
Newsletter

The Effects of Excessive Homework Loads on Social-Emotional Development in Compulsory Education Students: An Analysis Based on a Survey of 123 Primary and Secondary Schools in 12 Cities in China

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BASED on the data from a survey of 123 primary and secondary schools across 12 cities in 11 provinces in China, this study aims to investigate the effects of excessive homework loads on social-emotional skills in Chinese compulsory education students using the method of propensity score matching, with a view to providing empirical evidence to support student social-emotional development.

Research Findings:

- As a result of the implementation of the Double Reduction policy, the homework burden on Chinese compulsory education students has been considerably alleviated. Nevertheless, the homework burden on junior secondary students has not yet been reduced to the desired level due to the pressure of the high-stakes senior secondary school entrance examination.
- Excessive homework loads inhibited social-emotional development in compulsory education students by posing significant and negative effects on their emotional regulation and communication skills.
- There were heterogeneous effects of excessive homework loads on social-emotional skills across various student groups. Excessive homework burden had greater social-emotional consequences among primary school students than among junior secondary school students. Girls were more significantly negatively affected by it than boys in social-emotional development. Compared to their urban peers, rural students suffered more from the negative impact of disproportionately heavy homework loads. Low-SES and high-SES students are more significantly negatively affected by excessive homework burden than their middle-SES peers in social-emotional development.

The study suggests: (i) Schools should improve homework management, strictly controlling the overall amounts of homework. (ii) Teachers should improve the quality of homework design and assign more diverse homework. It is highly recommended that teachers of rural students

and primary school students increase the use of group assignments, creating more opportunities for students to engage in interpersonal interaction, to mitigate the unfavorable effects of homework burden on their communication skills development. (iii) Parents should develop scientific notions of education and rational understanding of the role of homework in supporting child growth. High-SES parents should be encouraged to arrange more extracurricular activities for their children, abandoning the one-sided emphasis on child academic results, while it is necessary to offer low-SES ones home education guidance to enhance their educational awareness and capacities for effective parent-child interaction and emotional communication, helping them create a positive family atmosphere.

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