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The Educational Equity for Children of Long-term Inner Migrant Workers: case studies in Zhejiang Province, China

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ABSTRACT

China's rapid urbanization and unbalanced regional developments has brought on not only population mobility of long-term inner migrant workers, but also the quality issue in their access to education and other resources for themselves and their family. Most of the current studies on educational equity for inner migrant children concentrate on finding ways to improve teaching and classroom performance from a pedagogical perspective, addressing institutional factors, such as entry barriers and educational policies. Little attention has been paid to non-institutional factors like urban and school environments, which have a greater impact on a long-term inner immigrant family's decision of their children's schooling. However, it is impossible to discuss non-institutional factors in a vacuum from institutional factors. The results of a mix method study using policy research, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and tracing indicated that childcare costs matter the most compare with other main categories of factors. Social feelings of children, family adherence, parental concerns about education quality, and the policies governing the care of talented and non-talented migrant workers in the workplace also significantly influenced migrant workers' willingness to migrate with their children. The study also discovered that there is no correlation between parents' education nor their desire to migrate. Furthermore, the discriminations in society against migrant workers is declining.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

An equitable education system helps all students develop the knowledge and skills they need to be engaged and become productive members of society. More importantly, giving all children an

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equitable start would lead to better economic and social outcomes for both individuals and society, as overall educational equity is made up by three components: process equity, outcome equity, and starting point equity [1]. China's rapid urbanization and unbalanced regional developments, has brought on not only population mobility of long-term inner migrant workers, but also the quality issue in almost every aspect of their life, including their access to local medical and education resources for themselves and their family. Almost half of the migrant workers prefer to leave their children in their rural hometowns, resulting in left-behind children. As 2020 Census report shows that there were 71.09 million migrant children nationwide, and 66.93 million left-behind children in 2020, for a total combined 46.4% of all children affected by this population mobility. In other words, almost half of China's youngsters are directly impacted [2]. Among them, more than 10.349 million elementary school children migrate with their immigrant worker parents, attend public schools and 3.949 million junior high school students attending public schools [3]. This indicates that the government is making significant progress toward ensuring that migrant worker children "have local school to go" as evidence of an equitable education. However, educational inequality occurs when there are disparities in educational background and achievement among subgroups of the population. The factors that contribute to educational inequality are both on micro-individual level and macro-social level [4]. While both macro and micro elements that lead to these educational disparities have been extensively discussed, yet the meso level perspective on the family problem has not received as much attention.

In recent years, with the progressing of China's urbanization, a substantial number of labors have flocked into economically advanced coastal areas. The question of whether the children of these migrant workers migrate with them, and whether they can access the same educational facilities as local children do, has long been a subject of concern in sociological studies. Migrant children and left-behind children are two sides of the same coin. Migrant children do not endure the problems of family separation, as left-behind children do. However, "children who stay behind" are similar to children of economic migrants as they face the same problems of social identity, family economic conditions, and school segregation [5]. Thus, educational equity covered in this work is both for non-migrating children and migrating children. Similar to other regions of the world [6-8], poverty is still the main cause of educational inequality. Relevant studies show that students from socially advantaged families have a higher probability of attending elite institutions with a better quality of education [9]. This indicates that various systemic variables and social structures contribute to educational inequality in different geographic areas. To different extents educational inequity result from these structures and circumstances undermining the current educational system.

The majority of migrant families' perspectives are rarely examined in existing studies, despite the fact that pertinent scholars have also proposed various measures. In order to better understand the factors preventing children of migrant families in Zhejiang Province from moving with their parents and the various ways that educational inequality is reflected in them, this paper uses mix methods with policy research, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaire surveys in the study areas of Hangzhou, Wenzhou, and Haining City. Among these three cities, Hangzhou is a leading industrial hub in China's high-tech sector. It is well-known for its Internet economy as the home of the Alibaba Group and for being a leader in biomedicine and information technology. Reputable tourist destination Hangzhou is home to world cultural heritage sites like the West Lake. Wenzhou is well-known for having a sizable number of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), particularly in the trade and manufacturing industries. Haining City is recognized as China's leather capital due to its thriving leather industry and highly advanced industrial sectors, which also include the production of machinery and textiles.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Social Structural Factors underlying Inequities in Education

Regarding educational equity, the majority of academics think that class solidification results from educational injustice. For example, Bernstein (1970s) proposed the theory of "code", which argues that

language is a tool for class and cultural reproduction by the ruling class [10]. People from the upper middle class are more likely than those from lower social classes to adjust to school and do better. According to the "cultural reproduction" idea put forth by Bourdieu (1970), the purpose of education in schools is to transmit culture to the next generation of students as well as to perpetuate and justify social injustices through the concept of "heredity". The purpose of education in schools is to perpetuate social inequality by reproducing it in a "genetic" method, controlling social mobility while doing so, rationalizing and fixing it, and passing on culture to the following generation of the class [11]. According to "economic reproduction" theory, the future paths of various classes have long been predetermined; the children of the advantaged class will continue to inherit their fathers' advantages to enter the upper-class society, while the children of the disadvantaged status will remain at the bottom of the class as failures in school (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) [12]. A few scholars believe that class reproduction is not only the result of the reproduction of social structural factors, but also the result of working-class children making a rebellion against the dominant culture in schools. Willis (1977) puts working-class children in an active position, arguing that working-class children join the working class as a result of active choice rather than passive abandonment [13]. Though each of these theories has its share of flaws, they all highlight the unfairness of the ostensibly equitable school system by examining the root causes of educational equality issues from several angles, including language relations of production and cultural capital.

In present China, policy limitations and school management are the primary subjects of pertinent research about the issue of education equity for migrant children. The enrollment of children accompanying migrant workers is hampered by the points system, preferential policy model, and other admission criteria, which illustrates the conflict between localized education management and population mobility [14]. The process of formulating and implementing policies is not straightforward and linear with respect to the policy's aims. This creates challenges for the implementation of policies and inevitably results in the emergence of "invisible classes" and "street children" [15]. There is a clear distinction in government support between public schools and schools for children of migrant workers, and that the educational needs of migrant populations have not been adequately addressed [16]. Children of migrants in lower-income situations are observed still enrolled in shabby private schools, while those who attend public schools are more likely to attend weak schools. From the perspective of relational and distributive justice, children of migrants experience a sense of helplessness and disempowerment due to their inability to take control of their education [17], but voices of the families have not been clearly heard. Therefore, this research take the viewpoint of individuals rather than institutions or the system..

1.2.2 Individualized Inequalities in Education

The Coleman Boat, a tool used to analyze educational inequality, highlights the connection between an individual's micro behavior and the larger social consequences. This offers a framework for comprehending the ways in which social networks and educational decisions impact the distribution of academic success. Collamat *et al.* (2020) emphasize the role of social structure, individual characteristics, and educational attainment in educational inequality and contend that the superposition of various individual and social factors undermines the policies of the education system as a whole [4].

The costs of raising children financially, materially, and long termly, all play important roles in school choice. Among these, the financial expenses are more significant since the family's ability to adjust and integrate into a new environment is influenced by their economic status in addition to their quality of life. Families' inclination to relocate is also influenced by the cost of living and time, particularly when raising children demands a large time and energy commitment.

Accompanying families have to, however, confront the realities of the social integration difficulty, particularly in smaller places with higher economic dynamism. Social integration is more challenging

in these places since there is more competition for economic opportunities. Furthermore, it can be challenging for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to socially integrate into society [18], and variations in speech and lifestyle can act as a catalyst for xenophobia and a feeling of prejudice towards the foreign community. Such unfairness and discrimination have a more significant impact on immigrant children's psychological development compared to grownups. Migrant children might see how their parents are treated unfairly in the city, which will make a lasting impression on their thoughts and increase their sentiments of prejudice and deprivation as well as their hostility against the city [19].

Connecting this to how children are affected by particular learning environments. Children who are permitted to go to school with their parents at work are separated into two groups: those who attend regular schools and those who attend schools specifically designed for migrant workers. Depending on the type of school, these children's educational experiences may differ. The issue of inadequately qualified instructors exists in schools for immigrant children, but identity-based discrimination does not exist. The family's readiness to relocate with them may be impacted by identity issues, discrimination, a lack of a sense of belonging, and a less supportive educational environment than that of their peers in the place of residence for students attending regular schools.

1.2.3 Educational Inequity Caused by Family Factors

The factors that contribute to educational inequality for children of migrants include school accessibility [20] and family structure [21], which can be broadly categorized as institutional and non-institutional factors. The institutional and non-institutional features of the two levels of educational equity will be covered in the sections that follow.

Not only does educational disparity contribute to the entrenchment of social classes, perpetuating the inequity of personal fates, but it also gives birth to more pressing social issues. For example, in the Paris suburbs between October 27 and November 17, 2005, a 20-day social unrest was set off by the unintentional electrocution of a teenage immigrant who was killed while trying to flee from the police. Due to the French government's incompetent response, the riot swiftly spread throughout the nation, even touching Germany and Belgium, and was unable to stem the intense dissatisfaction of the local immigrants. According to some academics, the cultural gap between immigrants' cultures and mainstream French culture was the root cause of the French riots in 2005 [22]. The murder of a junior high school student in Handan in March, 2024 garnered a lot of media attention. Notably, the victim and all three of the accused in this case were left-behind children [23], which brought the subject of left-behind children back into the public eye. The issue of educational fairness is intimately linked to the occurrence of these events. If the persons involved had had access to better educational resources, appropriate parental supervision and education, and less social prejudice, these tragedies might have been averted.

This research can only address the core reasons for educational inequality and prevent a string of social occurrences that are brought on by it by having a deeper understanding and awareness of the current state of the issue. Positive social benefits will result from this, as it will not only support social peace and the urban integration of the immigrant population but also enhance the demographic structure and increase the opportunities for social strata to move ahead. In the end, this will support the development of high-quality urban basic education and the creation of Children-friendly Cities.

2. Methodology

This research aims to examine the problem of educational equity for migrant children from the perspectives of architecture and educational equity. Empirical research was tried to look into the situation of migrant workers in factories and to understand the factors that influence migrant workers' decisions to migrate with or without their children. Three primary survey techniques thus were applied:

2.1 Policy Research Method

The decisions made by migrant workers are frequently greatly influenced by the enrollment procedures of each location. For policy research, this study chose Hangzhou, Haining, and Wenzhou because they have a higher proportion of migrants in Zhejiang Province. This research collected various enrollment policies for migrant children in different places in 2023 by visiting the websites of the education bureaus in Hangzhou, Haining, and Wenzhou. This research then carefully sorted and compared these policies in order to study the enrollment policies for different types of families in terms of enrollment consideration order, the point system, and the differences in enrollment conditions of talented and non-talented migrant children in different places. Finally, this research examined the impact of policies on the equity of migrant children's education. This research will examine the disparities in enrollment requirements between migrant and talented families' children and assess how these policies affect migrant children's access to fair education.

2.2 Interview

The following theories are put out in light of this paper's research idea and earlier researchers' findings:

H1. The primary element affecting migrant workers' decisions to relocate with them is the expense of providing for their children.

H2. One of the secondary elements is how migrant children feel about the school where they attend.

This research interviewed migrant workers entering and exiting industries in order to evaluate the aforementioned hypotheses, and next examined the factors influencing their decision to relocate.

2.2.1 Selection of samples

The more distinctive local plastic knitting business was chosen as the research industry, and the study was carried out in a science and technology park in Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province. The percentage of migrant workers in the overall number of employees is taken into consideration when choosing factories, and those with a high percentage of migrant workers are chosen to serve as research subjects. The primary focus of the subject selection is migratory workers whose children are enrolled in compulsory school, encompassing the two scenarios when children move with or without their parents.

Seven men, six older than thirty, four older than thirty-five, and one older than forty, participated in the interviews. With the greatest tenure being ten years and the smallest being one month, they had been employed in the region for more than four years. There are essentially only two children, and there is only one mother of three. Six of these have not moved, and one has moved with his kids.

2.2.2 Investigation process

Survey time: October, 2023

Place of survey: Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province

Duration: 2 days

The primary data for the study came from in-depth one-on-one interviews with migrant workers in factories who had migrant children. The respondents were asked a series of questions based on the topic framework, which allowed for a lot of first-hand information to be gathered. Following the interviews, the information gathered from the interviews was arranged and examined to provide the relevant information. The survey data are detailed in Part 3.

2.3 Questionnaire

2.3.1 Sampling

In Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, there is a research and technology park where the questionnaires are distributed. The choice of factories with a high proportion of migrant workers as the research object was made based on the ratio of migrant workers to total employees. The primary target group for choosing subjects is migrant workers whose children are enrolled in compulsory education, including the two scenarios in which the children move or remain in their current location.

31 samples were gathered through the distribution of questionnaires, 7 of whom participated in preventive interviews. Of them, twenty-one did not move with their children and ten had children who moved with them.

2.3.2 Investigation process

Survey time: April, 2024

Place of survey: Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province

Duration: 2 days

A total of 31 questionnaires will be collected over the course of two days from the appropriate survey population through the design of the questionnaire, the data to be gained for more thorough questions set, and the network. To obtain the necessary data, the questionnaire data were sorted and evaluated. The survey data are detailed in Part 3.

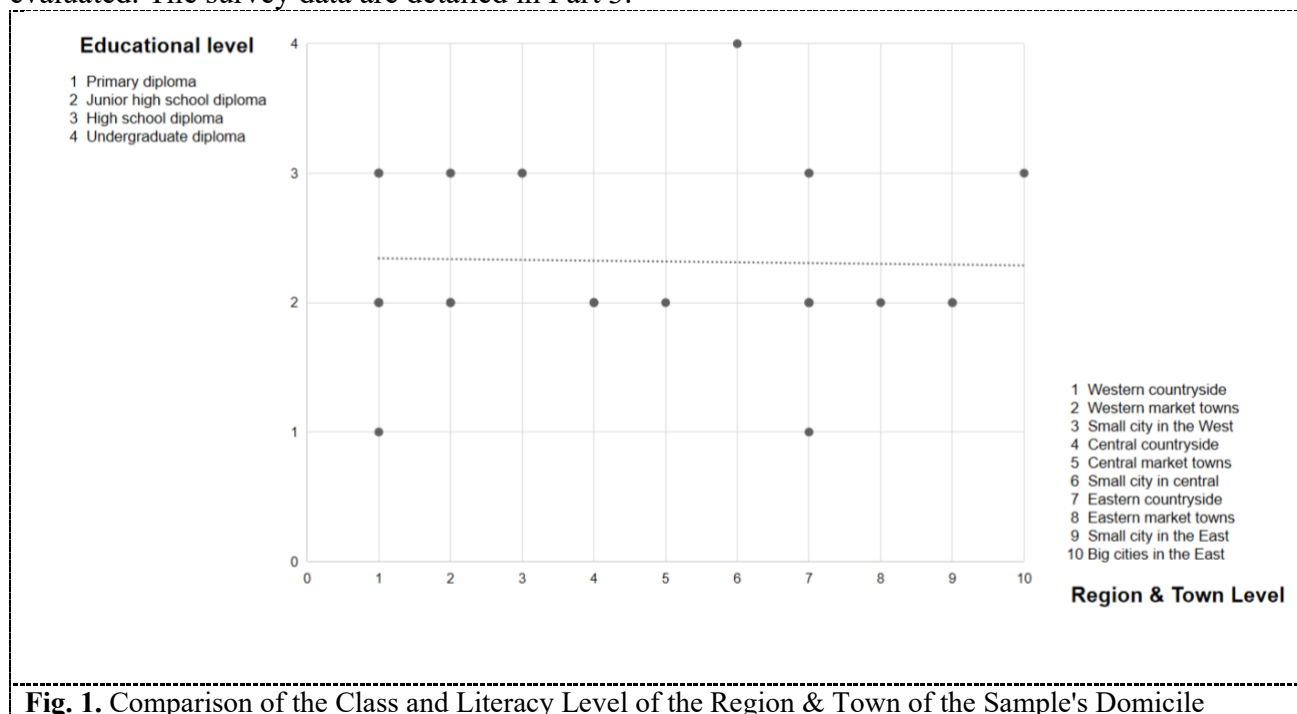


Fig. 1. Comparison of the Class and Literacy Level of the Region & Town of the Sample's Domicile

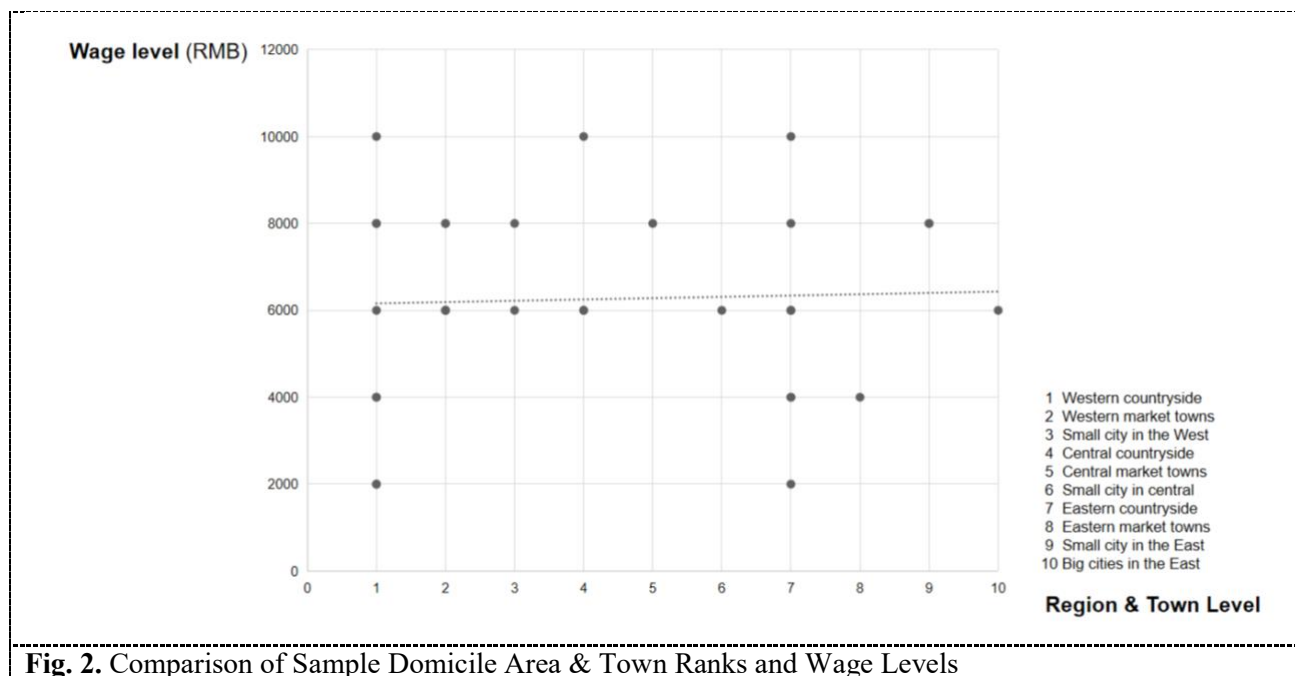


Fig. 2. Comparison of Sample Domicile Area & Town Ranks and Wage Levels

2.4 Tracing

Both the log tracking survey and the behavioral observation method were employed as tracking techniques in this investigation. Haining Boyuan School, a special school for children of new residents that primarily offers school services for children of migrant workers, was selected as the research object in the initial investigation. While traveling to and from school in April 2023, the authors squatted in front of the school to conduct their research. The percentage of kids who commuted on their own was counted, and parents who picked up and dropped off their kids were randomly sampled for structured interviews. Permission was obtained to conduct follow-up surveys in order to gather descriptive routes. GIS software was then used to compute the descriptive routes in order to determine the shortest path between the residence and the school. The survey data are detailed in Part 3.

3. Results

Three components make up overall educational equity: process equity, outcome equity, and starting point equity [1]. It is noteworthy that the viewpoint of the family subject has not been extensively explored in research on educational equity. Accordingly, educational fairness is covered in this paper from two perspectives: 1. incapable of migrating (studying at the place of domicile and not living with their parents); and 2. capable of migrating (studying at the place of work and living with their parents). Children of migrants experience educational inequality due to the combined effects of school accessibility [20] and family structure [21]. The causes fall into two primary categories: non-institutional and institutional. The two levels of educational equity from these two factors will be discussed individually in the following.

3.1 Enable to Move with Parents: Institutional Factors

The capacity of migrating children to attend school is mostly influenced by institutional variables, and the ability of migrant children to attend school at their location of employment plays a crucial role in determining whether or not migrant families may relocate their children. It is unfair to any member of the family for children to be left behind when they are unable to relocate with their parents. As a result, this research decided to examine the institutional determinants influencing school enrollment in

Hangzhou, Wenzhou, and Haining in Zhejiang Province with a GDP per capita of 161,100 RMB yuan, 89,800 yuan and 126,900 yuan respectively in 2023.

In Hangzhou, children of those with talent residency permits as the second category of enrollment after the local residences; other migrant children are treated as the third category. Ordinary immigrant children must apply for residence permits in the sequence indicated by points between March 1 and April 10 of each year. The higher the points, under the same criteria, the higher the ranking. In Wenzhou, children of talented can apply to private junior high schools and elementary schools, without the need for lottery-based preferential care arrangements; tuition subsidies are provided based on a standard of 20,000 yuan per person per school year. Ordinary migrant children are eligible to participate in "residence permit + points" gradient enrollment initiatives, whereby they are ranked higher under the same conditions as long as they comply with local household registration, local real estate, and the order of residence permit for school admission. Haining City has a specific policy for talented children; to satisfy the requirements of the talented children, coordinated enrollment arrangements must be accepted for the current year. The primary concerns of ordinary immigrant children are whether or not they have real estate at two levels, which are separated into eight successive levels, and whether or not they have a household registration. In the event that neither parent has a local household registration, one parent must fulfill the enrollment requirements by earning points. When all else is equal, the ranking rises with the quantity of points. The Hangzhou point system, which awards two points for every 1,000 yuan in donations and 0.5 points for every 100 milliliters of blood donated, is one example of a point system that utilizes public welfare activities like blood donations. Enrollment is not always available and selecting the preferred school is not given precedence without points.

It is evident that while specific solutions exist for various scenarios in various locations, migrant workers are primarily divided into two groups: talented and non-talented. In contrast to the intricate and convoluted enrolling process for regular immigrant children, talented's children have less demanding enrollment requirements. The main reason for this situation is that the children of talented people are better taken care of in order to attract them. Another factor is that because of the high number of migrants living in these three areas, there are many migrant children who must enroll in school, placing a burden on the region's educational resources and necessitating stricter enrollment restrictions. The majority of migrant workers, however, find it extremely difficult to own property in their area of employment. Moreover, individuals who possess residence permits must apply for residence permit points and compare points before they can assist in obtaining school entrance for their children. Undoubtedly unfairly, these stringent enrollment requirements have prevented many migrant workers' children from moving with them.

3.1.1 Differences in care policies for talents and non-talents

The policies of the three locations for the enrollment of talented and non-talented children differ greatly, according to the policy analysis method. For example, Haining's policy states that "Class A talents, Class B talents, Class C talents, and children of leading talents at all levels can be implemented by the Municipal Bureau of Education for unimpeded enrollment." The case of Wenzhou's "City ABC class talent, urban D class talent children can be coordinated to determine the priority of public schools, in principle, in accordance with the applicant's voluntary school priority arrangements for enrollment." The enrollment of non-talents' children must follow the hierarchy, which is primarily determined by the existence of a local school district that corresponds to the household registration, the presence of a real estate license in the district, and the high or low points of the certificate of residence.

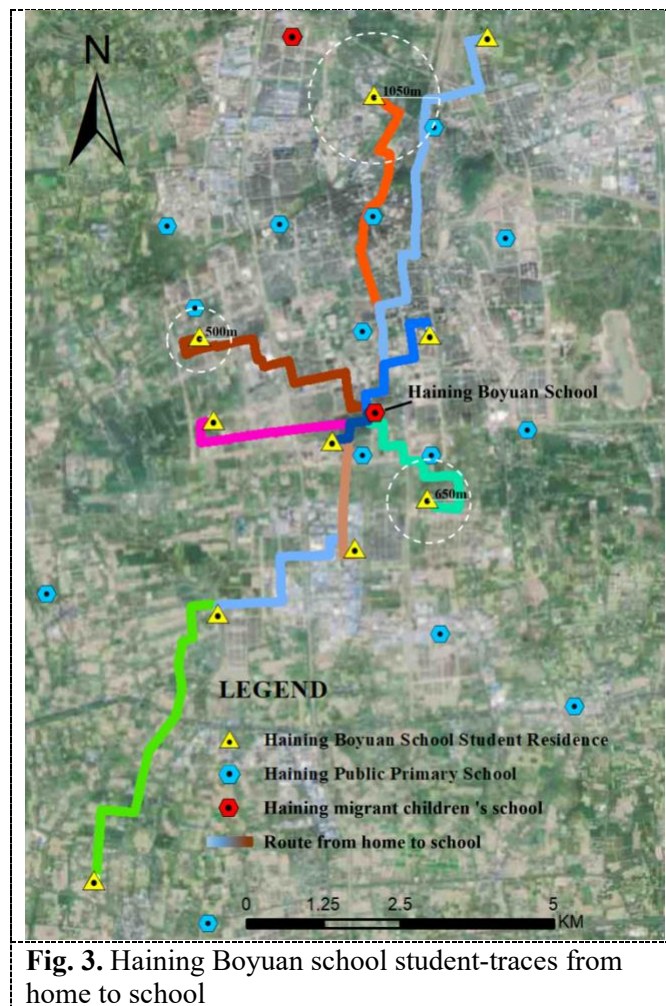
As such, it can be seen that the policy provides a high degree of protection for the schooling of children of talents, whereas children of non-talents are required to fulfil quite a number of conditions and make a lot of efforts in order to be admitted to schools. For migrant workers, purchasing a home that satisfies the requirements of the school district frequently requires decades of savings, and they

typically dedicate all of their financial resources to their children's education. Due to this, a lot of families have found it too difficult to handle the strain and have given up on purchasing a home in favor of thinking about the points system. Additionally, there are many unfair aspects of how points are acquired. For instance, the younger and more educated the parents, the higher the points, which has caused migrant workers with higher age and lower educational attainment to lag behind in points. Additionally, points are acquired through public welfare activities like blood donations and donations of money, which has caused wealthy families to be able to donate money and impoverished families to be able to acquire points only through blood donations. This is the only way that families can earn points for blood donations, which is equally unjust to families from lower-income backgrounds.

The disparity in care policies is evident, with children of non-talented workers required to meet a multitude of conditions to gain admission to schools, highlighting the systemic bias favoring certain demographics. The policy's impact is further illustrated by the experiences of migrant families. Of the twenty-one samples that did not bring their kids along, four claimed that the policy prevented them from enrolling in school, and of the four samples that did bring their kids along but did not attend regular public schools, three claimed they were unable to get into public schools with adequate educational resources.

To further investigate these disparities, this study focused on Haining Boyuan School, a special school catering to the educational needs of children from migrant worker families. This research collected eight routes from real tracking surveys and ten descriptive routes through interviews for the study on Haining Boyuan School, for a total of eighteen routes from home to school (as shown in Fig. 3.)¹. In order to project the shortest path between the settlement and the school, GIS software was used to generate the descriptive routes throughout the process of collecting the routes. These 18 routes had a mean distance of 3.78 km and a standard deviation of 2.44. The neighborhood is home to numerous public elementary schools because the school is situated in an urban region. However, the results of the actual random survey revealed that a large number of students attend the school far away from where they live. Specifically, 88.9% of students (Note: this group of students lives more than 1km away from the Boyuan School, and the distance from the public school \leq Boyuan School; 1km is the distance from the 15-minute living circle) have a public school near their home, but they are compelled to choose a more distant school for their new resident's children because they do not meet the admission requirements. The data underscores a notable trend in school selection that deviates from what might be expected based on geographical convenience. This choice to forgo nearby public schools in favor of a more distant school, which caters specifically to the children of migrant workers, is indicative of the complex interplay between policy, accessibility, and the educational aspirations of these families.

¹ Note: The figure displays 10 routes with clear differences because some of the routes have identical residence locations and routes, so they are blended.



Whether they are unable to enter a public school with good educational resources, or they choose a school for children of new residents that is further away from their homes, it is clear from this research that policy factors do have an impact on the equity of education for children who have been relocated.

3.2 Enable to Move with Parents: Non-institutional Factors

Non-institutional variables, such as financial considerations, the amount of time parents spend working outside the home, the expense of child care, and the inconvenience of moving with their kids, are significant influences on parents' decisions to relocate with their kids. Because migrant workers typically work in more affluent areas, their consumption levels will correspondingly rise. However, because of their lower economic status, migrant workers frequently lack the funds for tuition, food, clothing, housing, transportation, and other expenses associated with their children's relocation. The place of residence frequently has lower consumption than the place of employment, which prevents migratory workers' children from migrating with them; The housing conditions of migrant workers are typically limited because of economic and job instability, and parents are hesitant to move with their kids because they worry that the housing won't meet their needs. Other issues that arise from living away from home include domicile, social security, health care, and other issues that are easily encountered and negatively affect the ease of moving with the family. Children of migrant workers are also prevented from moving with their parents due to various issues that arise when living away from home, including medical care, social security, household registration, and other issues that are easily encountered. Additionally, parents' willingness to move with their children is also impacted by the

lack of time they have to care for their children due to hectic work schedules. It is unfair that children who are unable to move with their parents for these reasons receive less emotional support and educational resources than other children who are allowed to live with them.

3.2.1 Childcare Costs

The care, education, and company of children—as well as the financial, mental, and physical resources required to raise them—are collectively referred to as child care costs in this context.

The respondents' responses during the interviews, when asked why they choose to bring or not bring their kids to work, can be summed up as follows: 1. Taking into account the children's emotions; 2. Significant financial strain in comparison to the previous residence; 3. Child care issues; and 4. Elderly care issues².

It is evident that migratory workers' decisions to bring their kids with them are greatly influenced by economic pressure. Economically speaking, migrant workers typically have better incomes and, so, consume more. Due to their limited financial resources, migrant workers frequently struggle to pay for the living expenses and tuition associated with taking their kids with them. When it comes to their kids' education, they are more likely to select less expensive institutions over those with more highly qualified teachers. The primary focus of the respondents' responses was the cost of tuition and the travel time between home and school; they showed little to no interest in the quality of instruction, the strength of the teachers, or the school atmosphere. Many respondents claimed that in addition to the high cost of tuition in the area, they would rather their children attend the school where their household registration is located because of issues with difficult enrollment, numerous procedures, and expensive tuition in the local area. However, kids frequently miss out on greater educational resources as well because of the villages' poor educational standards.

The care of young ones and the elderly is a factor in the inconvenience of relocating with family. The majority of the interviewees are from the central region, 850–1,200 kilometers away from their workplace, and most of them only go back once for New Year's Eve. In addition to causing generational divides, communication breakdowns, and a lack of understanding between parents and children, longer workdays away from the home and less time spent with the kids also indirectly raise the cost of care. Comparably, spending less time with kids results in a change in guardianship, with migrant workers' parents taking up the majority of child care. The burden of raising children falls on the elderly; having children lessens their loneliness and establishes a mutually dependent relationship. If children move in with their parents, however, the issue of inadequate parental care and elderly people who are empty nesters may quickly arise. And for workers with children, it takes a lot of time just to pick up and drop off their children. Nowadays, parents must find time to pick up and care for their children throughout the non-compulsory education stage of kindergarten, just as they do during the compulsory education stage, especially in elementary school, when school authorities play a more significant role in student transportation.

It is discovered that while the economy does pose a significant barrier to migrating with the family, migrant workers' inclination to do so is also significantly influenced by how convenient it is to relocate with the family. It is important to note that the economic factor's influence on the whole decreases when factors like working outside the home, intergenerational concerns, and the interdependence of young and old are considered, with some respondents saying that money is not a big concern.

3.3 Move with Parents: Institutional Factors

In terms of institutional factors, the dualistic social structure of "urban-rural division," social discrimination in cities, insufficient attention and accommodation of migrant workers by formal

² The above four points are listed in descending order of the ratio, and the point 1 will be covered in 3.3.

organizations, and migrant workers' lack of social networks and limitations have all been cited as reasons why migrant workers struggle to integrate into urban society [24]. The lack of reasonableness of the government's explicit or invisible "enrollment thresholds," which are of various types and weights and vary by region, is tantamount to a new filtering mechanism, which not only excludes disadvantaged migrant worker groups from urban public services, but also creates new educational inequalities among migrant children [25]. Relevant policies have considerably improved as a result of the change policy's three stages of exploration, acceleration, and attack. Schools for children with migrants have likewise evolved from "simple schools" [26] to privately run elementary schools for children of migrant workers after conversion, and finally to public schools [27].

3.4 Move with Parents: Non-institutional Factors

Educational equity is influenced by two types of non-institutional factors: software and hardware. The social atmosphere and educational environment are examples of software aspects, whereas hardware factors include migrant families' economic position and school facility configuration. Despite urban efforts to improve educational resources, there are significant disparities in educational resources between migrant children and local kids due to spillover effects. Because public schools have limited enrollment and thresholds, migrant children must attend private migrant children's schools with less desirable conditions. Private schools for migrant workers are thought to have emerged during a certain historical time in reaction to a wave of migrant workers and urbanization, and they have a "informal" character from the start, belonging neither to the city nor the countryside [26]. As a result, these schools receive little government funding and have outdated operating conditions. Their sponsors are a diverse social group made up of people with strong profit-making instincts, and few of them are actually driven by love and understand how to educate [28]. Furthermore, in migrant schools, the impact of parents' expectations and school demands on teachers leads to employed teachers becoming urban wage earners with little feeling of responsibility [29]. Under the effect of these circumstances, obstacles remain between the resources available to migrant children and local students. Second, on the demand side of educational resources, migrant families' inability to provide education independently is both the cause and effect of the problem of educational disparity. Urban migrant populations often believe that their children will be able to attain higher academic degrees, modify their living situation, and improve their social status [30]. However, due to their relatively low academic abilities, they are unable to provide adequate educational supervision and educational planning for their children and must rely on outside assistance. They are unable to give their kids access to enough educational resources because of financial and environmental limitations, which makes educational disparity worse. The low-cost organizational model of labor reproduction of migrant workers has, however, resulted in a highly marginalized state of existence for the "children," making it difficult for them to advance through the educational system. As a result, they give up their education by rejecting knowledge, which gives rise to the "children's" anti-school culture [31].

Furthermore, other research has suggested that factors other than family dynamics play a bigger role in boys' and daughters' academic failure. The stereotypes that urban residents have about migrant workers, such as "low quality" and "dirty and rude," are often carried over to local students. This results in prejudice and rejection of migrant workers' children by local students, as well as exclusion and discrimination against migrant workers' children and a bad attitude toward outsiders. Because of this, migrant children of migrant laborers are also discriminated against and rejected by local students, and in certain urban local families, sentiments about migrant populations have been passed down from generation to generation [32]. Children of migrants experience psychological imbalances due to discrimination in their surroundings and resource imbalances, and they feel less equitable access to schooling than children of urban dwellers. It was discovered that urban children outperformed migrant children in terms of psychological equity in schooling [33]. The academic and collective integration situation will also be affected by these psychological issues. If the immigrant children face unsolvable

difficulties in their studies, they will eventually develop anorexia as a psychological reaction. As their academic performance continues to decline, they will gradually give up on themselves and move toward self-directed academic abandonment, which will result in irreversible academic failure [34]. For whatever cause, the offspring of migrant laborers will inevitably complete class reproduction without recognizing it and follow in their fathers' footsteps if the issue of educational equalization remains unresolved.

3.4.1 Children's social feelings

Nine of the twenty-one samples who did not bring their kids explained that they did not want to come here because their kids were already attending school in their hometowns, four said that they were worried their kids wouldn't adjust to the environment here, and the remaining three said they would think about whether their kids could attend a school in their hometowns with their friends. When deciding whether to move with their children, parents are reportedly highly concerned about the living conditions and educational opportunities for their offspring. They are concerned that their children will not be able to integrate into the new environment and will be alone and helpless. They don't want their children to have to deal with difficulties like changing schools and adjusting to a new environment as a result of relocating with them. These concerns are not unfounded. Some studies have pointed out that migrant children of migrant workers face challenges in terms of mental health and peer support. Migrant children were found to have significantly lower levels of mental health and support from peers than non-migrant children, as well as higher scores on interpersonal sensitivity and perceived exclusion[35]. This finding is consistent with the general findings within China that migrant children are generally considered to be less psychologically healthy than their urban counterparts. Although migrant children had common problems with psychological adjustment, they showed significant individual differences in demographic characteristics such as gender, whether they were only children, the grade they were in, and the type of school they attended, as well as in psychological characteristics such as cognition and emotional affect[36]. The impact of mobility on children's mental health, noting that children with higher mobility felt more discrimination and exclusion. This may have exacerbated the psychological stress of migrant children, leading to more complex mental health challenges[37]. Changing schools is a big deal for kids in today's world, especially if their parents relocated with them. For some kids, adjusting to a new surroundings, new classmates, and new teachers can be quite stressful psychologically.

On the other hand, this research also came across a few comforting circumstances. Of the ten interviewees who brought their kids along, six sent their kids to regular public schools, three sent their kids to schools specifically for migrant workers, and one sent his or her kid to a private school. Remarkably, families with children attending regular public schools stated that their kids did not object to learning, that they felt comfortable and connected to their classmates, and that teachers did not treat them any differently. This demonstrates that many migrant worker children are nevertheless able to carve out a place for themselves in the new environment, despite certain worries and challenges. The stigma associated with migrant laborers is progressively fading.

One of the key elements influencing the decision to relocate with migrants is also the psychology of family reunions. Eight of the ten interviewees who brought their kids said that they wished for a family reunion. This illustrates the enduring quality of the family, which serves as a crucial source of emotional support and social support for people. Family reunions and bonding are significant aspects that many migrant workers cannot overlook, even when working in the city can offer better growth prospects and a higher pay.

The responses provided by the respondents indicate that parents take into account the psychological and educational needs of their children when deciding whether or not to migrate, and that the psychology of family reunions also influences migration decisions. Additionally, there is a decline in societal prejudice towards migrant workers.

3.4.2 Parental considerations for education quality

Twenty of the thirty-one survey samples had a middle school education or less, and eleven had a high school education or more. The questionnaire's results indicate that children of parents with a junior high school diploma or less typically have relatively poor grades, with more classes falling into the 30%–50% and after 50% categories. In contrast, children of parents with a senior high school diploma or above demonstrate significantly better grades, typically ranking in the top 20% of the class. It is evident that there is a correlation between parents' educational attainment and their children's success. It is noteworthy that out of the 20 samples, 10 had a middle school diploma or less, whereas none of the parents with a high school diploma or above brought their kids along. This suggests that it is not the case that the more educated parents are, the more they tend to bring their children with them.

Of the thirty-one samples, twenty-one are extremely worried about their kids' grades, and eighteen of them will go with their kids after school. Only three out of ten parents who worry about their kids' grades occasionally will go with their kids after school, and only three out of ten parents who worry about their kids' grades occasionally will take their kids to work. It's evident that parents who care deeply about their children's education also care deeply about their own children. Additionally, parents who care deeply about their children's education are more likely to move with their children, which further exacerbates the effect that education has on children's daily care and attention.

When questioned, "Where do you work or where is your home registered, which has a greater degree of education? Which school, in your opinion, does your child currently attend have superior teachers than a school of the same caliber in your home or place of employment?", twelve respondents said they had not given it any attention. In response to the query, "Would you consider the schools if all these concerns were addressed and you were considering bringing your children to the site to study?" Ten respondents indicated they would bring their kids with them, indicating that the expense of other factors—like child care—would weigh more heavily when determining whether or not to move. This suggests that factors other than education and teacher quality were taken into account when making this decision.

4. Conclusions

Due to China's rapid urbanization, a large number of long-term migrant workers have emerged in economically developed areas. One of the more important issues that come with these migrant workers is whether or not their children will be willing to migrate with them, and whether or not they will be able to access the same resources for education and living as children of household registration. The educational resources available to children of migrants differ from those of the native population as a result of spillover effects, and the primary drivers of educational inequality are both institutional and non-institutional variables. There is less discussion of non-institutional factors, such as urban and school environment, affecting willingness to move with the family, when supported by institutional factors such as policy. Additionally, when any aspect of educational inequality is discussed, the majority of migrant families are not taken into account. Thus, using Zhejiang, an area with a high migrant worker population, as an example, this paper uses questionnaires, policy research, and interviews to examine the factors influencing migrant workers' desire to relocate with their kids.

The survey found that while institutional factors have an impact on the willingness to migrate, non-institutional factors such as the cost of childcare, children's social feelings, family adhesion, and parental considerations of education are also not negligible in influencing the willingness of migrant workers to migrate with their children. The cost of childcare, which takes into account consumption patterns, pay scales, and the upbringing of young and old people, is one of the most significant factors influencing migrant workers' decisions to relocate with their families. While literacy has less of an

impact, social feelings in children and parents' attitudes toward education also matter greatly. The willingness to relocate with children increases with decreasing childcare costs, parental concern for their education increases with moving with children, and the psychology of family reunions strengthens with moving with children. Furthermore, there is no connection at all between literacy and the decision to have kids move with them or not.

While this research provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. Firstly, the study's geographical focus on Zhejiang Province may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different socio-economic contexts. Secondly, the sample size, although reflective of the research sites, may not fully capture the breadth of experiences among all migrant families. Lastly, the study's cross-sectional design does not allow for the examination of long-term trends or the impact of educational policies over time. Building on the findings and limitations of this study, future research should aim to expand the geographical scope to include other provinces with varying levels of economic development. Longitudinal studies could provide a more in-depth understanding of the long-term effects of educational policies and family decisions on the life outcomes of migrant children. Additionally, qualitative research that explores the lived experiences of migrant children could enrich the quantitative findings presented in this paper.

In conclusion, educational equity is a multifaceted issue that requires a concerted effort from policymakers, educators, and society at large. After separating out the many forms of educational inequality and their occurrences, this research discovered that non-institutional factors are also crucial. Previous research has solely focused on institutional issues. This is a valuable resource for considering innovative approaches to address the issue of educational equity for immigrant children from an architectural standpoint and for creating a social environment that accommodates children's migration. These factors can boost immigrant populations' willingness to migrate, encourage their urban integration, hasten the development of child-friendly cities, advance spatial justice, and advance the advancement of basic education in a more equitable and high-quality manner. Moreover, the creation of child-friendly cities and the promotion of spatial justice should be integral to the urban planning agenda.

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