
NEWSLETTER

Can After-school Service in Primary and Secondary Schools Promote Educational Equity?

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PUBLISHED in *China Educational Technology*, the study analyzes the survey data of primary and secondary school students from 32 counties (districts) in 6 provinces (autonomous regions) in China. By using descriptive statistics, Chi-square test, Propensity Score Matching (PSM) and regression analysis, it examines the differences among students from low, middle, and high income families, to determine if after-school service can promote endowment equity, procedure equity and outcome equity in education in China. This will provide valid evidence for optimization of after-school service program in China.

Research results

- After-school service has insignificant effects on endowment equity in education. According to the Chi-square test, the overall proportion of students participating in after-school service is not high, and there are significant differences in the proportions of students from low, middle and high income families participating in after-school services ($\chi^2 = 146.942$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, the proportion of students from low-income families participating in after-school service is the lowest, and the participation rate is positively related to family economic conditions. This may have something to do with the limitations of after-school service as quasi-public goods.
- After-school service has moderate effects on procedure equity in education. Results of Chi-square test indicate that there is no significant difference in demands for after-school service in compulsory subjects ($\chi^2 = 1.577$, $P = 0.455 > 0.05$) and interest development ($\chi^2 = 0.738$, $P = 0.691 > 0.05$). Nevertheless, there is significant difference in demands for after-school service in competence education ($\chi^2 = 25.272$, $P < 0.001$), which is more likely to be accepted by high income households. This may be related to family economic conditions and school conditions, for middle and low

income families can hardly afford after-school service in art and science, and it is difficult for rural schools to conduct art and science courses due to limited human and equipment resources.

- After-school service has significant effects on outcome equity in education. According to the results of PSM, students who attend after-school service have better academic performance than those who do not. Meanwhile, results of regression analysis also indicate that after-school service helps narrow the gap in academic performance caused by different household economic conditions. Thus, after-school service reduces the inequality in educational outcomes among students from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Based on the research results, the author holds that the nature of after-school service as non-public goods determines its limitations in promoting educational equity. However, since after-school service is provided by schools, it helps make up for the inequality caused by family conditions to a certain extent. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the scope of after-school service to ensure it is available to students from low-income families. Schools should be encouraged to invest more in after-school service in competence education and after-school service should play a more important role in reducing students' homework and extracurricular training burden.

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