

# **Migrant Children Education Equity Research - Based on the Cultural Reproduction Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

*Since the 1990s, the issue of migrant children education attracts the attention of the society from all sectors for a long time. With the deepening of the research and the continuous innovation of the policy, the current situation of migrant children's education has been improved obviously, but still faced with many problems such as hard to enter the public schools, lacking social support resources, excessive educational cost. Migrant children education problem is an economic problem, in this paper, under the perspective of cultural reproduction, in the view from migrant children and migrant children's family, to contemplate and analyze migrant children's compulsory education problem, puts forward some solutions.*

**Key words:** cultural reproduction; Migrant children; Compulsory education;

## 1. The definition and the basic situation of migrant children

Migrant children are those who live in the townships that different from the registered permanent residence more than half a year, not including separation of registered and actual residence in the municipal district, and the population age under 18 years.

In 2015, China's urbanization rate has reached 56.1% [1], the population of migrants reached 292 million, the number of migrant children reached more than 3 million, and will continue to increase year by year in a certain period of time. Most migrant children are from the countryside, the household register for agricultural registered permanent residence of the migrant children accounted for 80.35%. Along with the advancement of our country education fair policy, more and more migrant children can enjoy the same education as in urban school. But for migrant children, the quality of family education, which is the most important source of off-campus influence, is directly related to whether they can truly enjoy a fair and high quality education. Such as American educator James Coleman puts it, "The relative strength of coherent school impact and differential out-of-school influence determines the effectiveness of the educational system in providing equal opportunity" [2].

## 2. The origin of the culture reproduction theory and basic view

Cultural reproduction theory was introduced in the middle of the 20th century, and it has great significance and influence in the social development. French contemporary famous litterateur, a sociologist Pierre Bourdieu puts forward the cultural reproduction theory in the 1980s, the theory is that: education has the function of the reproduction of cultural capital, so as to realize the social reproduction. School education dose not wipe out the social inequality, but reproduce social inequality in such a way of "genetic" production, and make this unfairness legitimate and permanent, the "genetic" here means the fitting problem between the internal family culture and the elite education culture. He stressed the importance of "cultural" process in maintaining existing social and economic structure. Now in China, obvious social stratum consciousness and high cost and system defects make it difficult for migrant children to accept fair compulsory education. In school education period, the cultural barriers begin to function, thereby blocking the path of the lower class to upper class flow, here, the role of cultural capital in the social mobility is very obvious.

## 3. The relying point of the theory of cultural reproduction in the equity of migrant children's education

Since the 1990s, with the deepening of the reform and opening up, the trend of Chinese social economy developed rapidly, at the same time, influenced by the development of the dual economic structure, given priority to the city's regional economic development, and the demand for human resources is also unprecedented vigorous, thus appeared the largest migrant population ever, amounts of migrant children supervened. Most children came to city before school age, and quite a few have settled down with their parents, which constitute the second-generation immigrants of the city in a matter of fact. But the official is defined them as a "migrant population" rather than "the city new immigrants" so they were unable to acquire the local identity or citizen rights of citizenship. This kind of appellation represents the reality, It's not normal for them to obtain the essential public services such as public education and health care. Due to the current household registration system and exclusion of local government, they were unable to enjoy the rights of education, the road to study runs rugged. Migrant children education problem not only damaged the principle of fairness of education, but also more adverse to long-term development and social stability of Chinese education career.

### 3.1 Family status and education level

It is generally believed that the childhood intelligence level has the greatest influence on children's education level, the effect of family background on the degree of education is only in intelligence. In fact, the influence of family social and economic status on education level and years of schooling is still very significant, cultural capital are of great help for children's successful transformation in the processes of senior middle school entrance, high school entrance and university entrance, cultural capital can realize the intergenerational transmission of family dominant position."Social origin determined people's future in learning mainly through the initial orientation in advance, generated different possibility in series of schooling and the success or failure of the different choices. The structure of the survivors are keep changing with the dominate limitation standard, the result gradually weaken the relationship between social birth and language ability (or other indicators in learning success)."[3]The status of the migrant children's family are relatively low in common, and the vulnerable groups in urban, migrant children's parents are usually engaged in physical labor work, or business activities with low content of knowledge, technology, and have larger liquidity generally. Major migrant population generally engaged in work with high strength, low pay, long hours, unstable nature, poor salary, low welfare treatment, even quite a number of migrant children parents have no formal job or stable source of income for a long time. That circumstance is full of negative effects on the migrant children's growth. Social origin not only can affect education achievement, but also can affect the professional accomplishment after education completion. Children from different families will have different cost-benefit assessment of their own education in the future, compared to children in the families background at an advantage, migrant children are in adversity and faced with higher risk and the cost of failure.

### 3.2 Parents education level and economic effect

The weighted average of parents income, profession and education degree can reflect social-economic background. The generational transitive relation of the educational degree is obvious, especially, when educational level and income levels in the same direction, the influence is much bigger. Among them, the influence of parents' educational degree is greater than their income. Parents' educational degree in a certain extent determines their awareness of the importance of education, and the expectations for their children's educational achievement, and the highly educated parents hope their children will also be able to accept a higher education, even more than themselves. In the process of educating their children, they also tend to be more scientific and rational, guiding their children to select school and choose a major professionally, as well as their future career orientation and planning, and show a greater role and a deeper participation. One of the immediate effects of low levels of parental education is that they do not have a clear idea of the child's exact state of learning and lack the ability to mentor the child's learning. The educational level of migrant children's parents is relatively low, the educational degree in the junior middle school to high school accounted for a large proportion, Compared with the nuanced observation and guidance for the children's study of parents from the upper middle-class family, migrant children's parents to help their children is too little. [4] Parents are the first teachers of their children, its important role as much as school education, and even in some cases greater than school education, so parents of education directly determines the level of quality of migrant children's family education, but also directly affect the way of education for children.

### **3.3 The possibility of children's social status transformation in the future.**

No matter how other social conditions work, the effect of parental education and ability on children's education is still relatively remarkable. Therefore, does education deepen inequality in distribution or ease inequality in distribution? In theory, the general increase in education degree is conducive to the relative migration and mobility of social status of individuals. But Marx once pointed out that productive relations under certain conditions will be rigid as the shackles of productivity. Similarly, when productive relations become rigid, the other social relations that are closely related with productive relations will be also rigid. Of course, the social impact of the effectiveness of education cannot be separated from the social system, economic basis and other specific circumstances. But in countries with class antagonism, hierarchy, and rigid social relations, educational differences in contributing to social status is minimal.

Migrant children in the stage of compulsory education accept the compulsory education in the city, which often is the beginning of a re-socialization. On the one hand, they accept the new education content are systems about relatively unfamiliar symbols, language is taught in books and class came mainly from the urban culture, and in their previous life, the use of the language in their environment are often very different. On the other hand, they have been following their parents with socialization in another cultural context, and they agree with the rural culture advocated value system and behavioral norms and in daily life to practice these norms, but when the migrant children accept the city education, the school is based on educational philosophy of urban cultural, because there is a big difference between the city culture and rural culture, so these children need to re-learn the new code of conduct and values to adapt to the school's education. Such cases, when migrant children enter into the new life and new education environment, they are faced with much psychological pressures. Migrant children follow their parents to work and live in a new environment. Compared with urban residents, their external may not see too much of a difference, but migrant children are at the most rapid physical and mental development period, and it's the time that the information and stimulation of the outside world are the most sensitive to the greatest impact on their growth of life time. Although cities give them an environment and opportunity to create and improve the quality of their life, they lack the most important identity. Especially in the stage of compulsory education, discriminatory treatment to children in different status, which damages the principle of fairness education, but also virtually hurt the mentality of migrant children, and narrow the opportunity that migrant children accept higher education in the future. Stagnating the possibility of the social mobility of migrant children.

### **4. Optimization of Migrant Children's Education from the Perspective of Cultural Reproduction**

From the point of view of neo-Marxist educational sociology, education is, after all, a tool for cultural reproduction and a place for various cultural conflicts. Cultural conflicts in the field of education may lead to the change of this cultural phenomenon. [5] From the theory of cultural reproduction, we can see that the educational background, social status, economic background, living conditions, family cultural capital status of migrant population constitute the basic conditions of their children's compulsory education stage. Migrant children and local students in the city not only in the school's learning and teaching environment are different, and in family-related projects there are also significant differences. It can be seen that the formation of family cultural capital and the influence of school education, and their field play an important role in the education of migrant children.

#### **4.1 Carry out and implement the new education policy**

With the constant innovation of national policies and the constant clarity of local government responsibilities, some cities and regions have relatively relaxed restrictions on the migrant children to school, so that the contradiction has eased. However, these measures mainly place migrant children on the edge of urban education, and quality education in urban centers has nothing to do with migrant children. When the public schools are open to migrant children in compulsory education, they must also formulate complementary systems and policies. Otherwise, even if the public schools in urban areas have loosened their restrictions on attendance for migrant children at compulsory stage, they will have to face more difficulties after compulsory education. Otherwise, even if the public schools in urban areas have loosened their restrictions on attendance for migrant children at compulsory stage, they will have to face more difficulties after compulsory education. With structural factors of the college entrance examination system, flow or stay will become their dilemma, which makes migrant children's education has a strong instability and discontinuity. [6]

The current educational system and educational policy have made progress and improvement on the education of migrant children, but the lack of many concrete detailed rules for the implementation and operational plans, lack of validity and operation, and blurred responsibility subject and boundary, so it is difficult implementation. To solve the prevalent binary division of urban and rural areas and strict household registration system is the root cause of migrant children to obtain educational equity, At the national level, it is necessary to enact the Law on Discrimination against Education and the Law on Compulsory Education for Migrant Children as soon as possible to provide equal rights access to education for migrant children in a systematic, comprehensive and specific manner All localities should also establish and improve local laws and regulations on compulsory education for migrant children, in particular the corresponding reward and punishment system, pay attention to the specific implementation of the obligations stipulated by law, and ensure the implementation of the rights and interests of migrant children.

#### **4.2 The joint construction of schools for children of migrant workers and public schools**

The aim of the school is to provide better services to migrant children and provide fair, effective and high quality compulsory education products and services for migrant children. However, nowadays many migrant schools are gradually evolved tools for fundraising and business competition, the developing mode of deformity deviated from the basic concept of education. On the other hand, these schools exist many problems, such as, hardware backwardness, poor teaching conditions, lack of teaching experience teachers, low wages and other issues, with a huge difference in teaching conditions of public schools. While on the one hand, the existence of the migrant schools is the dominant class division logo, but on the other hand, in view of our country at present the size of the migrant children and public schools for migrant children's absorption capacity is very limited, so blind rejection or even cancel the peasant-worker' children school is not a feasible option. Government can gradually standardize the behavior on the running schools, appropriate to reduce the standard, so that some migrant schools that guaranteed educational quality can be legitimate school, and make rational classification, rational banning, merging and support.[7]City public schools has many inherent advantages, urban public schools should be one-to-one support for migrant schools to achieve quality education resources sharing, such as public school teachers in the form of group on a regular job rotation to migrant schools to help teaching. Government make relevant policies to guide, and to reward the migrant

schools that have a big improvement and urban public schools that make huge contributions, and record the projects and participate in the year-end school recommendation, encourage school joint development.

### **4.3 To strengthen the guidance of parents of migrant children**

Family is the first step of children's accumulation and inheritance of cultural capital. Parents' awareness and importance of education, as well as their educational level, have obvious influence on children's education. Precious academic progress is self-development, become more appeared in the 16th to the age 30. As for the training, the most important content is 12 years ago by the mother ear to mention life. [8] As a result, the government and various non-governmental organizations should set up relevant education and training institutions, to strengthen the propaganda and set up the migrant children parents awareness that continue to learning and lifelong learning, to promote the migrant children family cultural capital accumulation, the improvement of the rituals and ascension, and field. Migrant children parents need to know, the improvement of their own cultural level is not only beneficial to the chance of employment and the expansion of employment, promote the improvement of the family economic conditions, more conducive to improve their children's education degree, cultural capital accumulation, and migration to the upper society. The government and society should help migrant families to change the economic situation, raise wages, improve living conditions, organize and cultivate the skills of parents of migrant children, encourage their own businesses, and give policy and economic support.

### **4.4 Improve the state of migrant children**

Our society should enhance of migrant children's care, especially the understanding of the spiritual demand and support to improve, rather than in the past only stay with the help of the material. Help to build a new consciousness of urban residents, in order to correct mentality health education into the urban social life and city system, reduce to a variety of dominant or recessive, giving them like children proper treatment. For migrant children, the city is not their temporary residence, but their growth and development in the future, can retreat to their hometown for these kids have already disappeared, the city is where they are familiar with, and the pursuit of life. Under the action of production mode in the class, they become the new generation of migrant workers, but gradually rising power consciousness that they won't like their parents willingly bear squeeze. Keep a certain class of liquidity is necessary for social sustainable development, help migrant children to set up the new urban residents awareness and positive change in consciousness, improve the migrant children's own problem, the solution to the migrant children compulsory education is the endogenous power.

Solve the problem of current children's compulsory education phase lags, migrant children education is the social and economic development of our country unexplored power, is a human resources with great potential. They should be same as urban children are considered being treated fairly, migrant children belong to the social vulnerable groups, and the civilization degree of a country depends on the extent of the vulnerable groups is treat. Only the whole society to work together to solve the problem of migrant children compulsory education, to implement the education fair question, to improve the quality of the future in our country, really realize a harmonious society.

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