



Exploring Intersectionality Inequalities in Junior Secondary Schools in Guangdong Province, China: Causes and Analysis of the Achievement Gap

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Abstract: This study explores the cross-inequality in junior middle schools in China and Guangdong Province, paying special attention to the causes and analysis of the academic achievement gap. Through the discussion of the theory of socio-demographic differences and intersection, this paper reveals the complex influence of multiple social identities such as socio-economic status, gender and race on students' educational experience and academic performance. It is found that the uneven distribution of educational resources in different schools in Guangdong Province and the socio-economic background of parents have significantly affected students' academic achievements. In addition, this paper also discusses the possibility of promoting educational equity through educational policy intervention, such as resource allocation, teacher training and curriculum reform. This paper aims to provide a new perspective for reducing the inequality in the education system, and suggests further research to understand and solve these complex educational inequalities more comprehensively.

Keywords: Guangdong junior middle schools, academic achievement gap, cross-inequality, educational equity and socio-demographic differences

1. Introduction

Education is crucial for shaping opportunities and outcomes in individuals' lives, making it essential to understand the factors contributing to educational inequality (Idris et al., 2012). This paper focuses on exploring inequalities in junior secondary schools in Guangdong Province, China, particularly the academic achievement gap between students.

Educational inequality is a global issue, and China's experience is no different. Understanding how various social categories like gender, ethnicity, and class intersect to influence educational outcomes is vital (Graven, 2013). Guangdong Province, known for its rapid economic growth (Wang et al., 2015), provides a valuable case study for examining how different dimensions of inequality impact academic achievement.

The paper will define key terms such as 'intersectionality,' 'inequality,' and 'academic achievement' in the context of junior secondary schools in Guangdong. Drawing on works like McCowan's "Education and International Development: An Introduction" (2016), it aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of educational inequalities and suggest ways to address them.

2. Description

This study examines a cohort of junior secondary students in Guangdong Province, aged 12 to 16. In Guangdong, most junior high schools are public, meant to provide equal opportunities for all students. However, there are noticeable differences in academic performance across schools.

Guangdong, a rapidly urbanizing region, faces significant demand for educational resources, with disparities between schools in wealthy and underprivileged areas. Junior secondary education is a crucial phase, where standardized tests and the transition from primary to secondary education are key challenges.

Despite a uniform education system, disparities in student performance persist. Factors like teaching quality, available resources, and students' socioeconomic backgrounds contribute to these differences. Understanding these factors is essential for addressing educational inequalities effectively.

3. Discussion

This section delves into intersectional inequalities, focusing on how socio-demographic factors contribute to academic disparities among junior secondary students in Guangdong.

3.1 Socio-demographic Disparities in Student Achievement

Significant socio-demographic disparities in student achievement exist, influenced by factors like discrimination, privilege, and resource access (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Socioeconomic status, closely tied to family background, plays a critical role in these disparities (Prior et al., 2022). For instance, students with better-prepared backgrounds often have an academic advantage (Liu, 2012; Sriprakash et al., 2015).

Extracurricular classes, often inaccessible to lower-income families, create gaps between students. This is especially evident in Guangdong, where public schools in affluent areas outperform those in less privileged regions (Guangdong Chengkao enrollment network writing, 2022).

3.2 Intersectionality

Intersectionality, a concept introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), examines how various forms of inequality, such as race, gender, and class, intersect to affect individuals' experiences. This framework is essential for understanding the complexities of student achievement disparities in Guangdong.

Studies often overlook how different social factors intertwine, which can obscure the nuanced realities of students' lives (Hernández-Yumar et al., 2018). Intersectionality helps reveal these complexities, making it a crucial tool for analyzing educational inequalities (Jones, Johnston & Manley, 2016).

Access to education in Guangdong is influenced by many factors, including parental education and geographical location (Choudhary et al., 2019). These intersectional inequalities are challenging to address, but understanding them is key to promoting educational equity.

4. Conclusion

This study explores academic disparities in Guangdong's junior secondary schools, highlighting the significant role of socio-demographic factors. Recognizing how these factors intersect is crucial for understanding the roots of inequality.

Intersectionality offers a valuable lens for examining how various social identities impact educational experiences. Addressing these inequalities requires targeted policies focused on resource allocation, teacher training, and curriculum reform (Levy & Schady, 2013).

Further research is needed to fully understand and address these complex inequalities. By fostering ongoing dialogue, we can work towards a more inclusive and equitable education system in Guangdong Province.

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