

# The Impact of Urban and Rural Education Gap on Student Achievement Differences

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**Abstract:** With our country's social development, the gap between urban and rural education has become increasingly obvious, especially the difference in student achievement. This study aims to explore the impact of the urban-rural education gap on student achievement. The study adopts a quantitative analysis method to collect and analyze the academic performance, learning resources, and social resources of urban and rural students. The results show that the unbalanced distribution of educational resources in urban and rural areas is the key factor leading to the gap in students' achievement. For example, urban education resources are abundant while rural education resources are relatively scarce. At the same time, the difference in social environment and family economic status also have a significant impact on student achievement. The differences between urban and rural areas, particularly in terms of family economic conditions and their ability to invest in education, further widen the gap between urban and rural education. The results of this study can provide a reference for reducing the gap between urban and rural education and improving the academic performance of rural students. A fair education policy is essential to narrow the gap between urban and rural education resources distribution, so as to improve the equality of education in society.

**Keywords:** Urban and rural education gap; Student achievement differences; Allocation of educational resources; Social and environmental differences; Family economic situation

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## 1. Introduction

Our country is going through a stage of rapid development, and the distribution of social, economic, and educational resources is becoming more and more important. However, these resources are not evenly distributed between urban and rural areas, especially educational resources, which is particularly serious. The gap between urban and rural education caused by the uneven distribution of educational resources has become a social problem, which runs through the road of academic development of each student and affects their future. This study has conducted an in-depth analysis and discussion on this issue, trying to reveal the impact of the urban-rural education gap on the difference in students' academic performance and provide a possible solution. It is found that education gap, social environment differences, and family economic status have a significant impact on student achievement. The threat posed by the urban-rural gap to educational equity cannot

be ignored. In this regard, we need to propose solutions to reduce the urban-rural education gap and strive to improve the academic performance of rural students, so as to achieve educational equity in society. The main purpose of this study is to provide a deeper understanding of how backward rural educational resources affect students' academic development and to explore the feasibility of reducing this educational gap.

## **2. Research on the impact of the urban-rural education gap on student achievement**

### **2.1. Analysis of influencing factors of urban and rural education gap on academic achievement**

The impact of the urban-rural education gap on academic performance has multiple complex factors, which can be analyzed from the aspects of education resource allocation, teachers, teaching facilities, family background, and so on <sup>[1]</sup>. The significant difference in the allocation of educational resources is one of the important factors that affect students' achievement. In cities, schools have adequate libraries, laboratories, computer classrooms, and other facilities, while schools in rural areas are obviously inadequate in these aspects. Urban schools can provide more abundant learning materials and advanced teaching equipment, which helps to improve students' overall performance.

The difference in the quality of teachers also plays a key role in the urban-rural education gap. Urban schools usually attract highly qualified teachers who not only have solid professional knowledge but also extensive teaching experience and are better able to teach students according to their aptitude. In contrast, the shortage of teachers in rural schools and their uneven quality make it difficult to guarantee the quality of education and teaching, which directly affects students' academic performance <sup>[2]</sup>.

The influence of family background on students' academic performance should not be ignored. Urban families generally have better economic conditions and educational backgrounds, which can provide rich extracurricular learning resources and a better educational environment for their children. However, due to the restriction of economic conditions, rural families have a large gap in education investment and support, which further aggravates the difference in student achievement. The differences in social environment, such as cultural atmosphere and community support, also further affect the learning effect of urban and rural students.

The impact of the urban-rural education gap on students' achievement is a multi-factor superimposed effect, which requires in-depth discussion and analysis from multiple perspectives and levels to fully understand the complexity of this problem and provide a scientific basis for solving the urban-rural education gap.

### **2.2. Relationship between academic achievement and educational resource allocation of urban and rural students**

The difference in academic achievement between urban and rural students is a direct reflection of the unbalanced distribution of urban and rural educational resources. Urban areas are rich in educational resources, complete school facilities, and qualified teachers, especially a large number of experienced teachers and a rich and diverse curriculum <sup>[3]</sup>. Collectively, these factors form a superior learning environment that enables urban students to better realize their academic potential. Urban schools also have better access to the latest educational technology and information, providing students with a wider range of high-quality learning resources.

On the contrary, schools in rural areas are generally inadequate in terms of infrastructure and teachers. Due to the limitations of geographical conditions and economic development level, the teaching equipment and the number of teachers in rural schools are difficult to match those in urban schools <sup>[4]</sup>. The lack of teachers leads to rural students lacking professional guidance in the learning process, and the single curriculum also limits the expansion of students' knowledge <sup>[5]</sup>. Rural schools also face great obstacles in obtaining educational information and technology, which makes rural students lag behind in the use of modern educational resources.

The uneven distribution of educational resources leads to the obvious gap in academic performance between urban and rural students. The abundance of educational resources not only improves students' comprehensive learning ability but also shapes better learning habits and academic goals, which are generally lacking in rural students. Promoting the balanced distribution of educational resources is the key to narrowing the gap between urban and rural students' academic achievement.

### **2.3. Influence of social environment differences on academic achievement of urban and rural students**

The difference between urban and rural social environments has an important impact on students' academic achievement. Urban students enjoy more abundant cultural and educational resources and have access to more extracurricular practice opportunities and a high-quality education environment, which is conducive to the improvement of comprehensive quality. In contrast, the rural social environment is relatively unitary, and the lack of various learning promotion factors leads to the narrow knowledge contact area of students. Urban residents generally have higher education awareness and enthusiasm, and pay more attention to the cultivation of family education, which has a positive impact on students' achievements. On the contrary, the education level and environment of rural families are generally low, which is not conducive to students' academic performance.

## **3. Analysis of the impact of urban and rural family economic status on student achievement**

### **3.1. Discussion on the correlation between family economic status and students' academic performance**

Family economic status is one of the important factors affecting students' academic performance. The sufficiency of economic resources directly determines the level of educational support that families can provide for students. Families with superior economic status are usually able to provide students with more learning resources, such as after-school tutoring, abundant books, learning software, and opportunities to participate in various extracurricular activities<sup>[6]</sup>. These resources can effectively improve students' learning effect so that they can perform better in their studies.

In contrast, in families with poor economic status, due to the lack of adequate economic support, children receive limited resources in the learning process. Students from rural families have less access to after-school tutoring and learning tools than those from urban families due to their low income, leading to lower academic performance. Parents of economically disadvantaged families may face more stress in their lives, which can be transmitted to their children, affecting their mental state and academic concentration, which in turn affects their academic performance.

Family economic status not only affects education investment but also exerts a long-term profound impact. Families with poor economic conditions usually have limited spending on education, leaving students with fewer opportunities to access quality educational resources, which may negatively affect students' overall academic development in the long run. Studies have shown that students who are in a state of economic hardship for a long time are more likely to have academic burnout and a lack of learning motivation and a sense of purpose, resulting in a decline in the overall academic level.

Family economic status also affects students' social capital accumulation. Parents of wealthy families usually have more social resources and can provide a wider social network and rich social experience, which provides students with more support and guidance in study and life. Improving family economic status is of great significance to improving students' academic performance. It is not only a short-term resource investment, but more importantly, it can promote the long-term development of students' education by enhancing their family's economic ability.

### **3.2. Influence of urban and rural household economic status differences on access to educational resources**

The difference in family economic status in urban and rural areas significantly affects students' access to educational resources. In cities, families usually have more financial resources and can provide their children with a variety of educational support, such as quality schools, after-school classes, rich learning materials, and opportunities to participate in a variety of outreach activities. These resources can significantly improve students' academic performance and broaden their knowledge <sup>[7]</sup>. In rural areas, limited by family economic conditions, students' ability to obtain high-quality education resources is weak, and many students can only rely on limited school resources and lack additional learning support. Rural families, often due to greater economic pressure, cannot afford the cost of after-school tutoring and additional learning resources for their children, which further restricts the improvement of students' learning ability and the expansion of their knowledge. The difference in family economic status leads to the imbalance of access to educational resources, which has become one of the important reasons for the achievement gap between urban and rural students. In order to narrow this gap, it is necessary to take effective measures to improve the economic conditions of rural families, so as to enhance their access to educational resources.

### **3.3. Long-term impact of family economic status on students' academic performance**

The economic status of urban and rural families has a significant and profound long-term impact on students' academic performance. Students from wealthy families usually have access to more educational resources, such as attending after-school tutoring classes, purchasing learning materials, and receiving personalized educational guidance, factors that help improve students' academic performance <sup>[8]</sup>. Students from poorer families have limited access to these resources, resulting in less satisfactory long-term academic performance <sup>[9]</sup>. Students from disadvantaged families are more at risk of dropping out of school, which reduces their access to continuing education and affects their educational achievement and employment prospects in the long term.

## **4. Countermeasures and suggestions to reduce the gap between urban and rural education**

### **4.1. Strategic suggestions for promoting equitable distribution of educational resources**

In order to narrow the gap between urban and rural education and realize the fair distribution of educational resources, effective countermeasures should be taken from multiple aspects <sup>[10]</sup>. We should strengthen the construction of basic education facilities in rural areas, improve the working and living conditions of teachers, and attract excellent teachers to teach in rural schools. The attractiveness of education in rural areas can be increased by providing incentives such as housing, transport subsidies, and career establishment. The training of rural teachers is strengthened to improve their teaching level and professional quality. Through the combination of offline training and online education resources, rural teachers can obtain high-quality education resources and update teaching methods despite geographical restrictions.

It is necessary to promote information-based education and deeply integrate Internet technology with education. Through the establishment of modern information infrastructure, high-quality educational resources can be widely shared between urban and rural areas. The Internet education platform can provide rural students with the same quality courses and learning resources as urban students, thus making up for the shortage of teachers. We will promote the online teacher guidance program, directly benefit rural students through remote teaching and video teaching, and narrow the gap between urban and rural students in access to educational resources.

The participation of social forces should also be strengthened, and enterprises, non-profit organizations,

and social welfare forces should be encouraged to make joint efforts. Enterprises can provide more resources for rural schools in the form of donations and scholarships. Non-profit organizations provide students in rural areas with learning materials and extracurricular activities through educational programs. The participation of social forces can effectively make up for the deficiency of the government in resource allocation, form a multi-party force, and jointly promote the fair distribution of urban and rural education resources.

These measures can not only significantly improve the supply quality and quantity of rural educational resources, but also create more equal opportunities for rural students to receive education, so as to effectively narrow the gap between urban and rural education and improve the level of rural education.

#### **4.2. Improving the social environment to enhance the achievement of rural students**

The social environment plays a key role in improving the academic performance of rural students and can be enhanced through various strategies. Priority should be given to the establishment and upgrading of cultural infrastructure in rural schools, such as libraries, playgrounds, and computer rooms, in order to enhance the learning conditions and interests of rural students. We will strengthen the ranks of rural teachers, organize regular teacher training, and improve the quality and level of education. We will promote interaction between urban and rural areas, encourage outstanding urban teachers to volunteer in rural areas, and improve the quality of rural education through experience sharing and teaching observation. We should carry out psychological counseling programs for rural students, pay attention to their mental health, and provide them with emotional support and academic counseling. It is also imperative to strengthen the rural community support system, mobilize parents and community forces, and jointly pay attention to and promote the all-round development of students. We should enhance the educational cooperation between rural families and schools, establish an effective home-school contact mechanism, and form a good educational force. On the basis of the improvement of the social environment, the academic performance of rural students is expected to be significantly improved, laying a solid foundation for the realization of educational equity.

#### **4.3. Suggestions to improve the performance of rural students by taking the improvement of family economic conditions as a breakthrough point**

Improving family economic status plays an important role in improving rural students' academic performance. We should promote the increase of economic income of rural families, improve their economic ability through policy support and skill training, and provide a guarantee for education investment. Financial aid and scholarship programs are provided to ease the educational burden of underprivileged students and ensure that they are able to complete their studies. Further, establishing and improving the social security system for rural families, including medical care, housing, and vocational training, is necessary to reduce the obstacles to education due to economic difficulties. We should strengthen the publicity and education of rural families' awareness of financial management and education investment, improve families' awareness of the importance and long-term benefits of education, and fundamentally improve the learning environment and performance of rural students.

### **5. Conclusion**

From the perspective of the difference between the urban and rural education gap and students' achievement, this paper deeply discussed the impact of the urban and rural education gap on students' achievement through the analysis of their academic achievement, learning resources, and social resources. It is found that the unbalanced distribution of educational resources in urban and rural areas and the difference in family economic status are the

main reasons leading to the achievement gap of students. Therefore, we need to pay particular attention to these differences and seek improvement at the policy level. There are some limitations to the study. For example, the education gap between urban and rural areas is a complex issue, which is affected by many factors. However, this study mainly focuses on resource allocation and family economic status and does not conduct in-depth research on other factors that may affect the education gap, such as teacher level and school environment. In addition, the samples selected in this study are mainly static data, and dynamic cross-time data may provide more information. In view of the above limitations, it is suggested that the subsequent research can take into account other factors that may affect students' performance, and consider using dynamic data for research to enrich the research content. In practice, a fair education policy is crucial, and we need to narrow the gap between urban and rural education through the redistribution of educational resources to improve the education level and equality of society. It is hoped that this study can provide some inspiration and suggestions for reducing the gap between urban and rural education, and contribute to the advancement of urban and rural education equity.

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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