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# Best Evidence in Chinese Education

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# How Teacher Support Affects Migrant Children's Learning Satisfaction

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**Abstract:** *Teacher support significantly affects student learning and directly relates to their academic development. Learning satisfaction is the subjective perception and evaluation of learning quality on the part of the student, which represents, to certain extent, the quality of education. Based on data from a questionnaire survey of 1251 migrant children in grades three throughout six, this study analyzed how teacher support impacted the learning satisfaction of migrant children. Research findings indicated that teacher support had a significantly positive effect on migrant children's learning satisfaction; and that teacher support indirectly and positively affects their learning satisfaction through the separate mediating effect of their learning engagement as well as via the chain mediating effects of their academic adjustment and learning engagement.*

*Best Evidence in Chinese Education 2024; 16(1):1817-1821.*

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**I**N CHINA, migrant children, also referred to as “children of migrant workers,” are those who move to urban from rural areas with their migrant worker parents and are under the age of 18. This group emerged amid the accelerated social transformation in China. Statistical data show that in 2022, there were a total of 13.6468 million children of migrant workers enrolled in compulsory education schools, including 9.6986 million primary school students and 3.9483 million junior secondary school students.

Migrant children often find themselves in a relatively underprivileged or marginalized position in schools and have more academic adjustment problems than their non-migrant peers. Strengthening migrant children support systems to guarantee their access to public basic education services and improve their learning satisfaction and quality of education concerns educational equity of the nation. It has a direct impact on the achievement of developmental goals of balanced compulsory education and social harmony.

According to the ecology of human development theory, the microsystem composed of the family, peers, and school is the primary environmental determinant of the individual's development. Moreover, research has revealed that human factors have a greater impact on student learning satisfaction than physical factors. The in-class learning environment built on teacher-student interactions is an important factor for students' academic performance. Teacher support is the supportive attitude and behavior of a teacher perceived by students in their learning, which directly or indirectly affect their learning engagement and ultimately impact their academic performance. Recent studies found that teacher support significantly positively predicts academic adjustment and engagement in secondary school students. Based on existing theoretical and empirical research, this study developed a theoretical model for the effects of teacher support on migrant children's learning satisfaction and analyzes the paths of the impacts.

## **A Theoretical Model for the Effects of Teacher Support on Migrant Children's Learning Satisfaction**

Teacher support can positively predict student learning engagement, and migrant children's learning engagement directly affects their learning satisfaction. Hence, the present study proposed hypothesis one: teacher support impacts migrant children's learning satisfaction through the mediation of student learning engagement. Student learning satisfaction enhances as their learning needs are met, or their learning goals are achieved. Given this, hypothesis two was put forward: student academic adjustment mediates the effect of teacher support on migrant children's learning satisfaction.

The literature indicates that there are interplays between the four variables of teacher support, student academic adjustment, student learning engagement, and student learning satisfaction. Thereby, structural equation modeling was adopted to define the structural relationships between teacher support and migrant children's learning satisfaction. Hypothesis three was posed: teacher support affects migrant children's learning satisfaction via the chain mediating effects of student academic adjustment and learning engagement.

## **Research Methods**

### ***Research Participants***

Using convenient sampling, children of migrant workers were selected as research participants from three schools from Beijing, Shanghai, and Wuhan and questionnaire surveyed. A total of 1,251 (705 males and 546 females) valid participants were included, ranging from grade 3 throughout 6, with 288, 297, 330, and 336 students from the four grades, respectively.

### ***Research Tools***

#### **The Migrant Children Learning Satisfaction Scale**

This is a self-developed four-point scale with 38 items grouped in six dimensions: class-room environment, teaching techniques, teacher-student relationship, peer relationship, family relationship, and academic achievement. The coefficient of internal consistency reliability of the scale is 0.89, and its split-half reliability coefficient is 0.87. Items with a less-than-0.3 factor loading were deleted after the first confirmatory factor analysis, and after that, an additional confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. The results show that the factor loading of each item is between 0.33 and 0.76, indicating good construct validity of the scale. The overall goodness-of-fit indicators of the model by confirmatory factor analysis are  $\chi^2/df = 4.10$ , NFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.97, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.05, indicating good construct validity of the questionnaire.

#### **The Teacher Support Scale**

The six-point student-perceived teacher supportive behavior scale developed by Ouyang (2005) has relatively high reliability and validity, including 19 items in three dimensions: learning support, emotional support, and capability support. The three factors could explain 50.64% of the total variance, indicating that the questionnaire has good construct validity. The reliability of the questionnaire is 0.87. The higher the student scores on the questionnaire, the more teacher support he or she receives.

#### **The Student Academic Adjustment Scale**

“School adjustment scales for Chinese primary and secondary school students” were developed by Jiang et al. (2017), among which the scale for the 3rd-6th graders was used in this study. It adopts a five-point rating method, including 17 items in three dimensions: learning motivation, learning skill, and learning difficulty. The correlation coefficient between each item and its corresponding dimension ranges from 0.39 to 0.61, all above the significance level of 0.01. The correlation coefficients between dimensions are lower than the dimension-total correlation coefficient, indicating the scale has desirable construct validity. The test-retest reliability of the scale is 0.78, and its criteri-

on validity is good. The higher the student scores on the scale, the better the student's academic adjustment.

## The Migrant Children Learning Engagement Scale

The self-developed five-point scale for measuring learning engagement of migrant children includes 31 items grouped three dimensions: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement. The scale has an internal consistency coefficient of 0.97 and a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.93. Confirmatory factor analysis shows that the factor loading of each item in its respective dimension is between 0.68 and 0.83, indicating good construct validity of the scale, which is also confirmed by the overall goodness-of-fit indicators of the model:  $\chi^2/df = 4.46$ , NFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.92, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.06.

## Research Findings

### *The Direct Effects of Teacher Support on Migrant Children's Learning Satisfaction*

Teacher support could significantly and directly predict migrant children's learning satisfaction. The academic guidance and emotional care from the teacher made migrant children feel respected and recognized, thus generating a strong sense of identification with and belonging to the school and fueling positive emotional experience of learning in them. Teacher support could also positively impact academically struggling migrant children by enhancing their self-confidence, boosting their sense of hope, and encouraging self-motivation in them.

### *The Separate Mediating Effect of Learning Engagement*

Teacher support could effectively instigate student learning engagement. Student learning engagement posed a separate mediating effect on the relation between teacher support and migrant children's learning satisfaction, which confirmed hypothesis one. Teacher support suits the needs of migrant children for a sense of security, promotes the development of harmonious teacher-student relationships, improves their academic resilience, and stimulates their intrinsic motivation, thus enhancing their level of learning engagement. The more teacher support migrant children obtain, the greater their sense of hope for their studies, resulting in their increased investment of time and energy in learning, which can help upgrade their academic performance and consequently, their learning satisfaction.

### *The Chain Mediating Effects of Student Academic Adjustment and Learning Engagement*

The connection between teacher support and student academic adjustment exists in various student groups. This study expanded the scope of research on the topic by targeting at migrant children, and thus, increased the generalizability of the research results. Increased teacher support made the smooth adjustment of migrant children to their studies possible by heightening their interest in learning and boosting their pursuit of self-development, and thus led to increased learning engagement of this group. Better completion of learning tasks contributed to improving their academic performance, generating enhanced learning satisfaction in them. As a result, hypothesis three was verified.

## Conclusion

Based on the ecology of human development theory, this study conducted a relatively comprehensive analysis of the relations between teacher support and the academic adjustment, learning engagement, and learning satisfaction of migrant children. A construct model for the external and internal factors affecting migrant children's learning satisfaction was created, which corroborated the hypotheses of the study.

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## NEWSLETTER

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# Factors Influencing Child Aesthetic Development: An Empirical Analysis Based on the Survey Data of Over 70,000 Chinese Children

By Yi, X., Xu, S., & Du, L.

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THE study examined factors influencing child aesthetic development, using Sharpley value decomposition and mediation effect model analysis. It was based on a sample of 71,546 students (9-18 years old) from grades four throughout 12 from 189 schools across China.

### Research Findings:

- (i) Individual-, family-, school-, community-related factors had differential levels of effect on child aesthetic development in the order: Individual > family > school > community. Among all the specific factors, the child's curiosity, attitude towards life, and the school's aesthetic education resources were the three most impactful factors in child aesthetic development. There were gender and educational phase differences in the impacts of these factors.
- (ii) The analysis based on the mediation effect model revealed that parental penchant for arts promoted child aesthetic development through parent-child interactions; that the teacher's quality of aesthetic education significantly mediated the effect of the school's aesthetic education resources on child aesthetic development; and that effective publicity of arts activities was supportive to the role of social aesthetic education resources.

Suggestions were also proposed as follows: i) Establish aesthetic education goals for developing student practice- and real life-based aesthetic literacy and foster students' self-motivation in this regard; ii) Give full play to the family's role in nurturing the child's aesthetic competence; iii) Create learning and living environments that facilitate aesthetic education; iv) Implement teaching patterns with diverse aesthetic experiences and practices; v) Increase publicity of social aesthetic activities via various channels and fully leverage social aesthetic education resources.

*Source: Educational Research, 2023; 44(6):78-94.*



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## NEWSLETTER

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# Promoting Student Interdisciplinary Learning: Mechanisms, the Learning Environment Design Model, and Empirical Research

By Wan, K. & Rao, A.

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**I**NTERDISCIPLINARY learning has become a highly recommended learning approach in Chinese compulsory education. Nevertheless, there exist a variety of problems with the current implementation of interdisciplinary learning, such as misconception of the approach and a lack of purposeful design. This study analyzed the mechanisms for promoting student interdisciplinary learning, constructed a model for interdisciplinary learning environment design, and conducted practical research based on the model.

### Mechanisms for Promoting Student Interdisciplinary Learning

- (i) In interdisciplinary learning, students must go through structured activities to develop higher-order thinking skills and realize deep learning.
- (ii) The primary purpose of interdisciplinary learning is to conflate knowledge from distinct disciplines and then for students to generate new knowledge after the processes of assimilation, internalization, and reconstruction.
- (iii) Image thinking and imaginative thinking entailed in interdisciplinary learning are beneficial for students integrating and establish associations between knowledge of multiple disciplines.

### Research Findings Based on the Model for Interdisciplinary Learning Environment Design

- The model could effectively reduce students' extraneous and intrinsic cognitive loads, increase their germane cognitive load, enhance their flow experience, and boost their higher-order thinking skills.
- In interdisciplinary learning, flow experience had positive effects on students' higher-order thinking skills development; the extraneous cognitive load negatively affected student flow experience; the germane cognitive load had a positively impact on student flow experience.
- In interdisciplinary learning, mutual impacts existed between student cognitive loads, flow experience, and higher-order thinking skills.

Source: *China Educational Technology*, 2023; 2023(8):59-63.

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## NEWSLETTER

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# Screen Exposure, Parental Mediation and Media Addiction in Preschool Children

By Zhang, Q.

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THE intensifying medialization of society has exacerbated the issue of child media addiction. Research has shown that media addiction can cause a variety of physical and mental problems such as obesity, myopia, sleep difficulty, and anxiety. Media addiction in preschool children is likely to impose a persistent negative impact on their lifetime development. Early intervention in child media behavior proves to be more effective than that occurs in later stages of their lives. This study conducted an online questionnaire survey of 2046 parents of preschool children aged between three and six to investigate the relations between child screen exposure, parental mediation, and child media addiction.

### Research Findings:

- Among children of parents polled, 58.7% were exposed to screen for over one hour every day, and 28.3% have become addicted to the use of media. Mobile screen (smartphones and tablets) was the primary vehicle for preschool children's access to media. Watching short videos has become the second most popular activity in screen use among preschool children.
- Parental mediation was implemented in three forms: restrictive mediation, active mediation, and co-use. All of them had impacts on screen time of preschool children, whereas only parent-child co-use exhibited significant intervention effects on child media addiction.
- Media addiction in preschool children intensified as their screen time increased. According to the media sensory curation theory, preschool children use media to meet their sensory needs, as opposed to adults' and adolescents' purposes for using media – to acquire information, reach emotional communication, develop relationships, etc.

### Suggestions:

- Parents should view child media use objectively. The benefits of screen media as convenient, content-rich, highly interactive tools should be fully utilized to support high-quality development of preschool children.
- Parents should pay attention to improving their own media literacy and their education on child media use.

- Preschool children media addiction intervention requires joint efforts of all parties of society to ensure child healthy growth, such as governmental supervision, community support, media platform self-regulation, kindergarten guidance, and parental mediation.

*Source: Studies in Preschool Education, 2023; 2023(11):42-54.*

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 NEWSLETTER
 

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## Effects of Home Education Guidance Services and Improvement Measures: An Analysis Based on Survey Data of 1,850 Families in Hubei Province

By Xiang, R. & Lei, W.

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HOME education guidance services play an important role in enhancing the quality of home education and supporting child healthy and holistic development. Based on survey data of 1,850 families from eight cities and 18 counties in Hubei Province, this study examined the effects of home education guidance services on parental education literacy, parental education involvement, and child development. Ordinary least squares regression (OLS) and propensity score matching (PSM) were used in the analysis. The purpose of this article was to provide implications for improving the effectiveness of home education guidance.

### Research Findings

- Home education guidance services had a significant positive impact on parental education literacy and its sub-dimensions, among which parental education knowledge was the most substantially and positively affected. In the meantime, the impact was heterogeneous among parents of children at differential education levels.
- Home education guidance services significantly and positively affected parental education involvement and its sub-dimensions, particularly parental oversight of child studies. There was heterogeneity in this effect among parents of children at differential education phases.
- Home education guidance services made no difference to child physical health and academic performance but had positive effects on child learning attitudes and behavior. In the meantime, home education guidance services prominently impacted child learning attitudes and behavior via the mediation of parental education literacy and involvement.

### Suggestions for Improving Home Education Guidance Services

- Optimize contents of home education guidance. Developmental characteristics of distinct age groups of children must be taken into consideration in providing the services. Educational, psychological, physiological, and nutritional knowledge should be incorporated in the home education guidance. Developing internet-based digital services can help popularize the home education guidance.

- Make the supply of home education guidance services pertain to specific needs. Basic home education guidance for disadvantaged families must be prioritized.
- It is important to establish a guaranteeing mechanism for sustainable provision of home education guidance services, which should be supported by governmental funding, professional personnel, and effective evaluation systems.

*Source: Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University, 2023; 22(6):60-69.*

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## NEWSLETTER

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# Effects of Sleep Quality on Academic Performance of Children Aged 10 to 12: The Mediating Role of Updating Ability

By Fang, H., Zhu, X., & Zhao, X.

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RESEARCH has shown that sleep quality can positively predict academic performance of the student. Previous studies have focused on examining the correlation in secondary and tertiary education students, with little attention paid to that among primary school students. A recent cross-sectional study demonstrated that primary school students had higher risk of low sleep quality than other groups. Through a mediation model, this study investigated the relation between sleep quality and academic achievement in primary school students and the mediating effect of updating ability on this relationship.

Research findings include:

- Sleep quality was positively correlated with academic performance and updating ability of primary school students; student updating ability was positively related to their academic achievement. That means the higher their sleep quality, the better their updating ability and academic results. High sleep quality is beneficial for the neurodevelopment, a key factor in cognitive maturation and academic success.
- Updating ability played a complete mediation role in the relation between sleep quality and academic performance in primary school students. Desirable academic achievement is the result of the development of cognitive competences (such as attention, information process, and memory) and positive behavioral tendencies (concentration and impulsion suppression); Good sleep is the precondition for sustaining updating ability of the individual.

The article also set forth the limitations of this study: Other key factors influencing student academic performance should have been controlled; the association between sleep quality and student academic achievement and the mechanism of impact were not fully confirmed; more paths affecting the relation between sleep quality and academic results need to be explored; aside from updating, the explanatory power of other executive functions for the relation in question also deserves investigation.

Source: *Journal of Psychological Science*, 2023; 46(5):1090-1097.



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