

Research on Competition in Education in China Since the Reform and Opening up: the Number of Papers Published in Journals from CNKI and its Interpretation

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Abstract: Competition in education refers to the situation or activity in which educational subjects compete for victory. This study focuses on the periodic literature of CNKI and identifies three stages of Chinese scholars' research on competition in education as a social phenomenon: the embryonic stage from 1983 to 1990, the developmental stage from 1991 to 2005, and the stable stage from 2005 to the present. The characteristics of these three stages are as follows: 1. In the embryonic stage, the number of papers is growing exponentially, and qualitative research is the primary research method used to construct the theory of competition in education; 2. In the developmental stage, academic papers on competition in education increase annually, while research methods continue to build from previous stages and expand in depth and scope; 3. In the stable stage, the number of studies reached its maximum and remained constant. Research methods evolved from qualitative and theoretical research to practical and quantitative research.

Keywords: Knowledge Graph; Citespace; Competition; Education

1. Introduction

The increasing popularity of higher education is an undeniable trend, resulting in an increasing number of students and teachers. However, due to China's primary stage of socialism, there are limited resources in the field of education, leading to intense competition. On July 24, 2021, the general office of the CPC Central Committee and the general office of the State Council issued Opinions on Further Reducing the Workload of Students' Homework and After-school Training at the Stage of Compulsory Education^[1]. On November 3, 2021, the State Administration of Market Regulation issued the Notice on the Control of Advertising for Off-campus Training^[2]. This study focuses on CNKI's database and analyses the number of collected literature and representative papers each year to explore the impact of China's research community on competition in education since the reform and opening up.

2. The Definition of Competition in Education

Competition in education refers to the competitive situation and activities formed between countries, schools, teachers, students, and students around issues such as investment, scale, speed, facilities, efficiency, quality, and efficiency in education. The initiative and upward performance of the educational subject reflect the inherent long-term phenomena within education, have incentive functions, and are sometimes influenced by external factors of education.^[3] The term "competition in education" as discussed in this study refers to a competitive mechanism or the occurrence of competition in the field of education, which may have both positive and negative effects. Fair competition in education can encourage students and educators alike to strive for excellence, resulting in better outcomes.

3. The Current Status of Research on Competition in Education

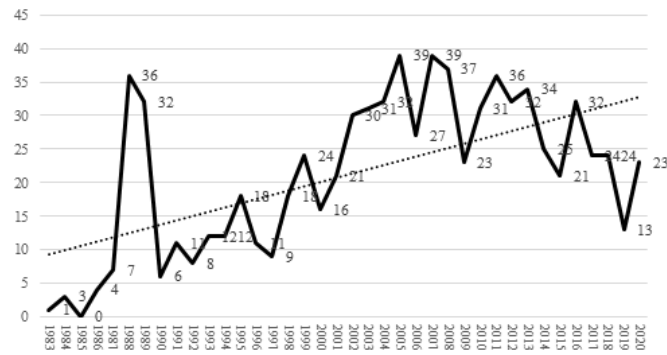


Figure 1 The number of papers on competition in education.

3.1 The Embryonic Stage (1983—1990)

Firstly, from 1986 to 1990, the number of studies on competition in education increased exponentially, reaching a maximum of 36 in 1988, an increase of 5.1 times compared to 1987. The “Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Education System Reform” issued on May 27, 1985, proposed that in response to the problem of government departments’ excessive control over education and the lack of vitality in education, it is necessary to start with the education system and carry out systematic reforms. Reform the management system, while strengthening macro management, resolutely implement streamlining administration and delegating power, and expand the autonomy of schools in running schools. [4]

In this policy context, there has been a significant increase in relevant research, introducing competition mechanisms into the field of education, and the characteristics of socialist competition in education have received widespread attention and discussion in the academic community. For example, Professor Du Zuorun^[5] proposed to cultivate or stimulate the competitive awareness of young people as a starting point, elaborating on the necessity of competition in education, and clarifying the difference between socialist competition and capitalist competition - competition under socialist conditions to encourage progress, spur backwardness, and promote the improvement of productivity.

From a macro perspective of international competition, Li Xinxing^[6] believes that competition in education is an inherent requirement for the talent competition and technology competition, and the development of the commodity economy naturally brings about competition in education. Therefore, the education management system should be reformed to adapt to the development of the commodity economy; Wang Li, guided by the one-sided pursuit of enrolment rate in ordinary middle schools, proposed the efficiency and fairness issues brought about by competition, and believed that improving efficiency should be the primary task in China’s overall low economic level.

3.2 The Developmental Stage (1991—2005)

Secondly, from 1990 to 2005, the number of studies on competition in education showed an increasing trend year by year, and reached its peak in 2005 (39 articles). On February 13, 1993, the State Council issued the “Outline of China’s Education Reform and Development”, which pointed out that with the establishment of China’s socialist market economy system and the acceleration of modernization construction, the education field needs to further adapt to the needs of society for talents. Therefore, in the 1990s, with the deepening of reforms in the economic, political, and technological systems, the reform of the education system should adopt a comprehensive and step-by-step approach, accelerate the pace, and establish a new education system that is compatible with the socialist market economic, political, and technological system reforms. [7]

Criticizing the negative effects of competition in education is also an important topic of research at this stage. As Cao Qingyang believes, with the intensification of international competition, education needs to undergo reforms in training objectives, basic education, and curriculum to adapt to the needs of this new situation; [8] Wang Enlai aims to change the one-sided pursuit of enrollment rate in competition in education, believing that the comprehensiveness and quantification of the evaluation mechanism are requirements of talent cultivation standards, and relying on the participation of evaluators from a wide range of sources to make its results credible. Wang Jingyu examined

the function of competition in education under exam-oriented education from a critical perspective, from cultivating people's core literacy to alienation to improving their exam ability. In order to seek ways to change, Wang Jingyu based on labor market theory believes that this phenomenon is mainly caused by the imbalance between education demand and supply, and proposes to expand the supply of education to promote education fairness, Weakening the segmentation of education into the labor market. ^[9]

3.3 The Stable Stage (2006--)

The number of studies has reached its peak (39), indicating that domestic scholars' attention to competition in education has remained stable. At the same time, the focus of research has shifted to reflecting on the issue of openness and transparency in the construction of competition systems and criticizing the phenomenon of "excessive" competition in education. Yang Liu summarized and reflected on the work of "reducing the burden" on students in China, believing that although the work of reducing the burden has a long history, the lack of communication between policy formulation and implementation agencies has led to inadequate policy implementation, and unclear responsibilities, resulting in the problem of "reducing burden more and more"; ^[10] Ding Yadong believes that as extracurricular tutoring has become a common educational phenomenon in China, students' academic burden has also increased. Based on the "ecosystem theory" used by Marcus B. Weaver Heightower, Ray Pawson, and Heather B. Weiss, the soil on which the phenomenon is rooted is analysed. Secondly, based on the understanding and choices of policies by different stakeholders, Translate policy texts into practical actions; To explore the effectiveness and shortcomings of government governance; Finally, explain the ecological environment system in which policies operate, the corresponding results, and emerging new situations of policies' passing through 'in different context contexts, and the evolution of the entire policy ecology over time.

4. Conclusion

Since the reform and opening up, the phenomenon of competition in education has become increasingly fierce, and the research methods for it have shown a shift from qualitative research to quantitative research; The research purpose of it has shown a shift from theoretical research to practical research. The study further found that the competition phenomenon in education has expanded from basic education to higher education, and this change is also closely related to educational policies. In short, theoretical research on the phenomenon of competition in education should continue to reveal its inherent laws and explain new issues in the contemporary educational context.

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