Call for papers: *Educational Studies in Japan* Vol. 18, 2024.

Exploring new relations between "Education and Equity"

Submission deadline: August 31, 2023

From the end of 2019 on, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact not only on Japan but also on global society. Its effects have been felt in educational institutions as well as in the field of healthcare, including the provision of online educational activities as an alternative measure and the consequent restrictions on educational experiences, and the need to address the disparities in educational outcomes and learning environments caused by changes in educational conditions as a result of these changes. Under these conditions, the sense of stagnation and difficulty in living that many people, especially young people, feel has been further magnified in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the context of this sense of stagnation, there is an increasing demand for "equity" in the field of education. There are many questions concerning this equity, such as whether education can contribute to the creation of an equitable society, whether school education equitably allocates educational resources, whether there is inequity in the educational outcomes obtained through school education, and how an equitable educational environment influences educational outcomes.

The definitions of equity are varied. Some terms have multiple overlapping spheres of coverage, such as equality, fairness and justice. From an educational perspective, many themes can be invoked, ranging from the distribution of educational resources to the correction of academic achievement disparities caused by socio-economic backgrounds and the appropriateness of educational content. Arguments on the relations between education and equity have already taken place over many years, both in Japan and internationally, in the fields of sociology of education, philosophy of education, and teacher education. The discussion has focused on the correction of the disparity in academic achievement and learning environments between "mainstream" children and minorities on the periphery of society, such as learners with foreign roots, learners from socioeconomically disadvantaged families, and indigenous peoples. In other words, although discussions of equity are beginning to clarify the relations between disparities among diverse groups and their social backgrounds, we have yet to acquire sufficient knowledge about the "appropriate" measures to correct these differences and the social impact of these outcomes.

These themes continue to be discussed today, although the focus of the discussion has changed. There are several reasons for this, in addition to the current situation in which educational disparities among minorities are still prominent. First, diversity within groups that have traditionally been the target for disparity redress has become apparent. In other words, minorities in peripheral positions naturally have diverse backgrounds, and it is difficult to deal with them all as a single target for support. Their diversity also intersects beyond categories and is associated with social power, including within the educational dimension. Second is the expansion of the target population for which equity is demanded. As society becomes more aware of diversity, it is necessary to consider new approaches to diversity that have not been given much attention in the past. This scope includes perception of the privilege of equity from the majority side. Third is the issue of indicators to measure the relations between education and equity.

Currently, these indicators are being used in relation to "excellence." Despite the emergence of diversity in society, the indicators are one-sided, such as achievement test results. This leads to a simplification of the disparities caused by diversity.

Furthermore, in addition to the above perspectives, as the affluence of society recedes, there is a tendency for people to become less receptive and tolerant of support for those in an inequitable position, and to promote a sense of difficulty in living for " normal/average" people who are outside the scope of support and compensation. This point will become an important perspective when considering "education and equity" in the future.

In consideration of the above, we here call for a broad range of practical and theoretical contributions to this special issue that question the new relations between "education and equity" in the light of future social transformations. Through these contributions, it will be possible to discuss inequitable conditions in education and measures to resolve them, not only in Japan but also from a global perspective. We hope to discuss the new relations between "education and equity" from a wide range of perspectives, including various examples in Japan as well as international comparisons, together with contributors, academics, and readers as presented below.

Thematic examples:
1. Philosophy of equity in education
- The definition of equity, fairness, equality and justice in the context of Japanese school education
- Transformation of the idea of equity in education policy
- Development of educational policies that seek both equity and excellence
2. Educational disparities
- The disparities in academic achievement and learning environments caused by socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds, and countermeasures therefor
- Transformation of schooling and its impact on equity amid the COVID-19 pandemic
- Contribution to the realization of social equity through the GIGA school concept
- Pedagogical practices related to the SDGs
3. Equitable distribution of educational resources
- Allocation of educational resources, including the human resources
- Curriculum and social power
- Social education and childcare (disadvantaged families) support policies and equity
4. Role of teachers in realizing social equity
- Development of teacher education with social equity in mind
- Reasonable consideration for diverse educational needs
5. Diversity inherent in society and school education
- Inclusive education
- Education for gifted children
- Gender diversity