

# **Analysis on the Risks and Countermeasures of Chinese Government Purchasing of Education Service**

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**Keywords:** Government, Purchase of Education Service, Risk, Countermeasures

**Abstract:** Transforming the functions of government is the mainstream view today. Government management is transformed into government service, vertical management is transformed into horizontal governance, and the concept of government purchasing service has become a hot topic.

## **1. Introduction**

Since the strong characteristics of uncertainty, timeliness and spatiality of education service, the thesis hope that the government can attach importance to and respect the risks in education service and better serve the people's education by clarifying the risks existing in the government purchasing of education service and proposing policy responses.[1-9]

## **2. The Analysis of Risks of the Government Purchasing education service**

The trail of government purchasing education service is an innovation governance system of Chinese government according to the present situation, which is of great practical significance to explore how the government can effectively undertake educational functions.[10-14] However, in the cases of that the government's educational function not completely transformed, the relevant policy system still not perfect, and the market not yet fully developed, there are certain risks in implementing the government purchasing education service. [15]

### **2.1 Education-specific Attributes Restrict Government Purchasing Education Service**

The government purchasing education service is essentially a commodity trade, because of this there is a problem of the cost and benefit of commodities. The reason why the government is willing to purchase educational public goods offered by social organizations or other entities is mainly due to their cost of education service is lower or production is more efficient than the government itself. Nevertheless, in the real practice, it's very difficult to estimate the price of education service based on the characteristics of education. Besides, the information asymmetry is serious between the government and professional education institutions. In addition to purchasing products, the government also needs to pay the information cost to know about the service market, which obviously increased the cost of education.

### **2.2 No Clear Definition of Education Service Supply Subject and Services Content**

#### **2.2.1 No clear definition of education service supply subject**

The government purchasing of education service is currently in the trial stage in China, so which organizations are eligible to become the mainstay of education services? There is no civilized regulation in national laws and regulations. The entrusted organization stipulated in the "Administrative Punishment Law" of China is a "public utility organization established according to law." In this case, whether education services can only be entrusted to institutions? The promulgation of "Non-state Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China" implemented on September 1, 2003, is actually the most powerful legal basis for the state to purchase private schools' education services. It can be seen that the state has recognized the participation of non-state in education services provision, but there is no clear mention of education provider subject.

### **2.2.2 No clear definition of education service supply content**

"Guidelines Catalogue for Shanxi Provincial Government Purchasing Services in 2014-2015" , "Implementation Opinions on the General Office of the People's Government of Guizhou Provincial Government Purchasing Services from Social Forces" and so on, these documents define the subject of government procurement services in social organizations which are registered in civil affairs department according to law or have been approved free registration by the State Council, as well as enterprises and institutions registered in the industrial and commercial administrations or authorities according to law. But they have only a broad definition, and the contents of education service supply are not defined.

### **2.3 Not Mature Operation Mechanism of Education Service Market**

The premise of pursuing the government purchasing education service system is that the government's "self-product" and "production mechanism" advantages are less efficient than market operations, but in fact education itself is a public product, and efficiency and quality are not justice standards that they must obey. From the perspective of Chinese current education service market, the system of bidding system, price estimation system, financial auditing system and budget system are still not perfect, besides there is no sound management mechanism inside and no mature market operating mechanism. As a result, The the products cannot meet the needs of education through half-baked market operation.

### **2.4 Education Corruption Bred Easily By Education Service Purchase**

The main risk of the government purchasing education service is the existence of “rent-seeking” and “interest-seeking” behaviors between the government authorities and the education service providers. The process of government purchasing education service is actually placing public goods in a profitable operation mechanism. It seems that after the lobbying and public relations of educational institutions, public goods will eventually become profitable, and even the education departments and staffs will seek market interests and profit distribution. In the status quo of government’s low information transparency, education corruption is easier to appear.

## **3. Countermeasures to Resolve the Risk of Government Purchasing Education Service**

### **3.1 Strengthen Government's Risks Awareness and Management of Education Service**

The government can not only blindly purchase education services or shirk its own education responsibilities. It should be clear that Chinese education service market is still immature, especially the development of social organizations. The government cannot rely too heavily on social organizations to provide education services. Due to the limited power of social organizations, whose development is still attached to the government. The government purchasing education services must be in combination with other management measures, and advance together, step by step. In addition to the convenience and efficiency of government purchasing education services from society, there are risks, hence a scientific and reasonable risk mitigation mechanism should be introduced to establish the government, service supply and citizens tripartite subjects. Build the risk prevention framework with public responsibility as the core, and create the systematical, organizational and social environment for the realization of this responsibility structure.

### **3.2 Establish Standardized Laws and Regulations to Facilitate the Government Purchasing Education Service**

At present, there is no unified normative regulation for purchasing education services across the country. The operational procedures of the government purchasing education service are disordered and unstructured. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a unified management norms for government purchasing education service. To establish a legal and regulatory system, there are three aspects to grasp. Firstly, establish a quasi-exit system for the education services to enter the market, and prevent the education departments from exempting their main responsibilities and obligations

or slacking. Secondly, scientifically supervise the operation and management mechanism of education services to prevent the interests damage of citizens education caused by market defects. Finally, establish legal norms for scientific evaluation and certification of education service products.

### **3.3 Construct a Diversified Education Service Evaluation System**

The government should give legal recognition to the purchase of education services, and approval and supervision to the purchasing education service projects. At the same time, the government education administrative department should give full play to the education service function, and plan for entire project, organize, and coordinate the purchasing education services. Industry organizations and quality assurance institutions should establish industry standards for the quality of education services, certify the professional level of education services, and conduct internal assessments of the quality criterion set by education service supply subject based on their own characteristics. Meanwhile the government, the media, the public, and the beneficiaries should be mobilized to evaluate and supervise the quality of education services to form a diversified evaluation system for education services.

### **3.4 Improve Government Information Disclosure and Supervision System**

#### **3.4.1 Improve the system and ensure public access to government purchasing education services**

It is required that governments at all levels firstly ensure open bidding to the whole society, for example, through government networks, newspapers, television and so on. Secondly the winning bidders should disclose the process while handling the bidding matters to guarantee transparency. When it refers to major education service purchases, the government should hold a press conference to announce the matter to the public and explain the reasons.

#### **3.4.2 Strengthen supervision to ensure that the open system for purchasing of education services is implemented.**

Internal supervision is the foundation. The administrative department of education should set an internal cross-inspection agency or a special inspection team to track and supervise the whole process of project planning, bidding, and acceptance. simultaneously, the education department is required to report to the relevant competent department and the audit supervision department before purchasing services from the society and consciously accept the supervision of the National People's Congress. Besides the funds for the purchasing education services must be included in the government's annual budget. In addition, each project must publish the contact information of the project monitoring and petitioning units during the operation process, and publicize on the new micro-medias such as Weibo and WeChat, and take the initiative to accept the supervision of the people.

## **4. Conclusion**

The transformation from "big government, small society" to "small government, big society" is a requirement of historical development. With the successful transformation of Chinese government functions, the service-oriented government will be deeply rooted in People's hearts, and the small and strong government will pay more attention to the quality and efficiency of government services. The government purchasing services from society is a necessary requirement for the development of service-oriented government. This paper does not oppose the government purchasing education services from society, but hopes that the government can attach importance to the risks of government purchasing education services under the current circumstances. All in all, the implementation of government purchasing service system should be gradual, not blindly advance, lest destroying the 100-year foundation of education.

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