
Newsletter

How to Tackle the Issue of Undesirable Educational Quality of Township Boarding Schools in China: The Relationship between the Input of School Resources and Academic Performance of Boarding Students

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TOWNSHIP boarding schools, as an integral part of rural compulsory education in China, play a vital role in optimizing the allocation of educational resources and promoting educational equity. Nevertheless, many students at these schools are facing the challenge of “boarding but without receiving quality education.” Based on data from a survey of 903 boarding students from 28 township junior secondary boarding schools in Hubei Province, the study empirically and systematically examines how school resources affect academic achievement of boarding students using hierarchical linear models and threshold regression models.

Research Findings:

- Teaching staff resources and after-class activity resources had significantly promotive effects on academic achievement of the boarding students, while physical resources showed no such effects with statistical significance. The effects of school resources exhibited a hierarchical pattern of “teaching staff > after-class activities > physical facilities.”
- In the dimension of after-class activity resources, the diversity of extracurricular activities was more important than the load of homework for the boarders’ academic performance.
- There were threshold effects in the input of school resources. The input of after-class activity resources could yield substantive benefits for the boarding students in academic achievement on condition that physical resources and teaching staff resources crossed the threshold values of 0.694 and 0.520, respectively.
- The effects of school resources were heterogeneous in various groups of boarding students. While the input of after-class activity resources was more effective in improving academic performance of impoverished students, that of teaching staff

resources could better promote academic progress in those who suffered poor home-school communication.

The study suggests: (i) prioritizing the building of teaching forces in advancing the standardization of boarding schools; (ii) driving the shift from the focus on the quantity to emphasis on the quality of after-class activities in township boarding schools, increasing the diversity of extracurricular activities while ensuring students have ample time for learning tasks; and (iii) making preferential allocation of educational resources to relatively disadvantaged boarding students and those suffering limited home-school communication to narrow the academic gaps between different student groups.

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