

Manifestations, Causes and Relief of Modern Educational Anxiety

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Abstract: As the need for talent and the corresponding ability to improve it becomes more and more urgent in modern society, education has completed a shift from the simple transfer of knowledge to a key tool for fostering creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability. However, this transformation has also brought about a series of new challenges, the most prominent of which are the phenomena of educational anxiety and involution. This paper provides a theoretical analysis and elaboration of the data collected on the causes of educational anxiety and the dialectical view of educational anxiety as well as the corresponding measures to address it. It is found that educational anxiety mainly comes from parents' deviation in educational expectations and unidirectional pursuit of educational targets, the contradiction between unlimited educational competition and limited educational resources, and social transformation and development. The corresponding solutions are that parents should take a dialectical view of education anxiety and set up a correct view of education; education-related bodies should promote the reform of the education evaluation system to promote the all-round development of students; and government departments should create a favorable environment for education and improve the family education guidance service system. The current education should focus on individual students, get rid of utilitarianism as the mainstream of test-based education, promote diversified quality education practices, and maximize the relief of parents' educational anxiety.

Keywords: Educational anxiety, education involution, educational competition, educational resources

1. Introduction

With the arrival of the era of globalization and the rapid spread of online education, the need for talent and the corresponding increase in requirements in modern society is becoming more and more urgent, and these changes have brought about a shocking impact on the traditional concept of education, which is a source of growing concern. In this fast-changing environment, education is no longer just about knowledge transfer; it has become a key tool for fostering creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability to meet the evolving needs of society and the workplace. However, this shift has also brought about a new set of challenges, the most prominent of which are the phenomena of educational anxiety and involution. And these two phenomena have become social issues that have sparked widespread concern and deep worry in modern society. According to American clinical psychologist Albert Ellis, anxiety is an excessive worry about potential future threats and an irrational fear of them

and is often accompanied by physiological complaints. This observation highlights the nature of anxiety, which is that it is an emotional response, usually involving worry and fear about the future, often accompanied by physical and emotional distress. However, educational anxiety is not a problem that can be traditionally defined by psychology but is an emerging issue due to social development and the evolution of the modern education system. Currently, studies and reports on educational anxiety focus on parental anxiety, which is usually the concern of parents about whether or not their children's education has been effectively transformed, and whether or not their prospects and quality of life can be enhanced through education. This anxiety is not limited to parents, but extends to students as well, especially in the face of a competitive academic environment where students feel overstimulated and pressurized, with consequences for their learning experience and mental health. At the same time, an internalized education system exacerbates social inequalities. Involvement means that education is no longer just about the acquisition of knowledge and personal growth, but is seen as a competitive tool, leading individuals into a vicious circle of constant competition, and the original purpose of education is gradually being ignored. By analyzing these issues in depth, it is possible to better understand the challenges facing today's education system and how to build an educational environment that is more inclusive and beneficial to every student. This paper will delve into the phenomenon of involution in modern education and the educational anxiety based on the status quo of involution, analyze the reasons for its formation, and attempt to answer the following four questions: Pathways of educational anxiety, a dialectical view of the effects of educational anxiety, ways to alleviate educational anxiety from its roots, and measures that can be taken in the face of educational anxiety.

2. The Current Situation and the Path of Educational Anxiety

As the relationship between the Internet and everyone turns out to be closer and closer, the things it reflects are also more and more contemporary, education anxiety is reflected in some of the Internet buzzwords and can be a better feedback on the state of anxiety and the reasons for it. Under the rapid change of high-frequency words on the Internet, a series of words ranging from "inner volume" to "lie flat" to "run" all reflect how the general environment of education is nowadays. Many students are unable to obtain relatively satisfactory results after they have invested a lot of time and energy in learning, that is, they are unable to obtain a sense of achievement and recognition in their academic life, which triggers continuous anxiety and worry in some students, and in the long run, not a few students chose to "lie down" and give up their internal papers, and the situation has triggered the anxiety of parents. The situation has also caused parental anxiety, and its influence has gradually expanded, becoming a common social phenomenon.

The 2018 National Survey of the State of Family Education report identified several problems. One is the high parental grade expectations felt by children. More than 90% of fourth- and eighth-grade students indicated that their parents had set certain grade expectations for their grades [1]. 96.2% of fourth-graders and 95.8% of eighth-graders reported that their parents expected them to be at least "middle of the class," while only 3.8% of fourth-graders and 4.2% of eighth-graders reported that their parents expected them to be "as high as they can get [1]. Only 3.8% of fourth graders and 4.2% of eighth graders reported that their parents' expectation of their grades was "to get as high as I can" [1]. Secondly, classroom teachers believe that parents are most concerned about their children's performance. It is found that about 90% of the fourth and eighth-grade classroom teachers believe that parents are most concerned about their children's test scores, with the proportion of 88.3% and 90.1% respectively, which is significantly higher than that of other aspects of the student's performance, and the percentage of parents who are most concerned about their children's performance is higher than that of parents who are most concerned about their children's performance [1]. The percentage is 88.3% and 90.1% respectively, which is significantly higher than the concern

for other aspects of the students, and the concern for "learning interest" is lower [1]. This shows that parents put more emphasis on academic performance than on discovering their children's interest in learning and stimulating their initiative. Albert Einstein once said that "interest is the best teacher", parents should not overlook the impact of interest on learning while focusing on their children's academic performance.

Nowadays, the overall market valuation of off-campus education training courses is as high as 87 billion yuan, and "for every 1% increase in household income, the marginal investment in education for urban and rural families increases by 1.1% and 1.48% respectively", this behavior is extremely common in the case of the education environment is rolled up, and parents are more inclined to invest in their children's learning, without realizing that such expenses do not necessarily grow their children's paper scores, but instead tend to add to parental concerns because the returns are lower than expected, as well as to students' low self-esteem, guilt, and insecurity when confronted with their grades [2]. This phenomenon is widespread, so both children in education or parents responsible for investment in education will hold the psychological "no progress or retreat" and will continue to study the "internal scroll", thus triggering a new round of educational anxiety, forming a vicious circle.

3. Causes of Educational Anxiety

3.1. Parental Perspective: Educational Expectation Bias and the Unidirectional Pursuit of Education

Parents' educational anxiety due to deviation in educational expectations has led to the "scores-only theory". Parental expectation bias in education means that parents, under the influence of traditional concepts have formed utilitarian values in education. Education has been "entrusted" with important responsibilities, and linked to the success of career, social status, and improvement of living conditions and other external conditions, and has become a tool for people to pursue interests. Parents hope that their children can have a better life, and then with the concept of "education changes life", they do their best to create a favorable learning environment for students' education and provide abundant educational resources, so they have high expectations for their children's learning results, and when their children's performance is unsatisfactory, the parents will have a great deal of anxiety about education, and they will be at a loss as to what to do and continue to do [3]. They will be at a loss and continue to invest more [3]. The deviation arising from the above utilitarian expectations of education and the reality of educational outcomes will then aggravate educational anxiety.

Slogans such as "education are your only way out" reflect the fact that everyone in society nowadays has a "score-only theory". The idea of "only the theory of scores" has invariably led to anxiety about education. Parents to improve their children's test scores, constantly increase the children's burden of learning and even make the whole family forced to be "involved" in the "scores first" predicament [4].

Parents only focus on the student's academic performance, the mode of thinking is nailed to the wall of the test, ignoring the growth of the student's all-round development; trying to magnify the value of the academic performance, but ignore the future into the community need to have the ability and quality, and when the test mentality of all people, the education system will be affected. And the objective reason for such a phenomenon is the existence of universal pressure to go to school in China.2021 The main results of the 2020 national education statistics released by the Ministry of Education show that in 2020, the country's primary school graduates 16,403,293,000 people, junior high school enrollment 16,321,000 people, graduates 15,352,900 people, ordinary high school enrollment 8,764,400 people, graduates 7,865,300, and general undergraduate enrolment of 4,431,200 [5]. According to this calculation, only about half of the junior high school students can enter general senior high schools, and only half of the general senior high school students can enter

general undergraduate programs [5]. If the starting point of the calculation is shifted to primary schools, less than one-third of the primary school students can enter general undergraduate programs at last, and the remaining nearly three-quarters of the students are "eliminated" in the process of further education in this involution [5]. Under such a harsh social environment, the unidirectional pursuit of education indicators seems to be the cause of parents' anxiety about education.

3.2. Institutional Perspective: Conflict Between Educational Competition and Education Resources

In today's China, if the promotion-oriented education evaluation system is the root of family education anxiety, then the contradiction between unlimited educational competition and limited educational resources is the direct cause of family education anxiety.

In recent years, all kinds of large and small educational training institutions have taken root in the education market like bamboo shoots, and the survey report released by the China Education Association in 2016 showed that 2016, there were 180 million primary and secondary schools in China, and there were more than 137 million primary and secondary extracurricular tutoring students, and the market scale of primary and secondary school tutoring institutions has exceeded 800 billion yuan[7]. It is due to the unequal supply and demand of educational resources and the internal selection of the advantages and disadvantages of resources that training institutions occupy an extremely high market share in the education industry [7]. In order not to let their children lose at the starting line, parents are willing to find a good helper for their students in addition to the equivalent school education [7]. The exaggerated publicity of some training institutions and the success stories around them have made parents feel uneasy about the status quo of further studies and created educational anxiety [7]. Many parents come to the school to consolidate the basic knowledge of ordinary students and improve the classes of the more outstanding students, and in this way, the educational institutions achieve the goal of fame and fortune.

The poor order of competition in education has led to schooling becoming a knockout competition for promotion, and students with poorer grades will slowly be eliminated from the game because they are not provided with better quality education resources [3]. In addition, exaggerated publicity in the public media has also fuelled public anxiety about education.

3.3. Social Perspective: Trends in Social Transformation

From ancient times to the present day, China has always used the educational examination system to select talents. Whether it is the ancient imperial examination system or the present-day college entrance examination system, education has always been a key way to achieve social class mobility [8]. With the transformation and development of society, modern society is no longer bound by insurmountable social class restrictions as in ancient times. Nowadays, society is more orientated to the individual's ability, and knowledge, skills, and comprehensive quality have become the key factors determining the individual's social status and quality of life [3]. Schooling plays an important role in this process, and education has gradually become the "knocking brick" for the working class and the poor to leap to the next level [3]. People no longer want to learn simply to acquire knowledge and improve themselves but see learning as a bargaining chip: the good marks they get from learning now can be exchanged for qualifications, diplomas, a better life, and so on in the future. This will be the meaning of learning objectification; reading is not for their reading. Inevitably, however, this situation has led to a violent involution and has triggered widespread educational anxiety [3].

4. Out of Educational Anxiety, Reconstructing the Educational Ecology

4.1. Dialectical Perspectives on Educational Anxiety: The Search for a Rationality Interval

Educational anxiety is not an entirely negative emotion, it just exists in today's society as a state of overload, which has some justification in itself. At the educational stage, educational anxiety should be viewed dialectically. A certain amount of educational anxiety can contribute to a child's learning and parents' understanding of their child's learning situation.

But for the most part, first of all, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "the family is the first school of life, parents are the first teacher of children, to give children a good 'first lesson in life', to help buckle up the first button of life [9]." As the child's first teacher, parents should, on the one hand, improve their awareness of quality education, master the scientific methods of family education, set up the correct concept of education, and abandon the utilitarian values of education; secondly, parents should strive to maintain rational thinking on the issue of children's education, understand that each child is an independent individual, reduce the occurrence of useless peer comparison and herd behavior, and give children appropriate educational opportunities according to the child's personality and their level of development [9]. In today's competitive pressure of test-based education, parents should learn to take the best and discard the dregs from both Chinese and Western education methods, and choose the education method that suits the child's physical and mental development according to the child's characteristics and interests. Specific problems should be analyzed, and the educational planning of children should be based on the principle of "everyone has talent and should be guided by it, and everyone should become successful", and at the same time pay attention to the cultivation of moral qualities as well as the establishment of a correct outlook on the three; once again, parents should prevent the cart from being put before the horse, and avoid imposing their expectations and ideas on their children. They should strike a reasonable balance between success and happiness in education. Respect for the law of growth of the child, can not be rushed, quantitative changes cause qualitative changes, and "pulling up seedlings to grow" will only aggravate their anxiety, but also may cause the child's boredom [10].

Lastly, it is important to realize that the essence of education is to educate people, and to make "becoming an adult" rather than "becoming a talent" the main purpose of family education, to cultivate children who are physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy and have a sound personality, and to promote the all-round development of human beings [10]. Helping parents to face up to their educational motives. Only when parents face up to their full educational motives for their children will their anxiety be within a manageable range [11]. In addition, parents should also set an example. Parents are the best teachers for their children, setting an example for their children and making progress and growing up together with them.

Educational anxiety should be viewed correctly so that, on the one hand, it is kept within reasonable limits and appropriate anxiety is used to promote educational development. On the other hand, education aims to ensure harmonious development and ease educational anxiety, thus forming a virtuous cycle.

4.2. The Construction of a Multiple Evaluation System: A Struggle Against Educational Anxiety

In October 2020, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Overall Programme for Deepening Educational Evaluation Reform in the New Era", which proposes to "reverse the unscientific orientation of educational evaluation, resolutely overcome the persistent and chronic problem of scores-only " and reform the school evaluation, which is the first time that a new concept, new ideas and new programs of educational evaluation are

systematically proposed [12]. This is the first time that a new concept, a new idea, and a new program of educational evaluation have been put forward systematically. At present, the reality of education in the examination is simply equivalent to the evaluation of the phenomenon is not uncommon, therefore, improving the examination and evaluation mechanism and promotion evaluation system in the advocacy of quality education is particularly important.

First of all, the main body of education related to setting up a reasonable concept of examination evaluation, changing the score of the supremacy of a single indicator evaluation guide, weakening the role of competition in education, in the context of quality education, and the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, the evaluation of education oriented to the promotion of students' moral, intellectual, physical, social, aesthetic and labor all-round development of the right track, really play the evaluation of the Second, promote the examination and selection system [3]. Secondly, the reform of the examination and selection system should be promoted to change the examination and selection mechanism of "one examination for life", advocate the diversification of examination and evaluation contents, and build an evaluation system that comprehensively examines morality, intelligence, physicality, aesthetics, and labor, to promote the all-round development of students [3]. Once again, to innovate the examination proposition, weaken the role of test-taking skills and, to a certain extent, reduce the parents and students on the subject of off-campus training institutions, really weakening the parents of the demand for off-campus training [13]. Finally, in the way of proposing questions, change the relatively patterned test question form, increase the number of real-life application scenarios related to the test questions, increase the number of questions that can reflect the students' thinking ability and comprehensive quality of questions, reduce the rote memorization, the sea of questions tactics can be achieved through excellent results of the assessment, to achieve the purpose of detecting the students' ability in all aspects [13].

Schools should call for the establishment of a correct concept of education and the concept of success, but also pay more attention to the individual characteristics of students, to promote the all-round development of students in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, so that the flower becomes a flower, so that the tree becomes a tree. Ordinary colleges and universities can cooperate with key colleges and universities to make full use of the high-quality educational resources of famous schools to carry out teaching and learning activities; vigorously develop "Internet + education", breaking the time and space constraints through online education, constantly narrowing the education gap with famous schools, thereby alleviating the educational anxiety of families [3]. At the social level, the guidance and control of public opinion should be strengthened to eliminate propaganda slogans that exaggerate the function of education and exaggerate educational anxiety, open libraries, museums, and other cultural venues free of charge to young people, and help students find their interests by organizing knowledge lectures and public welfare activities [8]. To improve the family education guidance service system, government departments should take the lead in setting up special family education guidance service agencies to provide parents with personalized guidance in a scientific manner and to allow teachers in schools to provide education counseling and make regular return visits [8]. Through "home-school-society" collaborative parenting and a true understanding of their children's learning situation, they can reduce educational anxiety, establish a scientific concept of education, pay attention to their children's physical and mental health, and enhance the sense of well-being and harmony in the family. In terms of policy, the introduction and implementation of China's "double-decrease" policy and the reform of the education evaluation system have promoted the balanced distribution of high-quality education resources, broken down the rules and regulations of score-only and promotion-only evaluation methods, and promoted the diversification of evaluation standards, the plurality of evaluation subjects, and the modernization of evaluation methods, to encourage excellence for all [14].

5. Conclusions

From the previous discussion, it can be learned that the source of educational anxiety mainly comes from the deviation of parents' educational expectations and the unidirectional pursuit of educational indexes, as well as the contradiction between unlimited educational competition and limited educational resources, and the social transformation and development. In the face of these causes of educational anxiety, current education should pay attention to the characteristics of individuals, get rid of the utilitarianism dominated by exam-based education, reduce the educational burden of students through quality education, and alleviate the educational anxiety of students and parents. The national policy direction should promote quality education from various aspects, including society, schools, and families so that quality education with diversified development can be put into practice. This will help to raise the educational level and personal qualities and abilities of all people, provide a solid foundation for each student's academic performance and personal growth, and alleviate parents' educational anxiety to the greatest extent possible.

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