

# The Influences of China's Higher Education Expansion

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**Abstract:** This paper will analyse the impact of the expansion of higher education in China and suggest possible solutions to the problems of implementation in order to facilitate the long-term implementation of the policy. The paper will be divided into three parts. The first part will explore the academic experience of international students in China from the perspective of their experiences and identify some of the problems and challenges they may encounter. This will be followed by the second part which will analyse the possible causes of problems in intercultural learning. Finally, recommendations for improving the academic experience of international students in China will be made based on these influencing factors and in relation to the specific target population of this paper's research (international students in China).

**Keywords:** Chinese higher education; Education expansion; The influence of education expansion

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## Introduction

As evidenced by the data changes, the third wave of China's higher education expansion has a large and significant influence (Arrow, 1993). As a result, research into the third expansion is critical to higher education's development in China and the rest of the globe. While the government's expansion of higher education has good intentions, there are some gaps in political rhetoric and reality. Some studies suggest that if the curriculums does not match the market demand after the expansion of higher education, students may not be able to adapt to the needs of the society after graduation. In addition, many scholars point out that expansion does not reduce educational inequality caused by family economic differences (Collins, 2019). This essay will analyze the impact of the expansion of Higher education in China and propose possible solutions to the problems existing in the implementation, so as to promote the long-term implementation of the policy.

## 1. Rationale behind the higher education expansion

Higher education expansion has been studied by scholars from a variety of fields and perspectives, with the bulk of people search it from a social and economic standpoint. This paper will also discuss the rationale behind the higher education expansion from these two approaches.

### 1.1 The Economic perspective

The most normal economic theory used to justify educational expansion is human capital theory. By studying the link between education and economic development, several scholars claim that higher education may offer efficient human capital, improve productivity and stimulate economic development (Collins, 2019). From a macro and micro perspective, human capital specialists highlight the necessity of education growth in encouraging economic development. According to Dore (1976), training and skill-human capital-importantly have a considerable impact on personal income distributions. He also argued that "some enterprises, including non-human capital, have substantial capital ratios". It means that training inputs could be compensated financially (Jedell, 1931).

### 1.2 The Sociological Perspective

There are also diverse viewpoints on the expansion of higher education from a sociological aspect. Arrow (1973) claims that higher education is a source of personal and social liberty. While the reproduction school of thinking claims that all societies, particularly class societies, tend to replicate their constituent structures (Collins, 2019). They believe that no matter how far formal education expands, what its origins and objectives are, the ruling classes will often try to influence and constrain the

system in order to maintain their social advantage. According to Arrow's research (1973), the influence of family background increased rather than decreased as the overall number of educational possibilities increased. Maximum sustained inequality theory (MMI) points out that the upper classes, who benefit from increased economic, cultural, and social resources, will be the first to benefit from higher education expansion (Dore, 1976).

### **1.3 The Outcomes of Educational Expansion**

While governments and development organizations throughout the world debate the rise of education in many areas, it is widely believed to result in numerous good changes for both individuals and countries. There are some of the most widely held assumptions on the education expansion effects on economic and social development: 1) Expansion of education is critical for national economic success since better educated persons are more productive; 2) By facilitating social mobility, educational growth reduces social inequality within countries; 3) Educational expansion helps to lessen social inequality within countries by increasing social mobility (Dore, 1976). Most countries have boosted their expenditure in higher education in the expectation of these assumptions and other good effects from growth. This expansion has contributed to the growth of enrollment, broadening the range of people receiving higher education and satisfying the problems of a country's rapidly developing economy. However, empirical evidence may not too often support these assumptions. The influence of increased educational opportunities on economic expansion as well as social and economic inequality is still a much-discussed topic of debate. Limited expansion does not solve the problem of educational inequality (Jedell, 1931). Poorly controlled expansions are likely to result in more people being trained than employed for the job (Arrow, 1973). For example, in the United States, after the implementation in educational expansion, inequalities still exist between different educational institutions, different states. Some experts through their research find that educational expansion in Italy may have been more beneficial to the middle class and less beneficial to the poorer classes (Arrow, 1973). In addition, Dore (1976) notes that with the rapid increase in engineering students in German universities lead to overcrowding in engineering programs. Several German industry associations and other organizations have even publicly warned of this "over-education". The higher educational expansion in China since 1999 has largely based on this ideal assumption, while there are also some gaps in political rhetoric and reality. China's higher education expansion may have faced similar challenges in its implementation. In many ways, it's too early to make any conclusions about the impact of such a move, which will almost likely have long-term ramifications (Collins, 2019).

## **2. China's higher education expansion**

### **2.1 Objective and positive impact**

The growth of higher education in China, which began in 1999, was primarily aimed at increasing consumption following the Asian financial crisis of 1997. The government believe that higher education expansion will promote Infrastructure development and educational resource usage by students. It also can boost China's economic development and bring the country's economy out of its short-term rut. This is because the expansion of higher education has coincided with a reduction in government subsidies, and universities have started to charge more tuition fees. Since 1999 the government has not only increased university enrolment but also reduced financial support for education (Arrow, 1973). Colleges and universities began to charge tuition fees. While influenced by China's traditional Confucianism, most Chinese parents are willing to invest their own income in their children's education. These investments in education will have a direct impact on stimulating China's economy. Dore (1976) estimates that doubling the number of students could generate rmb10, 000 in tuition fees per student per year. This income could boost investment and consumption by about 1 trillion yuan, which would add at least 0. 5% to GDP. The government will be able to raise consumption and support the development of education-related enterprises by increasing university enrollment.

### **2.2 Issues and challenges**

#### **2.2.1 Economic perspective**

Although China's higher education expansion since 1999 has encouraged some high school graduates to pursue higher education, easing some of the pressure on the labor market, there are also some gaps in political rhetoric and reality. The expansion of higher education may result in more serious issues and challenges in the future. Arrow (1973) found that after the expansion of higher education, students may still be unable to find a job after graduation if the skills they learn in education do not match society. The expansion of China's higher education has not resulted in a large-scale readjustment of the old higher education system, which is mainly to enroll more students in the existing system. However, there are still some problems in the old education system. The foundation and structure of the higher education system are still not perfect. The rapid increase

in the number of students makes it difficult for many higher education institutions to flexibly respond to the growth and ensure that the curriculum is matched with the quality market demand and employment requirements.

## **2.2 The educational perspective**

Firstly, institutions of higher education play the role as preserving, developing, and reinterpreting a nation's rich cultural heritage. In addition, higher education could assist a nation in developing common ideals (Dore, 1976). Sound higher education institutions could also foster a favorable academic environment for thinkers, experimenters, inventors, professors, and students. However, since the Chinese government has approved higher education expansion as part of its economic revitalization plan since 1999, economic growth has been a significant feature of China's development throughout the 1990s. Much of education policy has been tailored to meet this primary demand. The debate over higher education expansion has been dominated by an economic perspective (Hauser & Featherman, 1978). The purpose of education seems to be limited only to producing a workforce that can serve the economy. While if education is used only as a means of employment screening, it will affect people's attitudes and motivation to participate in education and learning. This might cause increasingly people just focus on the economic benefits that education can bring and ignore the other functions of education. In this situation, promoting economic development might become the sole purpose of education (Hauser & Featherman, 1978).

It is significant concerned that these schools' educational quality might worsen. Dore (1976) points out that the rapid expansion of China's large-scale higher education makes it difficult to maintain high-quality input, such as the number of qualified faculty, curriculum development and project upgrading, laboratory facilities and library books, and teaching, research and student living conditions were not up to standard.

## **3. Conclusion and recommendations**

This paper summarizes the relevant literature of experts and scholars to conclude the rationale of higher education expansion, and then focuses on the purpose and influence of China's higher education expansion since 1999. This paper finds that although the expansion of higher education has promoted China's economic development to a certain extent and provided more people with the opportunity to receive higher education, there are still some problems in the fields of economy, society and education. If the educational curriculum does not match the market demand, college students may still be unable to find a suitable job after graduation.

This article suggests some possible ways to address these challenges. This may help graduates make the most of what they have learned in their future jobs, making a smooth transition from academia to the world of work and preparing them for rapid technological change and an unpredictable economic environment.

## **References**

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