

Research on Gender Differences and Gender Discrimination in Chinese Education

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Abstract: This research study investigates the issue of gender differences and gender discrimination in the education system of China. Despite advancements in gender equality, subtle forms of bias and discrimination continue to affect students' academic achievements and career prospects. The study aims to examine the extent of gender-based disparities in educational opportunities, outcomes, and experiences among students in China, as well as explore the underlying factors contributing to these disparities. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing surveys, academic records analysis, interviews, and focus group discussions. The research findings reveal the presence of gender differences and bias in various aspects of Chinese education. Female students face challenges in accessing higher education and leadership positions, while encountering discrimination that affects their self-esteem, academic choices, and career aspirations. Male students experience stereotyping and pressure to conform to traditional masculine roles, limiting their potential in non-traditional fields. Addressing these issues requires policy reforms, awareness campaigns, and targeted support for marginalized students. Efforts to promote equal access, challenge gender stereotypes, and foster inclusive educational environments are crucial for a more equitable and empowering educational landscape in China.

Keywords: gender differences, gender discrimination, Chinese education

1. Introduction

The Chinese education system, being one of the largest in the world, has undergone significant development and progress in recent decades. Despite these advancements, challenges surrounding gender differences and gender discrimination persist within the system. Education is widely recognized as a crucial factor for societal progress and individual growth in China. However, gender disparities and biases continue to exist, impacting students' educational opportunities, outcomes, and experiences.

In China, gender differences manifest in various aspects of education. Firstly, there are obstacles and limitations that hinder women's access to higher education and career development, despite their academic achievements. Gender discrimination and stereotypes contribute to the under representation of women in leadership positions and fields traditionally associated with science and technology. Additionally, male students face societal expectations and stereotypes related to traditional masculine roles, constraining their options in non-traditional fields.

This study aims to investigate gender differences and gender discrimination within the Chinese education system comprehensively. By analyzing data on educational opportunities, academic achievements, and student experiences, this research seeks to reveal the extent of gender disparities and examine the underlying factors that contribute to these disparities. Additionally, the study will evaluate the impact of gender discrimination on students' educational and career trajectories.

Understanding and addressing these gender disparities and discrimination issues are of paramount importance for promoting gender equality and fostering an inclusive and fair educational environment. Findings from this study will not only contribute to the scholarly understanding of gender issues in education but also provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to implement necessary reforms and create an equitable education system that empowers all students.

2. Influencing Factors

2.1. Deeply Ingrained Traditional Beliefs

Chinese girls are instilled with the belief from an early age by their parents that males are naturally more intelligent than females, and that they dominate high-end industries. In traditional Chinese education, there is a prevalent mindset of "favoring boys over girls". This mindset considers males to be more valuable, authoritative, and capable than females. As a result, males are expected to become important figures in continuing the family lineage and bear the responsibility of continuing the family's bloodline and wealth. In contrast, females are seen as more suitable for family and marital roles, with their main goal expected to be getting married and having children.[1] Particularly among the older generation of grandparents, they may even prevent their granddaughters from obtaining the right to education, claiming that it is a waste of money. [2] This situation undoubtedly deepens the inequality between males and females in terms of access to education and knowledge.[3]

2.2. Discrimination Against Female Employment

Based on these deeply ingrained and long-standing influences, males are also given higher expectations in the workplace, leading to discrimination against female employment in the market. The employment rate for women has consistently remained at a disadvantageous level. From the perspective of male workers, they are also subtly influenced by these biases, resulting in an increasing gender gap and discrimination between males and females. In the workplace, there is not only gender opposition among workers, but companies also exhibit bias when selecting employees. They tend to assign high-paying positions to male workers, believing that they are more decisive and suitable for leadership roles. Conversely, female workers are considered more emotional and are expected to bear children, which becomes a major reason for many companies to exclude female workers. [1]

2.3. Lower Expectations and an Emphasis on Family Life

In traditional education, men often receive more learning opportunities and support, and are encouraged to pursue higher academic and career achievements. Women, on the other hand, face lower expectations and an emphasis on family life. If people with stereotypes are leaders of an organization, this problem will be more difficult to solve because the leader's beliefs will be subtly transmitted to managers and employees. For example, in schools, school leaders may allocate different resources to students of different genders. Teachers tend to provide educational resources in subjects such as mathematics and science (STEM) to male students, believing that they are more likely to succeed.[4][5] Teachers, influenced by this bias, may also focus more on male students, exacerbating gender inequality in education. Another decisive factor is that women naturally have less physical strength than men. They are often considered to have no advantage in sports, especially

in the sports industry. Women are not encouraged to participate in sports from a young age, which leads to undiscovered potential athletic talents. [6] For example, if the diving coach had not discovered the highly talented Quan Hongchan from Guangdong, China, the country would have lost an important young Olympic athlete.

2.4. Serious Gender Divide on Social Media

There is also a serious gender divide on social media, where derogatory, insulting, or discriminatory comments about specific genders often appear. Because social media does not have barriers, people from all walks of life have the opportunity to express their opinions. Low-quality individuals often mock others for their shortcomings or areas of weakness. For example, men may verbally attack overweight women or women with unattractive appearances. Similarly, when women perform poorly in a certain field, others may bring up stereotypes and say, "I knew women couldn't do it." Conversely, women may also mock men's emotional expressions and way of speaking. With a large number of users, social media naturally forms a vast information network, where stereotypes about men and women are often spread. For example, men are defined as strong, rational, and powerful, while women are defined as weak, emotional, and dependent. With the support of "marketing accounts," exposure of gender discrimination behaviors is maliciously modified, such as sexual harassment and gender-based violence. These exposures have sparked discussions and controversies about gender inequality, further exacerbating the portrayal of stereotypes and intensifying gender discrimination and differences.[7]

2.5. Policies May Have Gender Biases

Policies in this regard can also have corresponding impacts. Some social security and welfare policies may have gender biases in their design and implementation. For example, certain regions may provide less support for women's maternity leave and childcare leave, not offering paid leave or other support, which may pose greater challenges for women in their career development.[1] The impact of policies on the division of family and household labor can also exacerbate gender differences. [8] If the policies in a certain region fail to provide support and encouragement for men to participate in household chores and childcare responsibilities, women may bear a greater burden of household work, limiting their opportunities for development in other areas.

3. Suggestion

3.1. Promoting Gender Equality Education and Awareness

Regarding the above, promoting gender equality education and awareness is an important step in eliminating stereotypes. By conducting promotional activities in schools, communities, and media channels, the importance and significance of gender equality can be conveyed to the public. This includes educating people about the existence of gender stereotypes and providing correct gender concepts and values. [9] The government can offer gender equality courses to teach students about the concept, history, and current status of gender equality. At the same time, by updating textbooks and teaching resources, the content that perpetuates gender stereotypes can be eliminated, encouraging students to surpass the limitations of gender roles and pursue their interests and potential. In the community and media, lectures, seminars, and exhibitions on gender equality can be organized to raise public awareness. Additionally, positive gender images and stories can be disseminated through media channels to eliminate stereotypes about women and men and promote gender equality values. By promoting gender equality education and awareness, people can recognize the existence of gender differences and discrimination, and inspire public attention and action towards gender

equality. This will lay the foundation for eliminating gender disparities and discrimination, accelerating the achievement of social gender equality.

3.2. Redistributing Resources

To substantially improve disparities, one can start by redistributing resources. In order to ensure equal education and employment opportunities for women, equal educational resources and opportunities should be provided in the field of education, including education funding, teacher training, and teaching facilities. Simultaneously, encouraging women's participation in traditionally male-dominated fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) can break gender segregation. In the employment sector, gender equality employment policies should be formulated and implemented to prohibit gender discrimination and bias. [5] Ensuring that women can participate equally in all industries and positions and providing equal opportunities for promotion and compensation. [10] Additionally, providing support and training to help women overcome challenges brought about by gender differences and achieve career development. [11] To reduce gender disparities and discrimination, it is also necessary to break gender segregation and promote communication and cooperation between men and women. This can be achieved through the following methods: in educational environments, encouraging male and female students to engage in cooperative learning and team projects to promote communication and understanding between each other. Many students are maliciously given adult thoughts when they communicate and form teams with the opposite sex, which indicates that they have romantic intentions, making them unwilling to...

In the workplace, encouraging male and female employees to participate in cross-departmental and cross-gender cooperation projects to promote teamwork and gender equality.

In social activities, organizing activities and projects that involve the participation of both men and women to encourage interaction and communication between them.

By breaking gender segregation, equality and understanding between men and women can be promoted, reducing the occurrence of gender disparities and discrimination.

3.3. Reducing Sensitivity to Gender Differences

Reducing sensitivity to gender differences can promote more open and equal discussions. By raising public awareness and understanding of gender equality through education and promotional activities, biases and discrimination towards gender topics can be reduced. Social media platforms should try to avoid pushing controversial topics or questions with a bias. [7] To make the issue clearer, the government can design questionnaires on gender issues and conduct regular surveys and research on gender differences, collecting and analyzing relevant data to understand the gender disparities in different fields. This will help eliminate misconceptions and biases about gender differences and provide scientific evidence for formulating gender equality policies and measures.

4. Conclusions

This study uncovers a disheartening reality within the Chinese education system, where gender inequality and discrimination prevail. Women are confronted with a multitude of barriers and limitations in their pursuit of education and career advancement, while men's aspirations are restrained by the weight of traditional gender expectations and stereotypes.

These gender inequalities have far-reaching implications, influencing students' access to education, academic achievements, and personal growth. To achieve genuine gender equality, a comprehensive approach is necessary to drive transformative changes in both the education system and societal perceptions. Policymakers and educational institutions must enact and implement measures that actively promote gender equality, ensuring equal opportunities for women in higher education and

dismantling the shackles of gender stereotypes and prejudices. Moreover, educators must play an active role in fostering inclusive educational environments that empower students to break free from the confines of traditional gender roles, encouraging them to explore their passions and unlock their full potential.

The findings of this study hold tremendous significance in the quest for gender equality and the promotion of fairness and inclusivity within educational settings. Only through collective efforts can we eradicate the barriers hindering gender equality, ensuring that each student is endowed with the space and support needed to thrive and contribute to societal progress. To achieve genuine and lasting gender equality, it is imperative to establish a society and educational ecosystem that staunchly support gender parity, providing equitable access to education and opportunities irrespective of one's gender, free from the constraints imposed by societal norms or expectations.

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