, as opposed to 78.1% from prefecture-level high schools.

To be admitted to famous universities, students must pass the college entrance examination in order to realize their urban dream, consumer dream, or technological dream. In addition, they may consider how they can become a big city person, how they can spend money and enjoy life better, and how they can develop themselves. It is the responsibility of the students to stimulate their own potential and fighting spirit, to inspire their imagination of the future, and to help them during the hard three years of high school. They must enlarge their imaginations and aspirations on the one hand and develop a quality called delayed gratification on the other. The students believe that if they can pass the college entrance examination and gain admission to a prestigious university, they will be able to realize their dream of living. However, by suppressing and delaying their desire and dream, they will be able to finally realize their dream and enjoy their desire.

Those who did not pass their exams or did not get into the "good university" in the eyes of their parents and teachers tend to pursue the current satisfaction, desire, and demand of their personality. The urban dream may also be embraced by some of them, but they may feel that rather than delaying gratification, they should relocate to the city and work there instead. College entrance examinations provide students with a sense of personality, and a sense of imagination, and suppress their own identities.

As per social and school stereotypes, a child must first love learning to succeed in the Gaokao. The so-called love of learning is the ability to remain at the desk, listen attentively, to complete the homework. Are Chinese students' love of learning genuinely a tireless pursuit of knowledge, or is it more of an "act"? The student may not be aware of what love is and what the outcome will be. Consequently, he did so in response to the expectations and demands of his teachers and parents. "Superficial effort" may not be sufficient, but "deep effort" is intended to connect students' dreams with the college entrance examination, i.e., to help them realize their dreams through the college entrance examination. But his dream will come true or not. That remains unknown. Students consistently described their experience after the gaokao as "breaking out of prison" or "ending captivity" as observed by Pires (2019). Students describe their feelings after taking the college entrance examination in the following manner. During their high school years, it may be indicative of a lack of interest in studying.

The simplification of talent selection methods and standards leads to the aggravation of a high "load". As a result, universities of different levels and types cannot select talents according to their own positioning and needs, and universities have no real autonomy in recruitment: The admission standard is unitary, and the college entrance examination score becomes the only criterion for admission, ignoring the students' academic performance test, moral cultivation, and comprehensive quality evaluation, other abilities and contributions to the society or the school. The college entrance examination focuses more on measuring one's knowledge and learning in high school but does not measure one's daily behavior and moral character, which leads to a lack of moral education in education. For example, the mother murder case of Wu Xie Yu [26] shocked the whole of China. Wu Xie Yu was an extremely excellent student and a top student at Peking University, where there were many excellent students, but he murdered his own mother with extremely cruel means and cheated his relatives of property.

The purpose of education and the behavior of teachers in schools are distorted by the college entrance examination. Some schools and teachers are experiencing an increase in work pressure. As a result, education and teaching are unilaterally adapted to the needs of higher education and ignore the development of students' personalities, physical and mental health, and abilities. Many middle and high schools fail to implement the state's curriculum, end the curriculum one to one and a half years in advance, implement the sea of exercises, and repeat the test training; some schools even adopt semi-militarized management. Students are under severe pressure from family, school, and society, and struggle with time, energy, and health.

The most important period of a student's life is spent learning how to do exams and becoming test-making and test-taking machines. How is it possible to cultivate truly innovative talents and to realize the personalized development of students? Under the current college entrance examination "game rules side", under the full guide students to "test" efforts, but also out of the college entrance examination "results", in order to objectively strengthen the disadvantages of the current college entrance examination. There are a few individuals with insight who believe that the current college entrance examination has led China's basic education to a dead end and gone astray, severely hindering the cultivation of innovative talents in school education and stifling the creative spirit of generations and even the entire nation.

3 Conclusion

The current implementation of college entrance examination attaches too much importance to the written examination and exam-oriented education, ignoring students' comprehensive knowledge and moral cultivation, which directly leads to the exam-oriented education of "teaching what is tested", which greatly affects the development of student's personality and the cultivation of comprehensive and high-quality talents in China. China's education policy and the way of education in China are flawed and go against the original intention. Therefore, reforms are needed, focusing on encouraging students to develop hobbies, giving them more time, and encouraging students

to build creative, critical thinking, and awareness. Studies on implementation should be conducted continuously to reform policy objectives and enhance the quality of education [27,28]. More investigations and studies should be carried out to understand the negative impact of college entrance examination and pre-college entrance examination education on students, so as to further realize the college entrance examination and reform the college entrance examination to better meet the needs of students in all aspects of development.

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