
NEWSLETTER

Income Inequality, Education Competition, and the Model of Family Engagement in Education

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IN order to “not let children lose at the starting line”, parents get deeply involved in their children’s educational life through various ways such as educational consumption, parental participation, and emotional support. Some scholars have proposed that “over-parenting” has appeared, while others have also put forward that this is an inevitable “transitional” parenting strategy presented with the development of society, economy, culture, and education. Whether it is “over-parenting” or “transitional” parenting, a survey published in *The Journal Education Research*, based on the 2018 data of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 79 countries and regions, Take the student’s academic level as the dependent variable. Select the way of family education investment, including the two dichotomous variables of the education resource investment and emotional investment, and divide the family education investment into four categories: neglect investment with less investment in education resources and less emotional support, and investment with more education resources but more emotional support. Material investment, emotional investment with less investment in educational resources but more emotional support, comprehensive investment with more investment in educational resources and more emotional support. The macro-level GDP per capita, the Gini coefficient, the gross enrollment rate of higher education, and the micro-level control variables such as family wealth, parents’ highest professional status, and education level are included.

The article used a two-level multinomial probit (multinomial probit) model to estimate the data, and the research results are as follows:

- Different family education investment methods of family academic performance present the characteristics of “comprehensive investment in parenting method > material investment in parenting method ≥ emotional investment in parenting method > neglected investment in parenting method”.

- The effect of income inequality and education competition on the choice of household education investment mode presents a non-linear U-shaped curve relationship.
- China is at a stage of high-income inequality and a high gross enrollment rate of higher education. Parents can achieve class mobility through educational competition by adopting comprehensive and material-based investment parenting methods that are more beneficial to academic performance.

This study found that the current level of emphasis on student family education has not reached “excessive”, and it is still in the “transition” stage of development. Therefore, my country does not need to emphasize and advocate the restriction of family education investment but needs to encourage and guide parents to choose a reasonable way of family education investment.

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