

# Exploration of the Motivation of Secondary Vocational Education Under the Background of “Diversification”—Based on a Case Study of Impoverished Junior High School Students in Northwest Rural Areas of China

Zhu Cuicui<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Sociology, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xi'an, China

Correspondence: Zhu Cuicui. E-mail: akcssy@sina.com

Received: July 12, 2022

Accepted: July 29, 2022

Online Published: August 31, 2022

doi:10.5539/ass.v18n9p42

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v18n9p42>

## Abstract

The society generally regards the students who choose the secondary vocational school as the students who failed the high school entrance examination. Based on interviews and on-site observations of poor junior high school students and their parents in a rural junior high school in Northwest China, the paper summarizes the four major motivations for rural poor students to enter secondary vocational schools under the background of today's high school entrance examination diversion. The cost of educational choices and compromises, the influence of peer groups, and individual interests are motivated by school, family, peer, and individual motives, respectively. In view of the current fierce competition in education in China, the disparity of educational resources between regions and the embarrassed family background, the decision to enter secondary vocational school is the result of the interaction between the macro-structure and micro-situation of poor rural junior high school students. In conclusion, promotion to secondary vocational education is a reasonable choice for many rural families. Therefore, in order to meet the survival and development needs of the disadvantaged rural poor students and their families, and make vocational education truly a channel for their upward mobility, it is necessary to strengthen the publicity of vocational education, change the concept of discrimination against vocational education, and at the same time strive to improve vocational education.

**Keywords:** rural poor students, motivation to advance to secondary vocational school, school education, family background, peer group effect

## 1. Introduction

Since 1983, China has advocated and promoted the proportion of students entering vocational high schools and ordinary high schools to achieve a “roughly equal” level. In 1991, it directly proposed the goal of “1:1”. In recent years, the “labor shortage” in various places has covered many fields such as manufacturing and service industries, and the country is facing a huge shortage of secondary vocational and technical talents. This is why vocational education is considered to be the most closely related to economic and social development. Long before the founding of New China, vocational education played an important role in the process of industrialization. On the one hand, farmers in cities could acquire skills through vocational education to obtain jobs to alleviate class conflicts, and on the other hand, they promoted industrial and urban development. However, when faced with today's choices for further education, students and their parents have a relatively low degree of choice for secondary vocational education, which is in sharp contrast with the increasing demand for skilled talents in the society.

For Chinese people, the “high school entrance examination” is the only way to the vital test in life, that is, the college entrance examination. Even if they fail the senior high school entrance examination and have to go to secondary vocational school, students and their families will choose to continue their studies after graduating from secondary vocational school instead of getting employment. In order to cope with the huge shortage of skilled talents, the state has successively introduced a number of measures in recent years. In 2014, the State Council, the Ministry of Education and other relevant management agencies issued the “*Decision to Accelerate the Development of Modern Vocational Education*” and the “*Modern Vocational Education System Construction Plan (2014-2020)*.” and a series of policies have strongly boosted the development of vocational education. In

2018, the State Council further issued the “*Opinions on Implementing a Lifelong Vocational Skills Training System*” to solve the problems existing in current vocational education. On the basis of solving and optimizing, a lifelong vocational skills training system was established. A clear manifestation of the learning concept of “Live and learn” in vocational education. In the next 2020 and 2021, we will continue to move towards the goal of improving the vocational education system, and the state will successively introduce relevant measures. What is particularly important is that in a notice in 2021, the job-to-population ratio is clearly included in the government’s education work assessment indicators and supervision content, and the high-school education job-to-population ratio is generally unswerving, and the job-to-population ratio is lower than 45%. The provinces implemented the rectification as required, and followed up the requirements for the enrollment of secondary vocational schools. At the same time, the State Council executive meeting passed the Vocational Education Law of the People’s Republic of China (Revised Draft), which provides strong legal support for the healthy and orderly development of vocational education. In addition, it is worth noting that in July of the same year, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the “*Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Students’ Homework and Off-campus Training in Compulsory Education*” (referred to as “double reduction”), with the purpose of improving schools Education level and standard off-campus training, build a good educational ecology, and promote the comprehensive and healthy growth of students. On the one hand, these heavyweight policies make the current junior high school students face a more intense competition environment for the senior high school entrance examination, but on the other hand, the positive significance cannot be ignored. That is, while promoting the healthy growth and all-round development of young people, it can also ensure that under the background of the current weakening of demographic dividends, the country can still have sufficient secondary vocational and technical skills through reasonable and effective diversion of junior high school graduates. Promote national economic and social development.

In addition to the fact that under the guidance of national policies, there is a huge gap in secondary vocational and technical talents, coupled with the increasingly severe employment situation of college students and other practical factors. After the implementation of the “Senior High School Entrance Examination Diversion Policy”, what is the situation of junior high school students’ willingness to advance to secondary vocational schools? For junior high school students in rural areas, what are the main factors that influence them and their families to choose secondary vocational education? The ultimate purpose of the research is to provide scientific guidance and suggestions for the development and improvement of secondary vocational education in the country, and at the same time to provide suggestions for meeting the practical needs of junior high school graduates with rural backgrounds.

## 2. Literature Review

Even existing studies have pointed out that, on the one hand, the willingness of junior high school students to enter secondary vocational education has been declining in recent years, and the demand for secondary vocational education by students and parents is seriously insufficient. However, on the other hand, most scholars believe that secondary vocational colleges are still a helpless choice for the current disadvantaged groups, especially poor rural junior high school students. That is to say, children from families with poor economic conditions only receive education for survival, while children from families with better economic conditions are more likely to obtain high-quality education. For the differences in educational opportunities for children from different family backgrounds, the classical educational production function theory provides an explanation. Simply put, it is to examine the impact of family socioeconomic status on children’s academic performance and educational opportunities according to the model of input and production. Among them, parents’ educational level, family economic and income status, and parents’ occupation are usually used as three potential variables to examine the family’s socioeconomic status. In addition to the educational production function theory, capital theory has also been used to study educational issues, among which Coleman and Bourdieu’s research inspired many subsequent scholars. Coleman pointed out that, relative to schools and communities, families have a greater impact on students’ academic performance. Bourdieu distinguishes capital, and believes that the amount of capital owned by a family has class differences, and the different allocation of three kinds of capital, namely economic capital, cultural capital and social capital, will have a differentiated impact on children in the field of education. Domestic scholars have also verified the above theories through empirical research. Family socioeconomic status does have an important impact on students’ willingness to enter secondary vocational schools, and different capitals have different influences on their choice of further education. Various types of capital ownership are at a disadvantage. Regarding the internal mechanism behind the helpless choice of secondary vocational education by disadvantaged families, relevant research generally presents three

perspectives:

### *2.1 The Perspective of Social Reproduction*

This perspective mainly explains the differences in the willingness to enter secondary vocational schools through the two fields of the family and the school, and links the social structure with the family capital. The family plays a more important role in social mobility than the school. Among them, the cultural capital owned by the family has a positive prediction on the educational opportunities of the offspring to a large extent. At the same time, according to Bourdieu's theory, the school field is a tool for social reproduction in conjunction with the family field. The role of school education is not to promote social mobility, but to reproduce existing differences. Inequality in access to opportunities translates into inequality in one's own learning ability, thereby legitimizing differences in social class. From this, it can be seen that when stressing whether to go to secondary vocational school or general high school, it is far from being completely explained by the students' own cognitive ability or non-cognitive ability, and the function and process of social reproduction of schools and families must also be considered. In addition, many researchers also regard shadow education or weekend tutoring as a new mechanism for social reproduction. Relevant empirical studies have shown that there are urban-rural, regional and inter-school differences in the quantity and quality of shadow education students receive. Students from large and medium-sized cities from better families are more likely to receive shadow education, so that they will have an advantage in all aspects of development. And whether those poor students who can receive higher education can achieve social mobility, related research shows that even if the opportunities for education are increased, it is still difficult to achieve class crossing.

### *2.2 The Perspective of Functionalism*

Secondary vocational schools are more tolerant of poor students. The country has established a vocational education system for students from poor families. In addition to exempting the tuition fees of public secondary vocational schools, the coverage and amount of financial assistance for students from financially disadvantaged families in secondary vocational schools have been continuously expanded. At the same time, according to the investigation of the income of secondary vocational education in the country over the years, the income of secondary vocational graduates has a tendency to exaggerate. Because they are skilled talents, their income advantages will be more obvious in the later stages of their careers with their accumulated skills. It can alleviate the economic pressure of rural poor families. However, even if secondary vocational schools have many attractive features such as low tuition fees and employment packages, since most students do not have a strong subjective willingness to choose secondary vocational schools, considering personal interests, family economic conditions, prospects for further studies or employment, and the status of secondary vocational students. Due to the social factor of discrimination, a considerable proportion of secondary vocational students will choose to continue their studies and seek better development. They also agree with the signaling theory that the higher the number of clerks, the higher the educational benefits. In connection with Germany's mature vocational education development system, more than half of ordinary school graduates in Germany receive dual-track training every year, which explains why the vocational education penetration rate of German factory employees is so high, only 3% have not received it. Vocational education. From this point of view, there are still many challenges in China's career development path.

### *2.3 The Perspective of Social Stratification*

According to the theory of stratification, distinguishing strata according to the level of educational opportunities people obtain can legitimize this inequality and meet the needs of social stratification. The high school entrance examination diversion policy and the expanding scale of secondary vocational education are playing a role in social stratification. Distinguishing vocational high schools, ordinary high schools and key high schools can effectively predict the differences in individuals' access to higher education opportunities. In addition, with the expansion of higher education, the advantages of studying in ordinary high schools are more and more obvious compared with those in secondary vocational schools, and the disadvantageous position of vocational education in social stratification has gradually become prominent. As the second-best choice for secondary vocational education, it is a helpless move for poor families due to its low entry threshold, but it is also a reasonable choice considering the actual situation.

The existing literature has deeply analyzed the factors that affect students' willingness to secondary vocational school, but there are still three deficiencies.

First, previous studies attribute the main reason students choose secondary vocational school to poor academic performance. The focus on the choice of secondary vocational schools mainly focuses on individual-level factors, ignoring the phenomenon of educational inequality behind the two fields of family and school, in order to dig

deeper into the deep reasons why students and families make this decision. With low-cost education investment and the negative impact of education accumulation, entering secondary vocational schools may be a helpless but reasonable choice for poor junior high school students. For this group, it cannot simply be classified as a student with insufficient learning ability, nor can it be labeled as a failure of the senior high school entrance examination. The social characteristics of China's urban-rural dual structure should also be reflected in the study of secondary vocational willingness.

Second, existing research does not consider students' secondary vocational aspirations in the context of learning processes within schools, teachers' attitudes, expectations, and teaching methods. Research has found that in regions where both seniority and test scores determine teacher pay, teachers have the highest perceptions of transparency in their annual assessments and student performance. So, under such enormous pressure, teachers and schools may be inclined to blame poor student performance or parental indifference rather than problems with the education system. In response, this research will use a case study of a rural school to reveal how individual schooling experiences influence secondary vocational education decisions.

Finally, in terms of research methods, most studies rely on large-scale cross-sectional survey data for quantitative analysis, but few do in-depth excavations from the perspective of the research subjects themselves to explore the practical significance of secondary vocational choices for themselves and their families. For example, domestic scholars use field data in a certain region to interpret the path differences in the willingness to enter secondary vocational schools, and they are more likely to explore the differences in statistical significance from the perspective of family capital and structure. These data mostly reflect the average difference between classes, but it is difficult to discover the characteristics of specific groups and the active choices of individuals. It is necessary to examine why individuals and their families choose secondary vocational education and the social impact of this choice from the perspective of historical dynamics.

### **3. Research Data and Methods**

#### *3.1 Data Sources*

Considering the authenticity and validity of the interview materials, most of the clients came from a rural junior high school in a certain place contacted by the author. This study takes "ninth grade adolescents and their parents in compulsory education" as the research object. When selecting the case of students and parents, it is not only necessary to check that the student is a poor student with a file and a card, but also to determine that the student will be promoted to a secondary vocational school after graduation. Finally, 9 ninth grade students and 9 parents of the interviewed students who correspond one by one, a total of 18 people, were selected as the research objects. Parents refer to the main guardians involved in children's education, including parents' parents or grandparents of grandparents, grandfather and grandfather. grandmother. In addition, the information obtained from the head teacher will be used to understand the motivation behind students and their parents choosing secondary vocational school. Firstly of the main step is to collect school statistics in order to understand the overall willingness of the school graduates to advance to secondary vocational schools. Subsequently, the researchers conducted interviews with students who clearly showed high willingness to go to school, and conducted semi-structured interviews through teachers who contacted the students' parents to determine the family factors and school factors related to the willingness to go to secondary vocational schools. Finally, based on the attitude of students and parents to their children's willingness to advance to secondary vocational school, the evaluation of school education quality, the grasp of family background, and the results of on-site observation of the school to explore the motivation of rural poor junior high school students to advance to secondary vocational school.

The study was conducted in a prefecture-level city in northwestern China from May to June 2022. The city's economic development is relatively slow, and the complex terrain and inconvenient transportation make the city one of the prefecture-level cities with deep poverty and a large number of poor people in the country. For a long time, the region has been striving to keep up with the pace of the opening-up in the west, including seizing opportunities for inter-provincial poverty alleviation cooperation, undertaking a series of development plans such as the vigorous transfer of industries in the east, and the establishment of new community factories. However, under the principle of economic development that emphasizes the top priority of ecological protection, the future economic development of the region faces various challenges. As of the end of 2017, 53% of the population in the region was engaged in agriculture, and the per capital income of urban residents in the region was 30,918 yuan, compared with the provincial average of 30,810 yuan. Provincial data show that the per capital income of rural residents in the province is 10,265 yuan, lower than the national average of 13,432 yuan. There are 218 schools in the whole region, 75 primary schools and 45 junior high schools. The junior high school selected in

this study has been renamed three times due to the withdrawal of districts and townships and other reasons, and was later merged with a nearby primary school in 2016.

A survey of one school cannot yield findings that apply to rural China as a whole. The purpose of this study is to select a junior high school to carry out qualitative research to explore the main factors that affect junior high school students' acceptance of secondary vocational education, and to find out how the students who become secondary vocational students are considered by the public to be failures of the senior high school entrance examination and academically inferior students. Respond to inferences, this researcher believes that the deep reasons why students and parents choose secondary vocational schools are difficult to reveal through questionnaires. Based on a study of how this small group of students and their parents make decisions about advancing to secondary vocational schools, and analyzing how these decisions are related to the imbalance between urban and rural development, the level of rural education quality, and the overall fierce competition in education, the researchers believe that student achievement for the hypothesis that there is a link between poor, learning boredom and the tendency to advance to secondary vocational schools, certain preconditions are needed to be established. The assertion that "you have poor grades, that's why you go to the secondary vocational school" often appears in public discussions about children's education.

The provinces where the junior high schools selected for this study are located are not particularly wealthy compared with the eastern and southern provinces, but are not particularly poor compared with other northwestern provinces. However, although the area selected for this study is rich in natural resources, it is located in the middle and upper reaches of the Yangtze River and is planned as a key area for environmental protection. Special attention is paid to environmental protection during economic development, and heavy industrial production in this area is strictly restricted. In addition to the complex terrain and frequent natural disasters, many rural residents in mountainous areas have moved to resettlement sites for immigrants in different places under the implementation of the resettlement relocation policy. The community factories built by the government undertake industrial transfer projects in the east and provide them with employment opportunities. Many farmers became migrant workers after moving down the mountain. It can be said that the regions selected for this study can be said to be representative of rural areas.

3.2 Research Methods

This study mainly used a combination of field observation and structured interviews. In ethnographic research, the identity of the researcher and gatekeeper affects the nature of the overall study. On the one hand, the author is a insider of the study because the author interact with students from morning to night while observing at the school. On the other hand, the author is also an outsider, as the author has not held any formal position in the education system or related institutions. With the help of the school's teachers, the author entered the school, and thus came into contact with the students and their parents of the school.

Throughout the research process, the author can participate in self-study classes to supervise students and observe their academic performance. At the same time, the author also conducts interviews with students, focusing on students' willingness to apply for secondary vocational examinations and their own attitudes towards secondary vocational schools. In addition, because the school implements a non-boarding system, most of the school's students are from the surrounding villagers. Therefore, the author will also conduct semi-structured interviews with parents. On the basis of mastering the basic situation of the family, the author mainly discusses their attitude towards their children's application for secondary vocational school and their prospects and plans for their children's future prospects after graduation. In summary, the basic information of the 18 respondents selected for this study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of students and their parents respondents (9 children and 9 parents)

	Number of parents		Number of ninth graders
<b>Sex</b>		<b>Sex</b>	
Male	3	Male	5
Female	6	Female	4
<b>Occupation</b>		<b>experience of mobility or staying behind</b>	
Farmer	1	Yes	5
Migrant Workers	8	No	4

Education Level		Is it an only child?	
Primary	3	Yes	1
Junior high school	5	No	8
High school and equivalent	1		

#### 4. Research Findings: Where Does the Willingness to Enter Secondary Vocational Schools Come From?

Who will choose to go to secondary schools? Those junior high school students who come from remote areas, have poor school teaching quality, are not particularly concerned by teachers, and whose families are financially difficult are more likely to choose secondary vocational and technical colleges instead of ordinary high schools. In addition, the peer effect and self-interest also affect individuals' willingness to advance to secondary vocational school. In short, when analyzing why young people are willing to apply for secondary vocational school, it is necessary to comprehensively consider the influence of individuals, families, schools and peer groups. The question of whether to decide whether to be promoted to a secondary occupation should be studied in the whole social context.

Through interviews, it was found that when students were asked why they chose secondary vocational schools instead of general high schools, most of them first answered that their scores could only go to secondary vocational schools. Indeed, most of the findings show a strong link between family factors and students' academic achievement. However, through interviews with parents and on-site observations, the author found that the reasons for choosing secondary vocational schools are closely related to the unequal school education and stratified family background under the background of urban-rural dual development. The negative accumulation of poor quality early education makes Poor junior high school students have compromised in embarrassing family conditions and a fierce educational competition environment. In addition, there are peer group effects and the influence of personal interests.

##### 4.1 School: The Accumulation of Previous School Education

Although when students were asked why they chose secondary careers, most of the reasons given were poor academic performance. Academic performance is closely linked to the quality of school education. Among the 9 students interviewed, most of them had experience of staying behind. Relevant studies have confirmed that poor academic performance of left-behind children is inseparable from low school quality. When evaluating the teaching quality of the schools they attended since childhood, most of the students interviewed admitted that the teaching quality of their alma mater was poor. The parents of interviewed student 9 said: "I actually regret letting my child go to this junior high school, but I can't help it. I have been working outside for a few years and my child can only go to this school close to home in my hometown, and the quality is not very good. I heard that every year there are very few people who can get into a good high school in the city, and they basically pay for it, which is really not worth it." From a family level, parents will improve their children's academic achievements by sending their children to high-quality schools and excellent classes. But for rural parents who are limited by their own conditions, they cannot afford such a high cost of educational investment.

During field observation, the author learned that due to the massive loss of students, the school merged with a nearby primary school into a nine-year school three years ago. Coupled with the problem of teachers' treatment, many backbones have been lost in recent years, which has worsened the quality of running schools in the already withered villages. Interviewed student 2 said, "When I was in the first year of junior high, I liked math very much. The teacher taught very well and he was very attentive. As a result, he didn't teach us in the second year. They said that the teacher was poached by the urban school." In addition to the unsatisfactory teaching quality, the interviewed students also stated that they also had experiences of unfair treatment and favoritism by teachers. Interviewed student 4: "I felt that I was not liked by the teacher at school because my grades were poor, and the teacher only liked good grades." Students who lacked the teacher's encouragement reported this frustration to their parents, so that the parents realized that even if they let their children continue their education, and there are also risks. If they cannot perform well in high school, they may not bring good educational benefits to their children, and they will not be able to go to college. The parent of student 7 interviewed, "The road is blocked, so why should we continue. I tried to convince my daughter to work hard and go to a good high school in the city, and then go to college to give her family some breath. But she told me School is so boring, she can't keep up with others, teachers only focus on good students. My daughter is a quiet girl and doesn't do well in exams. She feels neglected easily. So I decided to send her to study, a kindergarten teacher, so she doesn't have to waste another three years in high school, since she doesn't like school so much." Some studies have pointed out that

the reason for those students who cannot adapt to school life is the lack of family cultural capital, because school culture often represents the mainstream. Therefore, children with more cultural capital will be more adaptable to school life, more likely to have good academic performance, and will be more concerned by teachers. However, combined with the communication with teachers, the author found that the negative impact of the accumulation of early education presents a vicious circle. Because although parents understand the importance of education, due to the lack of family capital, parents often put their children's educational expectations are placed in the hands of the school teachers, and they miss the opportunity to help their children. Most of the interviewed parents believe that their children's education should be entirely the responsibility of the school. From the teachers' point of view, as long as the students with poor grades do not cause trouble, it is the ideal result, and it is useless to make up lessons for students with poor grades, because the students whose foundation is weak, and some even may not have a good primary school foundation. At the result is that they can't keep up with others, they will continue their studies in junior high school without the measure of repeating grades. This will make the students who are inferior in their studies lack the opportunity to catch up and families cannot afford extra tuition fees. The interviewed students have basically zero experience of participating in extracurricular tuition. Relevant studies have confirmed that there are significant differences in the public security of students receiving extracurricular tuition in urban and rural areas and families, and they come from better families. Students from socioeconomic backgrounds and from large and medium-sized cities are more likely to receive extra-curricular tutoring.

#### *4.2 Families: Low-cost Educational Options and Compromises*

Although school is an important field that affects students' development, related research also points out that family background may even have a greater impact on students' development and educational opportunities than schools. Among the parents interviewed by the author, most of them attach great importance to education, although they themselves have not received higher education or even drop out of school early, and most of them are currently working locally. They recognized that education can help children and their families get rid of poverty, and some parents expressed that they also expected a college student to come out of their home. The parents of student 8 interviewed: "I also hope that the child will have a future, move to the city, and struggle for our family" But after accepting that their children could not go to school due to poor academic performance, the parents also expressed their understanding and support for their children's decision. From the interviews, it can be seen that both parents and students themselves think that finding a suitable job after graduating from secondary vocational school is also a good way for them. From the perspective of education costs and benefits, the reasons why students and parents interviewed about choosing secondary vocational schools can be summarized into the following three points: The first is the opportunity cost of continuing to study. If you go to general high school and then go on to higher education, the financial burden on your family will be too heavy. The parents of Student 1 interviewed said, "There are still several children in the family to support, so we can't just focus on the eldest's schooling. We don't ask the children to study to make a lot of money or help the family. We don't have the ability to support the family for so long"; Parents of interviewed student 2: "The school teacher said that it is good to let the child go to secondary school, free tuition and subsidies"; followed by the fierce employment environment. The parents of the interviewed student 6 said, "It's hard for college students to find a job now. It's better to go to a secondary vocational school, and then come out early to find a job. It's not that some schools also offer employment"; finally, the expected income after being promoted to general high school risk consideration. Interviewed student 8 said, "I want to say that after three years of high school, I can't learn anything, and I will never be able to keep up with others. If I continue to study, it will be a waste of time."

It can be seen from the interview that although parents attach great importance to education and hope that their children will become dragons, they are limited by various conditions and provide very limited resources for their children, and after considering various unfavorable factors and risks, parents' choices are more pragmatic, they would rather quickly change the route than blindly continue to accompany the children of urban families in the college entrance examination.

In fact, from the perspective of the current secondary vocational education students, the proportion of rural students is much higher than that of urban students. According to the development of vocational education during the "13th Five-Year Plan" announced by the Ministry of Education in 2020, it can be seen that 70% of secondary vocational school students are from rural areas. It is an undeniable fact that secondary vocational education is the choice of children from lower-middle-class families in society, and it is also considered to be one of the worst choices in educational social stratification, and this choice further strengthens them to a certain extent disadvantaged social status.

However, from the perspective of realizing spatial mobility, participating in economic and social development,

realizing rural revitalization, and sharing the fruits of economic development, it is the worst choice for children from poor rural families to get a job with technology through secondary vocational education. It also has its rationale. Zheng Yefu mentioned that the function of education can change social status. Even in the middle and lower classes of society, rural poor students still do not give up the channel of social mobility through education. The emergence of low-cost secondary vocational education that exempts tuition fees, provides living expenses and includes employment is very attractive to rural poor families. The low threshold for further education means that parents will not interfere with their children's decisions, even if they regret that their children cannot become the first college student in the family. The parents of interviewed student 4 said: "As long as my child can get into college, we will do our best. But he failed the test since elementary school, and he can pass the technical examination in a secondary vocational school without starving to death. If a child reluctantly reads a general high school, it will be painful for him to learn, and we are also anxious." Through interviews with parents, it can be seen that they have a profound understanding of the huge gap between urban and rural development. The parents of the interviewed student 6, who are engaged in domestic service work in the city, mentioned that "The tuition fee paid by the people I work is expensive. Anyway, our family can't afford it. The food for the child is all very particular. The family is also good, they will let me take old clothes home for my children to wear." Migrant parents have a deeper understanding of the urban-rural gap, and they gradually show a tendency to give up participating in the education competition for the next generation, believing that this is meaningless.

However, there are also students who express a desire to move upwards and get rid of their families of origin. Choosing a secondary vocational school, in addition to the consideration of relieving the family's economic pressure, is also a temporary choice on the road of personal development. In the future, they can participate in the vocational college entrance examination to realize "university dream". Interviewed student 2 told the author, "I'm still unwilling to go to a secondary vocational school, but I can't do anything now. I'm going to take the vocational college entrance examination in the future."

#### *4.3 Friends: Peer Group Effect*

In the field of pedagogy, the "peer group effect" is an important perspective to explain attitudes and behaviors of adolescents. Numerous studies have verified the view that the peer group effect affects adolescents' attitudes and behaviors, and this effect is highly homogenous. This is especially true for rural junior high school students. Under the urban-rural dual system, the differences in the quality of school education and the disadvantaged status of family background make most of them lack important and high-quality social resources and social support. When making further education choices, peers have a more direct impact on their access to external resources. Interviewed Student 1 said, "My friend who play well with me listens to family's arrangement to go to the secondary vocational school. I'm also going to the certain school. I played with him from childhood to adulthood." There is little difference in where we read. Respondents said that their close friends have grown up from childhood to adulthood, and all of them have been promoted from elementary school to junior high school together, and their living space is very concentrated. Interviewed student 7 said, "Most of the classmates in the class have known each other since childhood and live nearby. Both elementary and junior high schools are close to their homes, and they have been going to and from school together. When thinking about where to go after junior high school, they actually have private discussions." In a closed environment, peers exchange information and support each other. The quality of such friendship is often higher because of geographical proximity, and the accumulation of deep feelings will continue to maintain this friendship. It can be said that the influence of peers on rural junior high school students is more profound.

Due to the low cost of education in secondary vocational schools, poor rural students prefer to go to school together. In the absence of effective resource support from their families, they will seek social resources from their peers to obtain corresponding information. Interviewed Student 9 said: "My classmate said that his relatives went to this vocational school, and the job arrangement after graduation was good, and suggested that we all go there, because if there are many fellows, it is more reassuring to study abroad." Mutual support among peers can help maintain good mental health, ease future anxiety, and adapt to the new school environment.

#### *4.4 Individual: Interests and Hobbies*

In the research on European and American education, it is found that the development of education democratization in Sweden can already support students to choose the way of further education according to their own interests and to obtain corresponding educational resources support. Choosing the direction of further education out of personal interest is also reflected in the rural poor students. Although choosing a secondary vocational school is the second best choice for most, it compromises the current fierce academic competition environment and family embarrassment. However, in the interviews, some students said that part of the reason

for choosing the secondary vocational education is out of self-interest. Interviewed student 3 said: "I have been interested in cars since I was a child, so it is suitable for me to major in auto repair." Interviewed student 5 said: "I want to be a hairdresser, this is my wish since I was a child." Interest-oriented secondary vocational choices reflect factors at the individual level of students in addition to school, family, and peers. Out of enthusiasm for a certain field, these students' willingness to advance to secondary vocational schools is more subjective. However, the author found that among the factors affecting the willingness to choose secondary vocational schools, whether it is because of poor academic performance, heavy family financial burden or hobbies, the respondents did not talk about the attractiveness of the teaching quality of secondary vocational schools themselves and the resulting bright employment prospects. Therefore, in order to meet the development needs of these poor students and make vocational schools an ideal choice rather than a second-best choice for most people, improving the quality of running secondary vocational schools is the focus of the reform of secondary vocational education in the future.

In addition, interviews with parents found that parents were more accepting of secondary vocational education, and at the same time they expressed support for their children's hobbies. The parents of student 3 interviewed said: "I support my child to learn auto repair. When I come back, I can help in the auto repair shop opened by his second uncle, and continue to learn techniques, and the income is not bad. Besides, there are many relatives in the family who go to school. If you are an auto repair professional, you can come out and mix." It is worth noting that most of the students interviewed are from multi-child families because they all have rural account. Research on the choice of vocational schools in multi-child families shows that, parents of multi-child families generally receive secondary vocational education due to their own vocational education experience and the reasons for engaging in skilled occupations, and they will consider their children's interests to choose the vocational school that matches children's majors. In this regard, apart from peer groups, parents who respect their children's interests and wishes are also an important support force for these students who choose secondary vocational schools.

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

The senior high school entrance examination has always been a hot social issue. It is not only a major test before the college entrance examination, but also concerns the fate of oneself and the family, and also involves various aspects such as education fairness, national talent demand, and social development. Under the guidance of national policies, secondary vocational schools in the senior high school education stage are roughly the same size as ordinary high schools. It is worth noting that the problem of "identity discrimination" against individual vocational students still exists. Today's secondary vocational students are different from the graduates before the 1990s. At that time, the secondary vocational graduates were not only assigned work packages, but also had the status of state cadres. However, the status of the current secondary school students in people's eyes or the degree of social respect is not optimistic, and they are even labeled as "high school entrance exam losers". Based on interviews and field observations of a third-year junior high student and their parents in a northwest rural area, this article analyzes why they choose secondary vocational school, just because of poor academic performance? The results of the study found that putting negative labels on secondary vocational students is unreasonable in itself, and the reason why rural poor students choose secondary vocational education cannot simply be attributed to poor academic performance. The decision to enter secondary vocational schools is the result of the interaction between the relevant parties in the macro-structure and micro-situations. In the context of the dual development of urban and rural areas, rural teachers are weak, educational resources are scarce, family support is insufficient, as well as the influence of peers and personal influence. Interest orientation has an impact on the willingness to enter secondary vocational schools. In fact, for rural students, promotion to secondary vocational school is a reasonable choice for themselves and their families. Specifically, this study found the following:

Through field observation, it is found that the school-running model of the rural junior high school selected in this study follows a certain template. Even if the school is only a school in Northwest China, it also reflects the general attributes of rural schools in my country: lack of teachers and facilities; closed school-running under the competition system; training in accordance with the quality education goals, and strict implementation of various policies and so on. The on-campus curriculum arrangement is compact. After the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, students' time in school is extended. Although the time for obtaining academic counseling is extended, the improvement of academic quality is still limited. After all, the school's teachers are limited. At the same time, too long school time squeezes students' rest time. In conclusion, compared with their urban peers, these rural junior high school students are at a disadvantage in terms of educational resources.

Poverty may be the last choice for these junior high school students and their families who choose to enter secondary vocational schools. Through observation, it is found that when students show their willingness to enter

secondary vocational schools, their teachers and parents have no objection. Some parents even seek advice from teachers on which secondary vocational school to apply for in advance, and tend to choose secondary vocational colleges that exempt tuition fees and guarantee employment. Under the dual structure of urban and rural areas, the poverty that children from rural families face restricts their own development, and related research also points out that poverty is a huge obstacle to adolescents' academic success and overall well-being. Poverty, on the one hand, directly affects adolescents' health, cognitive abilities, social-emotional skills, and psychological well-being. On the other hand, financial stress, income deprivation, and related stressors can disrupt the psychological and emotional resources of parents, disrupt parenting practices, parent-child interactions, and thus affect adolescent development.

As far as the selected junior high school is concerned, according to the interviews with the parents, it can be seen that the reason why the child chooses the secondary vocational school is not because of the simple reason of the child's poor grades. In fact, rural parents can easily succumb to any pressure or impediment to keep their children in school. Although they have shown their willingness to earn tuition for their children, there are objective limitations of the family's economic situation, the choice of secondary vocational education with low education costs, and the advice from the head teacher, because some teachers will explicitly advise children from financially difficult families to choose the secondary vocational education, so that parents also accept the decision of their children to enter secondary vocational schools. The interview found that although most of these parents only have junior high school education, despite being restricted by their family background, they also support their children's studies through the way that the father works outside the home and the mother accompanies study at home. Considering the fact that a considerable number of students' parents are working abroad, it was also mentioned earlier that the region's economy is relatively backward, and the rural surplus labor mainly relies on labor export. It can be seen that the poor academic performance of rural junior high school students is closely related to the educational resources they receive. The lack of additional investment such as shadow education may be affected by the accumulation of previous education and the migration of parents to work. Relevant studies have confirmed that compared with children from non-migrant families, children of migrant families are at a significant disadvantage in obtaining high-quality school education and family education. Moreover, an important reason for the generally low academic achievement level of adolescents from low social classes is that they are limited by their lack of family economic and cultural resources.

In conclusion, the inherent disparity in rural education and the implicit reproduction of educational inequality have shaped the educational environment of rural adolescents. This also confirms previous research conclusions, that is, family socioeconomic status has a significant positive predictive effect on students' academic performance and even access to educational opportunities. The class with dominant family cultural capital and family economic capital has a similar educational level to its children. It is higher than that of the children of the disadvantaged class, and the influence of family cultural capital on children's educational acquisition is slightly greater than that of family economic capital.

The quality of rural junior high schools is low, and the educational resources enjoyed by rural students are naturally completely different from urban junior high schools in developed areas. It should be pointed out that the root cause of the labels of "stupid mind" and "poor learning" imposed on rural students lies in the educational inequality caused by the gap between urban and rural areas. Therefore, the claims of rural students who choose secondary vocational schools because of their poor grades may require further thought and discussion. The World Economic Cooperation Organization (OECD) released the results of the seventh round of international student assessment. Since its participation in PISA in 2009, mainland China has ranked first in the past years, except for the regression in individual years. But the acclaimed PISA scores were sampled from students from top secondary schools in the most economically developed regions of the country. This study believes that we should realize that compared with urban adolescents, rural adolescents face the embarrassing situation of educational resources, and achieving good educational equity requires the joint efforts of all parties.

In a word, the decision of rural poor students to go to secondary vocational school is the result of a combination of factors, including "personal factors" (intelligence level, academic performance, personal interests), "peer factors" (support from peer groups), "family" factors (family socioeconomic status and parents' expectations and encouragement for their children) and "school factors" (teacher encouragement). These factors either directly or indirectly affect teenagers' choices for further education.

Although the conclusions of this study have practical significance for understanding the deep motivation of rural poor students' secondary vocational choices, this paper needs to be further improved in terms of research validity. First, since the findings of this study are based on a single case study in Northwest China, further fieldwork should be conducted on rural schools and, if possible, comparisons with urban schools in the same region.

Moreover, the regions selected for the study can span the whole country, and interviews with parents of students in different regions can be conducted to investigate the status and reasons of regional differences in the willingness to enroll in secondary vocational schools. Secondly, the time span of the study is not sufficient and other aspects such as the excavation of students' academic performance and growth experience may be insufficient. Follow-up qualitative research covering the entire junior high school stage can be carried out, accompanied by the "double reduction" policy and After the implementation of the "Separation of Senior High School Entrance Examination" policy, we will track the degree and changes of rural junior high school students' willingness to enroll in secondary vocational schools, and further analyze the micro and macro factors behind the changes in their willingness to enter secondary vocational schools. The ultimate goal is to help the development of vocational education in my country. Provide scientific guidance and suggestions on education fairness and rural revitalization; finally, based on the results of the study, follow-up visits can be carried out to inquire about the subsequent academic and living conditions of the interviewed students who have been promoted to secondary vocational schools, changes in self and family. These contents will be continued in subsequent researches.

## 6. Policy Implications

Although according to the current high school entrance examination diversion policy, students who could enter ordinary high schools will flow to secondary vocational and technical schools, which is considered by the public to be the most unsatisfactory result. However, this study believes that due to the vast territory of my country, urban and rural development and regional development are not balanced. Many teenagers lack the disadvantaged environment, and entering secondary vocational and technical colleges may be the first step for them to obtain social mobility. After all, the fact that cannot be ignored is that, according to the published data, although my country's nine-year compulsory education has been popularized, in The compulsory education stage still has a certain dropout rate, which is 6.2% .

Becoming a secondary vocational student may be a reasonable choice for many children from poor rural families today. At the same time, teachers and parents often acquiesce in their students' decision to advance to secondary vocational schools. In fact, the choice of secondary vocational school instead of ordinary high school is based on the interaction of many factors, embarrassed family background, low-quality school education, peer effects and so on. As an important channel for rural poor students to achieve social mobility, secondary vocational education is an important part. Perfecting and developing secondary vocational education is not only related to the future development of these rural students who choose secondary vocational education and the improvement of family conditions, but also cultivating high-quality secondary vocational and technical personnel can also make up for the current shortage of skilled talents faced by the country. gap. Under the background of the current strict segregation policy for the senior high school entrance examination, we need to start from the following three aspects to promote the orderly and healthy development of secondary vocational education that benefits the country and the people.

### *6.1 The Media and Public Opinion Are Positively Guided, and Policies Related to Vocational Education Are Popularized*

According to the recently introduced measures of the Ministry of Education for the senior high school entrance examination, the ratio between general high school and secondary vocational school is close to 5:5. The introduction of this policy has caused a certain degree of panic. In addition, people have always believed in the concept of "the college entrance examination changes the fate of life", and at the same time, the discrimination against secondary vocational students and vocational education seems to change this life-changing situation. The important exam is three years ahead of schedule, from the college entrance examination period to the high school entrance examination period. Therefore, we should give full play to the positive role of the media in guiding public opinion, and do a good job in popularizing knowledge in terms of current policy interpretation, vocational education development, and related employment prospects. In terms of policy interpretation, we must correctly understand that the essence of the diversion of high school entrance examinations in national reform is to screen talents. This move can not only make a clear positioning of students themselves and their future career plans, but also change the public's notion that going to university is the only way to change their destiny. At present, vocational education in our country is actually constantly developing and improving. Even if rural poor students can only be promoted to secondary vocational schools and miss out on the opportunity to enroll in general high schools due to economic reasons or performance factors, they still have access to education promotion. And the relevant employment prospects are still bright. Skilled talents who have passed the skill test to become intermediate technicians, senior technicians, and reserve technicians are currently in short supply in China, and the relevant wages are naturally rich. Through vocational awareness education, "Vocational Education Week", successful experience presentations of outstanding secondary vocational graduates and their parents, and sharing

of school-running experience by secondary vocational school principals in primary and secondary schools in various places, TV programs and newspapers have promoted outstanding vocational and technical talents. Activities such as deeds publicity can change the public's negative impression of secondary vocational students' poor academic performance, behavioral deviation, and poor career prospects, so as to increase the public's recognition and acceptance of vocational education.

### *6.2 Improving the Quality of Secondary Vocational Schools and Help Rural Revitalization*

It is undeniable that secondary vocational colleges are an important means for the country to implement targeted poverty alleviation before, which not only realizes the social mobility of rural poor students, but also drives the improvement of family living standards. Subsequent rural revitalization will also continue to rely on the development of secondary vocational education. According to the existing national policy, entering secondary vocational schools will benefit from the expansion of secondary vocational enrollment and corresponding state subsidies. Therefore, rural poor students can survive the crisis of dropping out during the compulsory education stage, and they can continue to have educational opportunities after completing the compulsory education stage. But at the same time, the employment situation of secondary vocational students is not optimistic. After all, the employment competition of undergraduates has become increasingly fierce in recent years. To this end, it is necessary to improve the quality of running schools in secondary vocational schools, and then strengthen the skills of secondary vocational students, so that they can have a certain degree of competitiveness in the job market, and at the same time, it is conducive to rural revitalization. To this end, we can start from two aspects to improve the quality of running schools. One is to increase the degree of "integration of production and education", and the other is to seek paired assistance with high-quality colleges and universities. Specifically, in terms of the integration of production and education, the quality of cooperative enterprises is uneven, and some colleges and universities only stop to sign agreements with relevant enterprises to jointly train students and arrange employment. It is suggested that the relevant government departments can match up, and can introduce relevant policies to vigorously introduce leading enterprises in the industry to participate in the integration of production and education, so as to improve the teaching quality of vocational colleges. In addition, in terms of running schools and improving the quality of teaching conditions in secondary vocational colleges, they also rely on the help of other high-quality colleges, including teacher training, discipline construction planning, and professional settings and layouts that conform to the direction of local industry development.

### *6.3 Improving the Welfare Benefits of Secondary Vocational Students, and Make Joint Efforts of the Whole Society*

As the results of the study show, most junior high school students who choose secondary vocational education are disadvantaged groups, and it is a reasonable choice for individuals and families for them to choose secondary vocational education instead of general high school. Labeling them "losers of high school entrance exam" is unreasonable. On the one hand, the diversion of the senior high school entrance examination is a practical need, and the cultivation of outstanding vocational and technical talents is also a need of the country, and not all students have to take the college entrance examination for further education. In the context of my country's fierce competition for further education and the dual urban-rural development pattern, becoming a secondary vocational student is also a good choice for many families to change themselves and their families. In order to alleviate the economic pressure of students from poor families entering secondary vocational and technical colleges, and to attract more students to apply for secondary vocational schools based on their own circumstances, it is urgent to increase the living allowances for secondary vocational students during their schooling and the salary and welfare benefits after graduation. To this end, the secondary vocational schools should provide corresponding assistance to secondary vocational students enrolled to avoid dropouts due to economic reasons after enrollment; the state should increase their investment in grants so that they can successfully complete their studies. In addition, the state should give the most preferential policies to the salary standards and promotion channels of secondary vocational graduates, so as to smooth the way for them to move upward, and the skill rating can not be restricted by various conditions such as age, gender, and seniority. Of course, it is also necessary to call on enterprises and factories to take more care of their employees and fulfill the provisions of the labor law. Conditional enterprises can formulate and improve promotion and salary systems, stimulate the creative vitality of skilled talents, respect the labor results of skilled talents, and in terms of income be fully reflected. In this way, with the joint efforts of schools, enterprises, society, and the country, students who choose secondary vocational education can live up to the expectations. Through secondary vocational education, they can truly change the fate of themselves and their families, and can also contribute to the revitalization of the countryside strength.

## References

- Amano, I. (1989). Social Selection and Education. In R. J. Zhang (Editor-in-Chief) *Anthology of Foreign Education Sociology*. Shanghai: East China Normal University Publishing.
- Bian, Y. F. (2021). The traditional “family affairs” has risen to an important “state affairs” in the new era-how the whole society supports parents to teach to promote the healthy growth of children under the background of “double reduction”. *People’s Education*, 22, 26-30.
- Blair, C., & Raver, C. C. (2012). Child development in the context of adversity: experiential canalization of brain and behavior. *Am Psychol*, 67(4), 309-318. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027493>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (2002). *Inheritance: College Students and Culture*. Commercial Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (2002). *Reproduction—The Essentials of an Educational System Theory*. Commercial Press.
- Bray, M., & Liao, Q. (2012). The Global Expansion of “Shadow Education”: The Pros and Cons of Educational Equity, Quality, and Development. *Comparative Education Research*, 34, 13-17.
- Bray, M. (2009). *Facing the shadow education system: Extracurricular tutoring and government decision-making*. Institute of International Education Planning.
- Chen, P., & Liu, C. (2022). How “Three-Children” Empowers Secondary Vocational Development: A Study on Vocational School Selection for Families with Multiple Children. *China Vocational and Technical Education*, 4, 5-11, 32.
- Chen, Z. F., & Shen, Y. L. (2018). Analysis of Influencing Factors of Personal Demand in Secondary Vocational Education. *China Vocational and Technical Education*, 24, 37-41, 48.
- Coleman, J. S., Campbell E. Q., & Hobson C. J. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. WashingtonDC: National Center for Educational Statistics.
- Conger, R. D., & Donnellan, M. B. (2007). An interactionist perspective on the socioeconomic context of human development. *Social Science Electronic Publishing*, 58(1), 175-199. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085551>
- Fang, C. C., & Feng, X. T. (2008). Family Background and Academic Achievement: A Study on Class Differences in Compulsory Education. *Zhejiang Social Sciences*, 8, 47-55, 126-127.
- Fore. (2002). *German Education since 1945*. Beijing: People’s Education Press.
- Guo, C. B., & Min, W. F. (2006). The effect of familial economical and cultural capital on educational attainment in China. *Journal of Higher Education*, 27(11), 24-31.
- Hartas, D. (2013). Families’ social backgrounds matter: Socio-economic factors, home learning and young children’s language, literacy and social outcomes. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(6), 893-914. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.506945>
- He, G. Y., & Li, B. Y. (2020). The impact of family poverty on the mental health of middle school students: the mediating role of parent-child communication, parental relationship and parental confidence. *Youth Research*, 2, 49-58, 95.
- He, W. M. (2013). Whether to study general high school or vocational high school-A survey of junior high school graduates’ desire for further education and employment. *Vocational and Technical Education*, 34(31), 50-55.
- Hu, M., Chen, Y., Wu, L. W., & Zhang, G. Y. (2020). Investigation and Influencing Factors Analysis of Rural Junior High School Students’ Willingness to Study Under the Background of Rural Revitalization: An Empirical Analysis Based on Logistic Regression Model. *Rural Economy and Technology*, 31(13), 329-331.
- Huang, B., Xu, C. Q., & Jiang, X. Y. (2012). The willingness of Chinese rural junior high school students to receive secondary vocational education and its influencing factors. *China Rural Economy*, 4, 47-56.
- Huang, C. (2017). Urban-rural differences in educational expectations: The influence of family background and school environment. *Sociological Review of China*, 5(5), 65-78.
- Jaeger, M. M. (2011). Does cultural capital really affect academic achievement? New evidence from combined

- sibling and panel data. *Sociology of Education*, 84(4), 281-298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040711417010>
- Li, C. L. (2014). The chronological trend of educational inequality (1940-2010): A re-examination of the inequality of educational opportunities in urban and rural areas. *Sociological Research*, 29(2), 65-89, 243.
- Li, J., & He, D. M. (2017). The influence of educational structure on the interaction between social stratification and education: A comparative analysis of China, Germany and the United States. *Comparative Education Research*, 39(3), 3-13, 59.
- Li, L. L. (2009). An Empirical Study on Junior High School Students' Enrollment Choice in Senior High School. *Vocational Education Forum*, 22, 8-10.
- Li, M. L. (2020). Study on the Response Heterogeneity of Youth's Comprehensive Expectation. *China Youth Research*, 2, 13-20.
- Li, Y. (2019). Who would prefer to go to vocational school: Perspective of choice expectations in the context of family. *Contemporary Youth Research*, 4, 12-18.
- Li, Z. L., & Qiu, Z. Q. (2016). How Does Family Background Affect Children's Academic Achievement?—An Analysis of the Differences in the Impact of Family Socioeconomic Status in Compulsory Education. *Sociological Research*, 31(4), 121-144, 244-245.
- Liang, Y. (2020). Changes in the rate of return of secondary vocational education in my country since the 1990s: An analysis based on CHNS data. *Education Academic Monthly*, 8, 3-9, 31.
- Lin, N. S., & He, L. C. (2018). The Positioning Choice of Rural Secondary Vocational Education under the Background of Rural Revitalization Strategy. *Vocational Education Forum*, 11, 33-37.
- Liu, C. S., & Brodade, C. M. (1995). The Constraining Factors of Urban Educational Opportunity Distribution—A Survey and Analysis of Junior High School Graduates from Five Middle Schools in Wuhan. *Sociological Research*, 4, 101-107.
- Liu, J. M. (2006). Higher Education Expansion and Differences in Enrollment Opportunities: 1978-2003. *Society*, 3, 158-179, 209.
- Luo, R., Shi, Y., & Zhang, L. (2009). Malnutrition in China's rural boarding schools: The case of primary schools in Shaanxi Province. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 29(4), 481-501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188790903312680>
- Marie, D.-B., & Agnès, von, J. (2001). *School Sociology*. East China Normal University Press.
- Marjoribanks, K. (1984). Occupational status, family environments, and adolescents' aspirations: The Laosa model. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76(4), 690-700. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.76.4.690>
- Melby, J. N, Conger, R. D., & Fang, S. A. (2008). Adolescent family experiences and educational attainment during early adulthood. *Dev Psychol*, 44(6), 1519-1536. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013352>
- Murphy, R. (2004). Turning Peasants into Modern Chinese Citizens: Population Quality Discourse, Demographic Transition and Primary Education. *China Quarterly*, 177, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741004000025>
- Shah, R., Maber, E., Lopes, C. M. et al. (2016). *Peacebuilding, education and advocacy in conflict-affected contexts programme: UNICEF programme report 2012-2016*. Unicef.
- Shen, Y. L. (2022). Differential analysis of junior high school students' willingness to enter secondary vocational schools—Based on a survey of 21,531 junior high school students in the “three states” area. *Journal of Central China Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)*, 61(1), 165-172.
- Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417-453. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075003417>
- Song, F. Q. (2013). Current Situation and Influence Factors of High School Educational Demand in the Counties: Based on Data of Four Counties in Henan. *Educational Development Research*, 33(22), 62-68.
- Southgate, D. E. (2009). *Determinants of shadow education: A cross-national analysis*. The Ohio State University.
- Tian, Z. L. (2022). Secondary Vocational Funding Survey and Suggestions for Policy Improvement during the “14th Five-Year Plan” Period. In *China Education Finance Policy Consultation Report (2019-2021)* (pp 11-616).

- Tucker, M. (2014). *Chinese lessons: Shanghai's rise to the top of the PISA league tables*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ChineseLessonsWeb.pdf>.
- U Cenker. (1980). The Choice of Education: A Comparative Study of the School System of Seven Countries in Europe and America. *Trends in Foreign Education*, 2, 2-8.
- Wang, C. Y., & Xu, L. (2017). Migrant students' willingness to study in junior high school and its influencing factors: A hierarchical linear model analysis. *Education and Economics*, 4, 66-73.
- Wang, N., & Ma, L. N. Goal Orientation and Intergenerational Social Mobility: A Motivational Perspective. *Shandong Social Sciences*, 284(4), 50-60.
- Wang, W. H., Man, S. S., & Chen, L. J. (2013). A study on the impact of family capital on the choice of vocational education for rural secondary school students: Based on a survey in an agricultural county in Henan Province. *Vocational and Technical Education*, 34(31), 56-62.
- Wang, Y. J., Hu, H. Q., & Lv, D. X. (2019). Has the rate of return on education changed: An analysis of the reasons for the decline of secondary vocational education enrollment and promotion based on CFPS. *Education Development Research*, 39(11).
- Williams, H. R. A. (1987). The Stability of Students' Interracial Friendships. *American Sociological Review*, 52(5), 653-664. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095601>
- Wu, Y. X. (2020). Understanding the Educational Inequality in China from the Perspective of Social Stratification: Macro Trends and Micro Mechanisms. *Journal of Nanjing Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, 4, 8-35.
- Wu, Y. X. (2013). Educational Diversion System and China's Educational Stratification (1978-2008). *Sociological Research*, 28(4), 179-202, 245-246.
- Wu, Y. X., Huang, C., & Huang, S. W. (2017). The Dual Cultural Reproduction of Families and Schools: A Heterogeneous Discussion about the Effects of Cultural Capital. *Journal of social Development*, 4(3), 1-27, 242.
- Wu, Y. X., & Zhang, F. (2020). The health cost of "the redness of the near Zhu": Peer influence and adolescents' academic performance and mental health. *Educational Research*, 41(7), 123-142.
- Xue, H. P. (2015). From school education to shadow education: educational competition and social reproduction. *Peking University Education Review*, 13(3), 47-69, 188-189.
- Yan, B. H. (2017). Effects of Rural-urban migration to children's cognitive ability development in China: Analysis based on the Census Data of urbanization and migration in 2012. *Sociology*, 37(4), 59-89.
- Yan, Z. C. (2018). Family background and student development: The mediating role of parental participation and self-education expectations. *Educational Economics Review*, 3(3), 61-82.
- Yeh, W.-H. (2008). Huang Yanpei and the Chinese society of vocational education in Shang-hai networking. In N. Dillon & C. O. Jean (Eds.), *At the Crossroads of Empire: Middlemen, Social*.
- Yu, B. J., & Yu, J. H. (2020). Analysis of the effect and effect path of family cultural capital and parental participation on students' academic achievement. *Education Research Monthly*, 1, 18-24, 30.
- Zhang, H. (2017). Obstacles to improving the academic performance of migrant children in the compulsory education stage—Based on the investigation and research in Beijing. *Educational Science Research*, 9, 34-39.
- Zhang, K. C., & Li, Q. L. (2002). *German Basic Education*. Guangzhou: Guangdong Education Press.
- Zheng, Y. F. (2013). *Educational Pathology in China*. Beijing: CITIC Press.
- Zhou, Z., & Li, J. (2010). Who is in Vocational School: Investigation and Reflection on the Current Situation of Secondary Vocational Students. *Vocational Education Forum*, 4, 50-53.

### Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).