



RESEARCH STUDENT SEMINAR SERIES 1

PROMOTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR RURAL CHILDREN IN CHINA: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY



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SPEAKER'S BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Ms FU Linyun is a PhD student at the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice at the University of Chicago. She is currently a research exchange student in the Department of Applied Social Sciences at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, under the supervision of Dr. YU Lu. Her current research focuses on school-based mental health prevention and intervention strategies for rural children in China.

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Abstract

While Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) research has become ubiquitous in Western contexts, it is minimal in China. Several SEL programs have been developed or adopted for Chinese contexts, but few studies have examined their effectiveness in local settings, especially rare in rural schools. This study serves as the first to examine the acceptability and effectiveness of a school-based SEL intervention in rural Chinese elementary schools. A quasi-experimental pre- and post-intervention study with a two-level cluster design was adopted. The sample consisted of 1247 fifth graders nested within 28 classrooms in Southwest China. Students rated the SEL curriculum as highly satisfactory, interesting, helpful and practical. Findings demonstrated significant SEL intervention effects on rural children's overall social and emotional competencies and three subdomains including self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills. However, no intervention effects were found in the subdomains including self-management and responsive decision-making. These findings are interpreted in light of their practice, research, and policy implications to further strengthen school-based SEL efforts for rural Chinese children.