

An In-depth Analysis of the Issue of Sense of Belonging at school in the PISA 2003 Mathematical Literacy Study

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Macao participated in PISA 2003 mathematical literacy study. In this study, students' sense of belonging to school ranked bottom amongst all participating countries/economies. Analyses of data revealed: (1) Students' low sense of belonging to school was a common phenomenon in Macao, and it entailed all schools catering for students from different levels of economic, social, and cultural status (ESCS) of the home; (2) Sense of belonging was not correlated with mathematical literacy, showing that Macao's high-performing students might not have high sense of belonging to their schools; (3) There were no empirical relationship between sense of belonging and gender of student, and the same was also true for grade repetition in primary and secondary schools. Apart from non-local students' especially low sense of belonging to school, an in-depth analyses revealed that there were three factors related to the issue of sense of belonging: students' attitude toward school, student-teacher relations, and academic support rendered by teachers to students. The conclusion proposed that educational objectives of Macao schools should not only be targeted at the cognitive thinking minds, but also the affective feeling hearts so as to exhibit the spirits of all-round education.

Keywords: sense of belonging, student-teacher relations, teacher support, PISA

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