

Study on Educational Investment of Urban Impoverished Family Children

-Based on the Interview Data of Jinan

Yu Zhao*

University of Jinan
School of Political Science and Law
Jinan, China
2459858189@qq.com

Gongjing Gao

University of Jinan
School of Political Science and Law
Jinan, China
66532001@qq.com

Abstract—This paper, with the adoption of the intention sampling method, interviews 9 impoverished families in S community of Jinan City, and finally selects Xiao Qi's family as the key research object. During the whole process, the Nvivo software is used to analyze the situation of educational investment for urban impoverished families. Specifically, on one hand, the parents of impoverished families, with a higher expectation for their children's education, are willing to invest in their children's education, to improve their children's education and comprehensive qualities; On the other hand, however, they pay more attention to the money that they invest, and the time, emotion and manpower invested by them are relatively scarce. Compared with the previous studies, the conclusions reached by this paper bear similarities as well as differences with them.

Keywords—Urban impoverished families; Educational investment; Situation analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of poverty has always been an unavoidable major issue in the development of human society. In order to completely get rid of poverty, governments around the world are actively exploring practical and feasible anti-poverty policies. At present, China's social assistance system has satisfied the basic living needs of the poor. However, the problem of the intergenerational transfer of poverty among urban impoverished families is still outstanding, and social stratification is significant.

For this, Liu Jingming and Yang Jianghua (in 2007) believe that education is the most important promotion mechanism if individuals want to break through the barriers of class and achieve upward mobility [1]. Education plays a fundamental role in the total elimination of poverty. Education investment has a very special status in the entire socio-economic development. Among them, as a basic unit of society, the family has a strong practical significance for the sharing of education costs. The family's ability and willingness to invest in children's education influence the scale and scope of government financial investment [2]. Family education

investment is one of the important factors affecting the success of children. Especially for urban impoverished families, family education investment is one of the important ways to improve their social status and change their destiny.

II. THE MEANING OF URBAN IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES AND EDUCATION INVESTMENT

A. The Meaning of Urban Impoverished Families

Urban poverty refers to the poverty of urban society. In a narrow sense, urban impoverished families include those who have urban account, poor unemployed people, and employed or laid-off workers whose per capita income of household is lower than the minimum living standard.

In this paper, the meaning of urban impoverished families are generalized. It include low-income households and poor families whose entire family members have urban account, and have at least one kid who aged 3-16 and in compulsory education.

B. The Meaning of Education Investment

According to the investee, investment in education consists of two parts: Firstly, it is used in school education to cultivate reserve labors and specialized personnel. And these schools are in different levels; Secondly, it is used for adult education and training to increase their-service labor's intelligence, ability and comprehensive qualities. From the investor, education investment mainly includes state financial appropriations, social education funds, and student family education expenditures, namely national investment, social investment, and individual investment.

The meaning of educational investment is specific. In this paper, firstly, it is based on the urban impoverished families, and taking the parents as the education investors, taking their children as investees. Secondly, it includes two aspects, called investment concepts, which cover economics, times, emotions, manpowers and so on, all these are related to education, and

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investment levels, which cover the willingness, the purpose and the expectation of investment.

III. SAMPLE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

This interview is based on the sampling of intention, pays attention to the generation of the sample. It comprehensively considers the condition of the S community. And selecting impoverished families in the community, according to whether there are children aged 3-16. That is the primary condition. It is a comprehensible analysis of the population, average monthly

income, and family members' gender, age, level of education, occupation, kid's grade, and other factors. Based on the assumption that the selected cases are representative, this interview selected 9 families to conduct interviews, and finally identified Xiao Qi's family as the key research object and conducted in-depth interviews. During the interview process, the recording pen was used for recording. And made a lot of notes. The visit time is 14:25 to 17:10 on February 7, 2017.

The following table shows the basic situation of Xiao Qi's family:

TABLE I. BASIC SITUATION OF XIAO QI'S FAMILY

Family Members	1	Xiao Qi's Father	Age		40
			Diploma		Junior High School Graduate
			Health Condition		Good
			Profession		Pedlar
			Major Income Source		Sell Rice Noodles and Oil Cakes
			Average Monthly Earnings		3,000 yuan
			Working Hours Each Day		12 hours
			2	Xiao Qi's Mother	Age
	Diploma				Junior High School Graduate
	Health Condition				Good
	Profession				Pedlar
	Major Income Source				Sell Rice Noodles and Oil Cakes
	Average Monthly Earnings				3,000 yuan
	Working Hours Each Day				12 hours
	3	Xiao Qi			Age
			Gender		Girl
			Health Condition		Good
			Grade		Grade 5 in a Primary School
			The Percentage of Each Subject's Class Ranking in Last Semester	Chinese	20%
				Math	20%
English				20%-30%	
The Percentage of the Class Comprehensive Ranking in Last Semester			40%-50%		
Interests and Hobbies		Reading Extra-curricular Books and Dancing			
4	Xiao Qi's Brother	Age		3	
		Health Condition		Good	
		Grade		Preschool Children	

From the above table, we can see that (1) Xiao Qi's family has four people: Xiao Qi's father and mother, Xiao Qi and Xiao Qi's younger brother. All members are in good health; (2) Xiao Qi's parents are junior high school graduates and have a low level of education. Both of them run a single store and work for an average of 12 hours per person a day. The family's main source of income is selling rice noodles, and oil cakes, and their average monthly income is 6,000 yuan; (3) Xiao Qi is the eldest daughter of the family. She is in the fifth grade of primary school. And her learning is not very well. At the end of last semester, her class ranking of the last semester is about 40%-50% before the class, among which the math score is the worst one, which is probably in the last 20% of the class; (4) Xiao Qi has two major interests, one is reading story books, another is dancing. And last year (in 2016), Xiao Qi took dance

class for half a year; (5) Xiao Qi's younger brother, only 3 years old, belongs to preschool children and needs family care, this may take up a lot of time for their parents.

IV. THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

After the interview, Nvivo software was used to analyze the situation of children's educational investment in impoverished urban families. The specific conditions are as follows:

A. Investment Concept

1) *The Willingness of Investment*

Regarding to “What kind of behavior is education”, Xiao Qi’s parents agreed that it is both an investment behavior and a consumer behavior. For this, this paper asks “Who has the final decision on the children’s educational issues?” In Xiao Qi’s family, her father has this right, and her parents are more willing to invest in her education. In general, there are three major factors, called children’s grades, employment expectations for children, and family economic conditions, that affect impoverished families’ investment decisions in their children’s families. For Xiao Qi’s family, the parents’ expectation for Xiao Qi’s employment is the primary factor. According to Xiao Qi’s mother, having a high degree of education will have good employment opportunities. Secondly, Xiao Qi’s grade is general in her class, especially Mathematical grade is particularly unsatisfactory. So her parents try to improve her the grade by making up lessons. Thirdly, it is the family’s economic conditions. In the past few years, Xiao Qi’s grandfather got uremia, which cost about 150,000 yuan for treatment. Returning to poverty due to illness made this family not have much money to invest in Xiao Qi’s education, but the parents are still willing to do it [3].

2) *The Purpose of Investment*

Family educational investment is a kind of family activity, and the family’s culture, background and purpose can be seen on the basis of “Why the family willing to invest in children’s education”. In Xiao Qi’s family, that “The parents themselves have limited education, so they want their children to receive more education” is the main purpose, followed by “To have a skill to get a good job”.

“The level of education is directly proportional to income.” Xiao Qi’s parents are very much in favor of the attitude. This reflects parents’ recognition of the positive relationship between education and income. On the other hand, “For the difficult employment situation, it is better to go to work early”, Xiao Qi’s parents do not agree with the attitude. It further shows that the parents’ purpose of investment includes education and employment, but it is more important to improve Xiao Qi’s education. Compared with previous studies, the investment aim of “Glorify and illuminate the ancestor” is no longer the primary goal.

3) *The Expectation of Investment*

The degree of education expected by parents of urban impoverished families for their children can reflect the degree of educational expectancy of the family for their children. “Supplying children to school is the responsibility of parents”, and “As long as the children are willing to go to school, we will try to supply them.” Xiao Qi’s parents are very much in favor of these two viewpoints. For “As long as she can make money in the future, it is the same whether or not we have knowledge”, Xiao Qi’s parents completely disagree. For “Which one is the highest diploma you expect for your child”, Xiao Qi’s parents think, “She at least should get a master’s degree, nor it is difficult to find a job after graduation”. From the interview, we can clearly feel the parents’ expectation of Xiao Qi’s employment and the positive relationship between education and employment. It can be seen that the parents of

impoverished families attach great importance to the educational level of their children and have a high educational expectation.

It is worth noting that “To which degree children must up to” is also shared by Xiao Qi’s parents. It means that parents are not set a specific goal for their children. And let it be natural, it depends on the children’s own abilities.

B. Investment Level

According to Becker’s family educational investment theory, the form of family education investment is varied. To be precise, the form of it includes not only economic investment, but also time investment, emotional investment, and human investment.

1) *The Economic Investment*

For the impoverished families, in addition to the basic living expenses of the family, the second largest family spending is on their children’s education. Although grandfather’s serious illness take most of the savings of Xiao Qi’s family, her parents do not give up their investment in her education. Firstly, they paid a school selection fee of 1,700 yuan when Xiao Qi went to school for the first grade. Secondly, they spent about 3,000 yuan on Xiao Qi’s tutorial class for the last semester. Thirdly, last month, they spent about 1,000 yuan on a learning computer to help Xiao Qi training mathematics thinking. Fourthly, last year, Xiao Qi took a dance class for half a year and spent about 1,600 yuan. Fifthly, they spend about 300 yuan a year on Xiao Qi’s extra-curricular books. In addition, about 100 yuan is spent each year for the school supplies. Compared with previous studies, for the urban impoverished families, the extra tuition is still the biggest expense in education [4]. And the cost of purchasing electronic school supplies has increased. Parents also pay more attention to children’s hobbies and interests. Their investment in money accounts for a large proportion.

2) *The Time Investment*

Time investment is an important form of investment that is easily overlooked by parents. Studies have shown that the average time of impoverished families in tutoring their children’s homework is 30 minutes a day [5]. In Xiao Qi’s family, the parents seldom have any time to accompany or help her to do homework, because they must make rice noodles and oil cakes, and sell them from morning to night as well as look after their little son. The frequency is about two weeks. Xiao Qian’s father used to accompany her to read books in the children’s library. However, since her younger brother was born, her father no longer go with her [6]. Xiao Qi’s parents have never participated in the parent’s interactive activities organized by Xiao Qi’s class or school. Except for the school’s organization, Xiao Qi’s parents barely take her to museums, cinemas, and other places. Xiao Qi’s parents take her to the city’s big park every year, and the frequency is almost twice a year. The physical exercise time, which the parents accompany with Xiao Qi, is almost zero. It can be seen that the parents of urban impoverished families have little time to accompany their children because of their busy work, and their investment in time is severely lacking.

3) *The Emotional Investment*

Emotional investment is another important form of investment that is easily overlooked by parents. Studies have shown that parents of urban impoverished families occasionally do care about their children's behavior in school, but they seldom care their performance in school. In Xiao Qi's family, her mother told us, "Before her third grade, I often communicated with her head teacher, and often asked many things about my daughter's learning situation, and how she got along with her classmates and friends. Before long, another teacher became her teacher. Up to now, we have not the new teacher's photo number, and we are so busy that never contact her head teacher, and never ask anything about my daughter at school." From this, the parents of impoverished families are not very clearly for their kids' performance at school.

On the other hand, "What is your biggest concern for your child?" "What are your main interaction activities with your child?" And "Do you give your child any encourage or reward when she make progress in learning?" These 3 questions were asked to reflect the impoverished families' emotional investment situation. Through interviews, Xiao Qi's parents mainly care about her study, future prospects, and personality development. The main interaction between parents and Xiao Qi is the parents take care of her daily life. Nestly, it is chat, but the content of the conversation is seldom related to Xiao Qi's relationship with teachers and classmates. The above two points are consistent with previous studies. It can be seen that parents of impoverished families have less investment in kid's emotions and have relatively little interest in children's performance at school. When Xiao Qi make progress in learning, contrary to previous studies, her parents are more likely to give her verbal encouragement, because they believe that material encouragement is unnecessary. And when she behaves badly, her parents often chose to scold her. It can be seen that the parents of urban impoverished families have not a scientific way to have the emotional investment. And their attitudes are relatively tough, it is easy to form a child's rebellious attitude.

4) *The Human Investment*

This paper selected the most common incident in the family, housework, to examine the second generation of human investment in urban impoverished families. According to past studies, parents of impoverished families have no requirements for their children's contribution to family daily life. Impoverished families invest more in their children's human resources and do not occupy as much time as possible [7]. In this interview, Xiao Qi's parents think that doing housework is very necessary. According to the mother's answer, in addition to helping with housework, Xiao Qi spends an average of 2-3 hours a day helping in the store, mainly helping parents collect money and weigh, and even sometimes helping to make rice noodles. For the parents, the children of the poor are early to be home, and they think these works are the most basic ones that a person must master, otherwise, the person is a bookworm. And they do not think that doing housework equals to wasting the learning time. As a result, parents of urban impoverished families have made great changes in the investment of their children's human resources. Xiao Qi's family is a typical case.

V. CONCLUSION

The major conclusions are as follows:

On the one hand, parents of urban impoverished families are willing to invest in their children's education, and they are mainly aimed at improving their children's education and comprehensive qualities, and have a higher expectation for this. Firstly, in terms of investment willingness, parents of urban impoverished families are more willing to invest in children's education, and their employment expectations for their children are the primary factors. Secondly, compared with previous studies, the investment aim of "Glorify and illuminate the ancestor" is no longer the primary goal. And it is replaced by "Improving child's education and having a satisfactory job". Thirdly, parents of urban impoverished families expect their children's education to be at the postgraduate level and even higher, but they do not have a specific goal for their children, and the diploma depends on the children's own abilities.

On the other hand, they pay more attention to the investment of money, but their investment in time, emotion and manpower is relatively lacking. Firstly, the economic investment is diversified. With the development of the times and the reform of education policies, most of the money invested by urban impoverished families in their children's education has been invested in course tuition, e-learning tools, interest classes and so on. Secondly, the time investment is lacking. Parents of impoverished families have little time to coach their children's homework, and rarely go to museums, cinema, and other interesting places with their children [8]. Thirdly, the emotional investment is insufficient. These parents do not clear their children's performance in school. The primary concern is their children's grade, future prospects and character development. It can be seen that the parents have not a scientific way to have the emotional investment. Fourthly, the human investment is inadequate. These parents have made great changes in their children's investment in human resources. And they believe that doing housework is a work that a person must master. Otherwise, it is an abnormal person.

In the new era, impoverished families still have many problems in children's educational investment. This is closely related to the economic conditions, employment status, awareness of educational investment, and it also reflects the lack and insufficiency of related welfare policies in China. Therefore, first of all, we must change the concept of the parents' investment in education and allocate scientifically the investment in time, emotion, and manpower. Secondly, we should use fiscal measures to appropriately increase the employment subsidies for urban impoverished families and raise their income levels. Thirdly, relevant education policies should be appropriate to poverty to help these group of children to have more opportunities to enjoy good educational resources. Finally, local community groups should be encouraged to actively carry out volunteer's classes to help these children to improve their learning grades and develop their hobbies and interests.

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