

The Importance of College Guidance and Choosing Schools and Majors under China's New College Entrance Examination Policy

Linghong Su*

London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London, E20 2AQ, United Kingdom

* Corresponding Author Email: l.su0420211@arts.ac.uk

Abstract. Under the reform policy of the New College Entrance Examination (NCE), students' choices are increased and at the same time, their ability to make choices is also challenged. Under the plurality of the system of higher education, whether the parents' education and social status will affect the news that students get and thus the choice of higher education. Nowadays, the number of research in China is relatively small, and most of the research vision is oriented to university education, with insufficient attention paid to the level of high school education. The systematic research related to it is almost in a blank condition, and the practical projects generally lack large-scale popularization, and the problems exposed in the interface between high school education and university education are numerous. There is very little cooperation between them, which is relatively neglected at the levels of school, society and family. Schools, society, families and other levels have been neglected. This paper will explore the reform of college guidance under the new college entrance examination policy, its impact and suggestions. High school education should be closely related to university education. In the face of the gap in information about university education, it is important for schools to improve the number and quality of teachers. The government should increase regulation of paid college counseling and shut down poor-quality counseling agencies.

Keywords: new college entrance examination reform; choice of higher education; guidance for higher education; educational articulation.

1. Introduction

In order to reduce the excessive pressure brought about by the previous exam-based education and to promote the diversified development of students, China has embarked on an unprecedented reform of the college entrance examination (gaokao). The New College Entrance Examination (NCE) is the latest model of college entrance examination through the reform of the existing college entrance examination and enrollment system. In 2010, the National Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020) put forward the overall strategy of deepening the reform of the college entrance examination, i.e., categorized examination, comprehensive evaluation, and diversified admissions [1]. With the advancement of China's college entrance examination reform, the articulation between senior high school education and university education has become particularly important. The reform of the college entrance examination highlights the diversity of higher education while also increasing the complexity of the system, thus giving rise to the profession of college guidance counseling.

"Good college planning changes the destiny of families." The starting point for a person's various major choices can be said to be this choice of higher education that a person makes at the college entrance exam. Many people are because at that time chose the unsuitable major, into the undesirable school. This leads to an unhappy college life, a poor state of learning, and, unsatisfactory results. Later on, in the career stage, they either fall flat on their face or work in a job they don't like and find it difficult to achieve success. It may take a lot of time and a lot of money to get on track in life.

According to media reports, more than 70% of college students are dissatisfied with their major and want to change it. However, changing majors can be difficult. It requires top grades in the major and the chances are slim. There is also the possibility of having to start over from the first year of college. If students want to change their major through graduate school, the competition is also fierce.



According to the current number of applicants for graduate school, in China, the number of applicants for the 2020 exam reached 3.41 million. That's 510,000 more than in 2019, a rise of 18%.

The increase in the difficulty of competing for graduate school in the same specialty has greatly increased the difficulty of interprofessional graduate school.

Counseling for higher education is not only about planning which college major a student will be in, but also about which career to choose for life. This way, college life will not be wasted. Students can work hard for their favorite majors and life.

Regarding class differentiation, there is a consensus in the field of sociology that the choice of higher education for the offspring depends to a large extent on the educational experience of the parents, and that there is an inextricable correlation between an individual's educational achievement and the socio-economic status of the family in which he or she lives [2]. Highly educated parents pay more attention to their children's studies, and some of them even plan the direction and path of their children's education before they are born. Educated parents usually get more information and make better judgments in the field of education. For example, in China, more educated parents than uneducated parents will have their children start their education in hobby classes and competitions that will give them extra points in the middle school or college entrance exams, so that they can participate in competitions and get rankings. This gives them more extra points than other students. They also have more insights and knowledge to help their children in choosing majors for the college entrance examination. Some highly educated parents are accomplished in certain fields, such as doctors, lawyers, and professors. They educate their children in this field from an early age. Because they specialize in this field, they usually have more information and access to this industry. Their children will have an absolute priority over the average student in this field. This is where college guidance becomes important, and college counseling will provide a more comprehensive service when parents are unable to provide better access to information. This paper will explore the reform of college guidance under the new college entrance examination policy, its impact and suggestions.

2. Free Guidance on School Advancement

College preparation requires parents to have a complete picture of the university in terms of academic standards, admissions rules, and admission details. In this situation, the class barrier between the advantaged and disadvantaged classes translates into a huge information gap that directly affects their children's chances of going to college. Advantageous parents use their own experience of higher education, networking, and exchanging information with others to advance their children's education. This is why school guidance is so important to them. The underprivileged, on the other hand, usually do not have access to higher education and do not have the information or knowledge to advise their children on school selection. The lack of capital also makes it difficult for them to pay for one-on-one guidance and to invest effectively in their children's schooling. Derek Bock has said that marketized information and advice raises serious equity issues, and the equity of access to higher education is questionable as the disadvantaged are frustrated on three fronts: at home, at school, and in the marketplace. At such times one can only try to increase the quantity as well as the quality of college guidance in schools. More guidance counselors should be provided in each public high school so that each student receives as much targeted guidance as possible. Guidance counselors also need to be highly educated, well-informed, and well-informed.

3. Home and School Interaction

After the reform of the new college entrance examination, the diversification of the system of higher education has intensified the importance of the information gap. The choice of college is closely related to market changes. Hossler et al. distinguish three stages of college preparation: disposition formation, goal search, and decision-making, and parental information support is integrated throughout the process [3]. In the disposition formation stage, parents convey educational expectations to their children and help their children form internalized goals for college through early

academic communication. In the goal-seeking stage, parents communicate educational preferences to their children based on their own college experience and ability to pay, leading them to focus on specific colleges and universities. In addition, parents help their children understand college admissions requirements and encourage early, targeted college preparation. In the final college decision-making stage, parents need to work with their children through the college admissions process, assisting them with financial support and emotional encouragement to make college decisions [4]. When schools and families communicate with each other, they can better address students' school choices and reduce the likelihood of mistakes.

4. Advantages of Paid College Guidance

The complexity of the design of the new college entrance examination system has also catalyzed the expansion of China's college counseling market, and the diversification and competency orientation of the admissions test have made career planning and guidance for higher education a new demand gap. The information services provided by some higher education consulting companies have covered the complete process of higher education and admission, such as subject selection, specialty planning, independent enrollment, and volunteer application. Relevant industry research found that the market scale of China's K12 online education industry grew at a rate of 51.8% in 2017, and college counseling, as an important sub-product, has gradually become a normalized and mature business model [5].

The purchase of market consulting for higher education has become a derivative of parental involvement in education. It should be noted that, as the rules of institutional admissions tend to be complicated, competition for higher education becomes white-hot, knowledge of higher education becomes commoditized, and anxiety of students and parents about higher education swells, the unpaid higher education consulting previously undertaken by high school and university admissions offices is becoming a highly profitable market-oriented consulting industry [6].

In China, the economy has been developing rapidly for twenty years. The dividends of the times have created many "grassroots entrepreneurs". They usually have not received higher education, while the successful entrepreneurs in recent years are usually highly educated. They also think that the dividend of that time has passed, and eagerly want to raise their children to be highly educated. How to train them at this time? Which specialty to choose? All of them become the questions they are stuck with. In the situation where parents' information support fails, a considerable number of families choose to try to compensate for the lack of family information support for higher education by purchasing market consulting services. Paid college counseling is usually a one-on-one service, which is better able to make an optimal plan for the student based on the student's personality and wishes, as well as the parents' ideas and the family's financial situation. First of all, before the college entrance examination, the paid college counseling agency will provide one-on-one guidance. They will explain the college entrance examination policy, introduce colleges universities, and majors, provide guidance on planning directions, and answer questions for students and parents. Before the scores are released at the end of the college entrance examination, career interest and personality assessments and reports are conducted. Based on the estimated scores and interests, we will provide a preliminary plan for the college entrance examination. After the scores of the college entrance examination are released, people will analyze the positioning of large schools and the choice of majors. After the guidance of volunteering, the best program will be provided. Paid guidance will be more detailed and humanized than the free guidance of the school.

5. Problems with Paid College Guidance

With the increased demand in the college entrance exam consulting market, many related industries have risen rapidly [7]. The quality of paid consulting firms also varies. There are too few people who want to do education and many speculators who are trying to make money by fishing in troubled waters. How to choose a responsible and high-quality college consulting organization is very much a test of parents' screening skills. Generally speaking, parents who choose college counseling usually

have no experience in higher education and do not have enough knowledge and awareness to help their children plan well, so they seek the help of college counseling companies. It is very difficult for this group of parents to screen the quality of the college counseling agencies.

After the opening of paid counseling for college guidance, does family economic and social status affect students' professionalism and foresight in school choice? Do poor or disadvantaged families make mistakes in choosing schools because of information further widening the class gap in education?

Under the NSS policy, family socio-economic attributes have a significant impact on students' progression to higher education. With the availability of paid counseling in higher education, the gap in information on higher education between classes is further widened. In higher education, some factors lead to the fact that the family's pre-conditions will outweigh the student's efforts. For the advantaged students, the advantage of accumulated family resources will translate into the advantage of scores in the college entrance examination. For disadvantaged students, because of the limitations of their families' economic and cultural capital and the lack of information support for higher education, their scores in the college entrance examination are more often in the low-scoring range. Even though students from poorer backgrounds cross the university threshold, they are more likely to enter less academically selective institutions and have difficulty touching quality higher education resources. Market information support can further contribute to the imbalanced pattern of access to higher education and the distribution of opportunities for further education, solidifying class barriers in the choice of higher education

Under market operation, these consultancy agencies, with their strong information collection and consolidation capabilities, provide effective assistance in the estimation of scores and the filling of college entrance examination volunteers. However, as market-based organizations, their services are narrowed down to cost-effectiveness in terms of success in filling in the college entrance examination and admission, and their high fees mean that children from low-income families have lower chances of accessing accurate and quality services [8].

6. Recommendations for Future Development of College Guidance

Improving counselling and guidance for China's college entrance exams involves a multifaceted approach, and several recommendations are offered to provide students with a fair, balanced and holistic progression to higher education. In terms of counselling, the government needs to increase funding for college guidance in schools and strengthen the quality of free in-school counselling. They should ensure that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to quality counselling and guidance services. On the teacher side, college guidance teachers should complete all professional knowledge of their guidance direction before they formally take up their duties. They should be very familiar with the admissions policy, the advantageous major situation of the university, the policy and situation of international student admissions, and the application process for studying abroad in that domestic university, in order to cope with the common problems that may arise among the students [9]. They should train teachers to use innovative and effective teaching methods that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students are given more autonomy in their choice of further education. He Yong, the principal of Guangzhou Deaconess Middle School, said that the best education should be personalised education, which is built on the knowledge of the individual, and the individual first needs to have knowledge of themselves, which is a difficult thing, so career planning education is particularly important. When applying for volunteering in the college entrance examination, students should systematically think about three questions, i.e., which university do I want to go to, which university am I suitable for, and can I go to this university [10]. In terms of parental education, do not rely entirely on teachers. In striving to accomplish the goal of school-family unity, parents should also receive more social information and research on further education, so as to carry out perfect further education with the joint efforts of teachers, students and parents. Some online resources and platforms can be developed so that students from disadvantaged families can also have channels to receive information about higher education.

7. Conclusion

In the context of China's new gaokao reform, guidance for higher education and choice of schools and majors are crucial. The scores and choices of the gaokao largely determine a student's access to higher education. It affects students' future career opportunities and earning potential. Effective guidance helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses. When students receive appropriate guidance on effective college entrance examination guidance, they can set realistic goals and relieve the intense stress and anxiety associated with college entrance examinations. Choosing a school major is a critical decision. College guidance counselors help students make informed choices that are in line with their interests and career aspirations. In the long run, making the right choice of major can lead to greater academic engagement, better grades, and higher job satisfaction. This contributes to a more successful career. College guidance can also help students understand the changing job market and select in-demand majors that will enhance their employability after graduation. College guidance lays the foundation for future educational and career success and is of great importance in the lives of Chinese students.

References

- [1] Zhang Tao. Research on the articulation between high school education and university education under the influence of new college entrance examination[D]. Hainan Normal University,2021.
- [2] MCNEAL R B Jr. Parental involvement as social capital: differential effectiveness on science achievement, truancy, and dropping out[J]. *Social Forces*, 1999, 78(1): 117-144
- [3] HOSSLER D, GALLAGHER K S. Studying student college choice: a three-phase model and the implications for policymakers [J]. *College and University*, 1987, 62(3): 207- 221
- [4] HINES E M, BORDERS L D, GONZALEZ L M, et al. Parental involvement in college planning: cultural considerations when working with African American families[J]. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, 2014, 8(4): 249-260.
- [5] Ai Rui Consulting. China K12 Online Education Industry Research Report 2018 [EB/ OL]. (2018-05-18) [2019-02-18]. <http://report.iresearch.cn/report/201805/3213.shtml>
- [6] MCDONOUGH P M, KORN J S, YAMASAKI E. Access, equity, and the privatization of college counseling[J]. *The Review of Higher Education*, 1997, 20(3): 297-317.
- [7] Bao Wei, Jin Honghao, and Xiao Yang." Class barriers and information divide: Information support for higher education in the context of the new college entrance examination reform." *China Higher Education Research* .05(2019):39-48.
- [8] Hua Hua. (2018). Influence and countermeasures of college guidance on high school students' college choice under the new college entrance examination. *Modern Teaching* (23), 49-50.
- [9] Jin Lida & Yuan Yuan Chen. (2021). A study of international high school guidance practices. *PR World* (04), 130-131.
- [10] Ma, Limin (2021-03-21). "How to do a good job in students' career planning education under the new college entrance examination?". *Nanfang Daily*,003.