
NEWSLETTER

Homework Loads and Creativity Development in Chinese Primary and Secondary School Students: An Empirical Analysis Based on the SSES Data

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DRAWING on data from the OECD's Survey of Social and Emotional Skills (SSES), the study seeks to investigate the relationship between homework loads and creativity development in Chinese primary and secondary school students, with the purpose of providing evidence for scientific implementation of the Double Reduction policy.

Research Findings:

- There was an inverted U-shape relationship between student homework loads and creativity. As their weekly homework time increases, the students' creativity initially strengthened, followed by degrading with the inflection point at 8.377 hours. Moderate amounts of homework can foster creativity, whereas excessive workload, which may lead to sleep deprivation, emotional stress, etc., can stifle it.
- There were significant group differences in the relationship in question. The negative consequences of homework burden were more pronounced among junior secondary students and secondary girl students; the students with higher family socioeconomic status (SES) and experiencing higher teacher expectations were more creative.
- The mediating and moderating mechanisms: Inordinate homework loads indirectly eroded creativity by lowering sleep quality and increasing negative emotions; academic anxiety weakened the positive effect of homework on creativity.

The study suggests:

- Scientifically stratifying assignments. The principle of "less is more" does not apply to homework assignment. To optimize the effects of homework, the teacher needs to reduce the workloads for students feeling overburdened while assigning legitimate extra tasks to high potential ones.
- Considering non-cognitive factors. Improving homework design (e.g., adding open-ended tasks) and offering emotional support

(e.g., alleviating academic anxiety) are among effective approaches to releasing students' creativity.

Source: Education Research and Experiment, 2025; 2025(01):103-113.