

# Differences of Primary Education Resources between Urban and Rural Areas

Yijia Chen\*

College of art, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, 321000, China  
\*c85ny9j91@163.com

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**Abstract:** The unbalanced distribution of educational resources, especially between urban and rural areas, constitutes a universal problem in the world. In China, however, this difference in educational resources is particularly obvious and has become an important issue to be solved urgently. This issue is not only related to educational equity, but also profoundly affects the overall development and progress of society. This work adopts the research method of quantitative analysis, and uses the data in China education database to analyze it. According to the research results, in China the distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas shows obvious differences, which are not only reflected in material resources, but also in teachers' strength and the access to education. The unbalanced allocation of educational resources may trigger a series of social chain reactions. The government and society need to take a series of measures to solve these problems. Specifically, we should increase investment in rural education, improve rural teachers' salary and benefits and career development opportunities, and optimize the hardware facilities of rural schools and so on. At the same time, it is necessary to deepen educational reform and innovation, aiming at achieving fairness in the field of education and promoting all-round social progress.

**Keywords:** Urban Education; Rural Education; Education Resources.

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## 1. Introduction

With the trend of globalization and the acceleration of urbanization, the unbalanced distribution of educational resources has become an important factor that hinders the realization of educational equity and the overall progress of society. The obvious gap in them is not only manifested in the material basis such as hardware facilities, but also affects the future development potential of individuals. The differences mainly manifest at several levels: in the allocation of teaching staff, the adequacy of educational facilities, the amount of educational funding, and the quality of education, among others, which together shape a complex social phenomenon. The existence of these phenomena not only restricts the possibility of students in rural areas to obtain high-quality educational resources, but also exacerbates social stratification and inequality, which poses a threat to the long-term stability and harmonious progress of society, and is directly related to the prospect of individual's future economic situation. Previous studies have revealed that the significant differences between urban and rural areas in the allocation of educational resources are multi-dimensional and complicated, including teachers, educational facilities, capital investment, educational policies and so on. It shows highly complex characteristics and changeable situation. Because many indicators of some rural villages are extremely distributed, the significance of the difference is determined to some extent. Therefore, it is necessary to redefine the "city" and "township" in the traditional sense of urban-rural balance [1]. The unbalanced distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas has induced the so-called "Matthew effect", that is, areas with more resources will gain more advantages, while areas with less resources will face greater challenges. This phenomenon has further aggravated the existing pattern and strengthened the unequal structure between them [2]. 'The pendulum complex of urban and rural education goal positioning, the value paradox of logical paths,

and the lack of structure of the main body of governance' and many other practical problems have hindered the development of urban-rural co-ordinated education[3]. Because the policy orientation is biased towards cities, rural areas are at a disadvantage in obtaining public educational resources, which widens the difference between them[4,5]. These studies provide valuable theoretical basis as well as a reference for national policy formulation. In 2008, the important national strategy of urban-rural integration was defined. The main goal of this study is to explore the present situation and differences between urban and rural primary schools in terms of educational resources, trace back to the root causes, and evaluate the extensive and far-reaching impact of these differences on society. This study will use the method of statistical analysis for in-depth and detailed analysis to achieve this goal. To some extent, this study will provide a theoretical perspective for sociology, economics and pedagogy to study social stratification and mobility, and at the same time provide suggestions for government departments to realize a fairer and more effective education system through policy intervention and resource redistribution.

## 2. Method

This research adopts the research method of quantitative analysis, and uses the data in China education database to deeply analyze the phenomenon of unequal distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas. Specifically, we collected data from 2005 to 2021, covering urban and rural primary schools across 31 provinces nationwide, focusing on aspects such as the asset value of teaching instruments and equipment, education expenditure, number of schools, and number of full-time teachers, totaling 1,054 records. Subsequently, through descriptive statistical analysis, we systematically organized and visually presented the data, and employed mean comparison methods to further

explore the differences in educational resources between urban and rural areas and their potential influencing factors. The research findings indicate significant disparities in educational resources between urban and rural primary schools, revealing the issue of unequal resource distribution between the two.

### 3. Results

In this study, the data of teaching equipment assets, educational expenditure, number of primary schools and number of full-time primary school teachers of urban and rural primary schools in 31 provinces from 2005 to 2021 were obtained from China Education Database, so as to understand and study the differences. From the obtained data, we can know that 1054 data were selected in this study, including 527 data in urban and 527 data in rural areas. With regard to the total assets of teaching instruments and equipment, for urban primary schools, the average assets amount to 1,289,283,000 yuan, compared with 783,245,000 yuan for rural primary schools. By comparing the mean values, the difference between them is statistically significant ( $p=0.0000$ ), which indicates that there is an obvious gap between urban and rural primary schools in teaching equipment resources. In terms of education expenditure, the comparison between urban primary schools and rural primary schools also shows a significant difference ( $p=0.0000$ ), in which the education expenditure of urban primary schools is significantly higher than that of rural primary schools. As far as the number of primary schools is concerned, the average number of primary schools in rural areas is 5,393.368, while that in urban areas is 768.6717. The comparison between the two shows a significant difference ( $p=0.0000$ ), and the number of primary schools in rural areas is obviously more than that in urban areas. In addition, in terms of the number of full-time teachers in primary schools, the average number of full-time teachers in rural primary schools is 80,600.08, compared with 48,209.72 in urban primary schools, and the difference between them is also extremely significant ( $p=0.0000$ ), and rural primary schools have an advantage in it.

### 4. Discussion

By analyzing the data in China education database, we can find that there are significant differences in the distribution of educational resources between urban and rural primary schools, which may lead to a series of social consequences. First of all, it affects the academic performance and education completion rate of rural students, thus affecting their future development and social mobility. Secondly, the imbalance of educational resources intensifies the unfair education, which makes rural students at a disadvantage in obtaining higher education opportunities. Finally, the loss of educational resources in rural areas leads students and families to tend to migrate to cities in order to seek better educational opportunities, which further aggravates the educational gap.

First of all, by discussing the asset value of teaching instruments and equipment, it can be observed that the average amount of teaching instruments and equipment assets enjoyed by each student in urban primary schools generally exceeds the level of rural primary schools. Specifically, in 2020, the value of teaching instruments and equipment owned by primary school students nationwide reached 1,809 yuan, an increase of 137 yuan compared with the previous year, with an increase of 8.2 percentage points. In contrast, the

average asset value of teaching instruments and equipment of rural primary school students is 1652 yuan, which is about 80.4% of the corresponding value of urban primary schools. Nevertheless, it still marks that rural primary schools have achieved an annual improvement of 2.6 percentage points in this respect. This data change reveals that although there is still a certain gap in the allocation of teaching instruments and equipment resources between urban and rural areas, rural primary schools are gradually improving their equipment assets, which indicates the gradual optimization of rural education conditions. In addition, the proportion of rural primary schools establishing campus network schools is also increasing. The increase of this proportion will help improve the learning environment and resource acquisition of rural students. However, in terms of education funds, although the investment in compulsory education in rural areas has shown a sustained growth trend, its growth rate has not reached the national average. Specifically, in 2020, each student in rural areas received an average of 11,178.71 yuan from the general public budget for education, a significant increase of 85.77% compared with 2012. Nevertheless, this growth rate still lags behind the national average growth rate, which reached 90.15% in the same period. This may mean that rural primary schools are still facing challenges in obtaining educational resources. Although rural education funds have increased, the growth rate is relatively slow. And the speed of increasing the asset value of teaching instruments and equipment may also be affected. Generally speaking, the gap between them is gradually narrowing and the educational conditions in rural areas are gradually improving. In the field of education expenditure, in 2020, the average amount of general public budget education funds enjoyed by ordinary primary school students nationwide is 12,330.58 yuan, while in rural areas, this figure is 11,541.34 yuan. Compared with the previous year's 11,126.64 yuan, it has increased by 3.73%. This data change shows that although rural primary schools have increased their education funds, on the whole, their level is still lower than that of urban primary schools. In addition, as far as the expenditure of public funds in the general public budget per student is concerned, the average expenditure of rural primary schools is 2,586.72 yuan, an increase of 1.49% compared with 2,548.73 yuan in the previous year. Although this growth trend shows a positive trend, it is undeniable that there is still a certain gap between them in terms of investment in education funds. Generally speaking, although there are obvious differences between urban and rural primary schools in the expenditure of education funds, it is worthy of recognition that the situation and overall conditions of education funds in rural primary schools are gradually improving, and the gap between urban and rural education funds is gradually narrowing. This trend indicates the further improvement of educational equity in China. Regarding the number of primary schools, statistics show that in 2020, the total number of regular primary schools nationwide was 158,000, reflecting a downward trend compared to the previous year, with a specific decrease of 2,169 schools. Among them, there were 746 primary schools in urban areas, while 2,915 primary schools in rural areas decreased. This shows that the number of urban primary schools is increasing, while the number of rural primary schools is decreasing. The reasons may be as follows: First, some local governments have adopted the policy of merging small rural schools into larger township or county schools to optimize the allocation of educational resources to improve the quality and efficiency

of education; Second, with the change of population structure in rural areas, the number of school-age children has decreased, and some rural primary schools have been forced to close because of insufficient students; Third, with the change of educational demand, rural families have higher requirements for the quality of education. Many students are sent by their parents to city schools for better education. So that the students in rural primary schools are lost. In general, the difference in the number of primary schools between urban and rural areas reflects the imbalance in the distribution of educational resources. The increase in the number of schools in urban areas may be related to population mobility and urbanization, while the decrease in the number of schools in rural areas may be related to many factors, including population decline and school merger. These changes have challenged the rational allocation of educational resources and educational equity. In the dimension of the number of full-time teachers in primary schools, the national statistics in 2020 show that it has reached 6,434,200. Under this general background, the number of full-time teachers in urban primary schools is increasing, on the contrary, rural primary schools are facing the challenge of reducing the number. By further analyzing the distribution of full-time teachers in urban and rural primary schools, we can find that the allocation of full-time teachers resources in rural primary schools is relatively scarce. Specifically, the teacher-class ratio of rural primary schools is 1.88:1, while that of urban primary schools is 2.04:1. This data comparison shows that although the average number of students per teacher in urban primary schools is slightly higher, the tension in the allocation of teachers' resources in rural primary schools is more prominent. In addition, the aging of rural teachers is also worthy of attention. According to statistics, the proportion of teachers over 55 years old in rural primary schools reached 8.8%, while in urban primary schools, the proportion was only 3.3%. The aging of rural teachers may adversely affect the teaching quality and educational innovation of rural schools.

In view of these phenomena, it is necessary to increase funding for rural education in order to more reasonably optimize the allocation of educational resources and focus on improving the salaries, benefits, and career development opportunities for rural teachers. At the same time, improve the teaching facilities in rural schools to enhance the quality of

education, effectively attract students, and reduce dropout rates. Moreover, reasonably planning the layout of rural schools is also crucial to prevent problems arising from excessive consolidation. To fully utilize educational resources, leverage modern information technology to provide abundant remote education resources for rural schools. The implementation of these measures is expected to comprehensively improve the quality of rural education and further narrow the educational gap between urban and rural areas.

## 5. Conclusion

This article analyzes relevant data from the Chinese education database to illustrate the uneven distribution of educational resources between urban and rural primary schools. The research results indicate a significant resource disparity between urban and rural primary schools. To promote the realization of educational equity, the government needs to increase support for rural education, improve the pattern of resource allocation, and advance the integration of urban and rural education.

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