
 NEWSLETTER

Super High Schools: Improving or Reducing the Educational Quality of High Schools in Different Provinces?

By Guo, C., Xu Z., & Zhang, S.

Correspondence to: Guo, C., Institute of Economics of Education, Peking University, Beijing, China 100871. Email: cbguoguo@pku.edu.cn

WITH the extremely high enrollment rate and the high rate of being admitted by Peking University and Tsinghua University, to some extent, Super High School is usually considered as the opportunity to realize the intergenerational social mobility upwards. However, it could cause serious damage to the ecology of the high schools' education within the region, aggravating the exam-oriented education phenomenon in high school education, exacerbating the disadvantages of education inequity, etc., as a result, it has become a hot topic in all sectors of the society in recent years.

Recently, a study published in Educational Research, based on the data from the freshmen in University A between 2007 and 2017, defined a Super High School as a school whose admission rate for University A exceeds 2 standard deviations of the provincial average, measuring the degree of super high schools' monopoly in each province by constructing an educational monopoly index, and evaluated the quality of upper secondary education by using the college entrance examination scores for sciences fixed by the first batch of universities enrolling senior high school students, and the college entrance examination scores for sciences fixed by Peking University and the University of Science and Technology of China. The researchers used the two-way fixed-effect model to analyze the status quo and the trends of the educational monopoly in China's super high schools and based on this, probe into the effect of educational monopoly on the quality of upper secondary education in different provinces. The results show the following:

- Over the past few years, 34% of the freshmen from University A averagely come from super high schools, which indicating a serious educational monopoly phenomenon.
- In the mainland, the data of 26 provinces shows the educational monopoly at a moderate level or above; while in the western provinces, the situation of one certain high school always possesses the strongest status of university admission; as for those provinces with developed education

and economy or a large population, a situation of tripartite confrontation will emerge.

- The educational monopoly indexes tend to rank oppositely to the college entrance examination scores for sciences fixed by the first batch of universities enrolling senior high school students, which indicates that the increased educational monopoly by super high schools will significantly reduce the educational quality of local upper secondary education.

To break the educational monopoly, besides improving educational quality and promoting the balanced and high-quality development of regional education, it is strongly recommended to improving the educational quality of disadvantaged senior high schools, guiding junior high school students and their parents to choose senior high schools rationally, and accurately and effectively consummating the special policies for college admissions, on the condition of strictly prohibiting the cross-regional enrollment of super high schools. The suggestions are as follow:

- Educational administrative departments must truly eliminate “schools in schools” and strictly prohibit public schools from enrolling students across cities and counties in the name of private schools.
- Comprehensively evaluate the quality of high school education and promote the diversified development of high schools.
- Consolidate the team construction of disadvantaged high school teachers to retain the good teachers and recruit new teachers.
- Guide students and parents to choose schools rationally, and encourage parents to choose the most appropriate education for their children.
- Further increase the number of students enrolled in various special programs to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of policies.

Source: Educational Research, 2021; 42(4):37-51.