

Non-cognitive Skills, Family Socioeconomic Status, and Longitudinal Outcomes among Children in China

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This study examines the role of non-cognitive skills in shaping children's development and social stratification in China. Drawing on longitudinal data from the China Family Panel Studies from 2010 to 2022, we investigate how family socioeconomic status is associated with children's non-cognitive skills, how these skills predict later educational and health outcomes, and whether their effects vary by family background. We focus on a broad set of non-cognitive skills, including positive behaviours, socioemotional skills, problem behaviours, and self-esteem. Preliminary results show that family SES is positively associated with most non-cognitive skills, although its associations with self-control and emotional stability are negative. Most non-cognitive skills are positively related to children's cognitive development, academic performance, educational attainment, and mental health. Interaction analyses further suggest that the benefits of non-cognitive skills are often stronger among children from lower-SES families, pointing to a compensatory role in children's development. These findings contribute to research on social stratification by showing how non-cognitive skills operate in a non-Western institutional and cultural context.