

Critical Reading Achievement of Rural Migrant Children in China: The Roles of Educational Expectation

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Abstract : Rural migrant children have become a fast-growing population in China as a consequence of the large-scale population flow from rural to urban areas in the context of urbanization. In China, the socioeconomic status of migrant children is relatively low in comparison to non-migrant children. Parents of migrant children often work in occupations with long working hours, high labor intensity, and low pay due to their poor academic qualifications. Most migrant children's parents have not received higher education and have no time to read with their children. The family of migrant children usually does not have a good collection of books either, which leads to these children's insufficient reading and low reading levels. Moreover, migrant children frequently relocate with their parents, and their needs for knowledge and reading are often neglected by schools, which puts migrant children at risk of academic failure in China. Therefore, the academic achievement of rural migrant children has become a focus of education in China. This study explores the relationship between the educational expectation of rural migrant children and their critical reading competence in general and the moderating effect of the difference between parental educational expectation to their children and the children's own educational expectation. The responses to a survey from 5113 seventh-grade children in a district of the capital city in China revealed that children who moved to cities in grades 4-6 of primary school performed the best in critical reading, and children who moved to cities after middle school showed the worst performance in critical reading. In addition, parents' educational expectations of their children and their own educational expectations were both significant predictors of rural migrant children's reading competence. The higher a child's expectations of a degree and the smaller the gap between parents' expectations of a child's education and the child's own education expectations, the better the child's performance in critical reading.

Keywords : educational expectation, critical reading competence, rural migrant children, moderating effect

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