



“Are migrant schools in China catching up? Evidence from Shanghai”

(in English)



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Abstract:

A substantial number of migrant children in Chinese cities are excluded from the public education system due to lack of HuKou, and have to enter migrant schools which are low-cost private schools serving migrants. This paper studies quality of migrant schools using data collected in Shanghai in 2010 and 2012. In the fall of 2010 we have selected 20 elementary schools in Shanghai (including 9 migrant schools and 11 public schools) and surveyed all 4th grade students from these schools. In the spring of 2012 we went back to the same schools and the same students. In both rounds, we collected information on schools, classes, students and parents through survey questionnaires, and also administered standardized tests which allow us to compare academic performance of students in both types of schools. Overall, we find that students in migrant schools perform considerably worse than their counterparts in public schools. However, the test score gap in mathematics has almost halved between 2010 and 2012. Similarly, the gap in terms of parental subjective evaluation of school quality has also declined, suggesting a rapid relative improvement of the quality of migrant schools, which can be attributed to increased funding assistance and monitoring from the government. We also report some evidence that substantial outside institutional barriers remain for migrant schools despite the rise in school quality.

Biography:

Shuaizhang Feng is professor at the school of economics of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics and currently also at the Chinese University of Hong Kong as a visiting scholar. He received his Ph.D. in economics from Cornell University in 2006. He has published in journals such as American Economic Review, Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, Review of Economics and Statistics, and Journal of Business and Economic Statistics. His research encompasses various topics such as unemployment, labor market, income inequality, education, climate change and migration.

All are welcome

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