Yap Dian Hao

A0184679H

ES1103 Essay Draft 2

Free higher education is quick to escalate to be one of the most controversial topics nowadays, and various countries hold different viewpoints regarding the cost bearer of higher education. Higher education includes education at polytechnics, universities and colleges, whereas state-funded higher education is defined as education at public colleges or universities funded by the state government (Burrows, 2018). While Chile and Germany advocate public funded education, Australia and England stress more on individual contribution from students themselves. In the United States, Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders proposed an allocation of $700 billion to eliminate public colleges’ tuition fees (Burke, 2016). While it seems that his proposal provides students greater access to higher education, it may impose negative consequences on students themselves. Statistics show that the current completion rate of public community colleges is at 38%, which is exactly half of that of private institutions, which boast a completion rate of 76% (Cooper, 2017). This essay seek to detail the increasing of already high students’ dropout rates caused by state-funded higher education in the United States, and I will provide one existing approach to tackle this problem. Additionally, I will suggest one better solution to further ameliorate it.

One major problem that is derived from state-funded higher education is the increasing of existing dropout rates of college students. Cooper (2017) show that nearly half of the students who study in public colleges fail to graduate, and this is supported by Vedder (2018) who mentioned that college dropout rate is at an alarming 47%, which far outnumbers the 27% who graduate and the remaining 26% who are still pursuing their degree. Kurfiss (2018) suggests a possible explanation of this phenomena: students might take free education for granted, and put in minimum effort in their studies. According to Norton (2018), when students deal with competitive courses in college, students will probably withdraw from those classes, especially when certain colleges do not include withdrawals when calculating the grade-point average. However, this will result in financial burdens and when students do not bear the cost of college education, they might lose motivation to persist, mass withdraw from classes, and dropout entirely. Furthermore, Halff (2019) argues that families who finance their children’s education will be more willing to monitor their studies. Without that financial incentive, parents tend to be more lenient towards their children and students may not be motivated to commit fully in their studies. Therefore, this shows that state-funded higher education contributes to the increasing of college students’ dropout rates due to students’ lack of motivation to excel in their studies, permissive parenting, or both.

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