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A Meta-Analysis of the Academic Status of Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disturbance

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Reid, R., Gonzalez, J.E., Nordness, P.D., Trout, A., & Epstein, M.H. (2004). A Meta-Analysis of the Academic Status of Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disturbance, *The Journal of Special Education*, 38(3), 130-143.

Abstract :

Context and Research Issues

Studies have yet to establish a clear, causal relationship between behavioural problems and poor academic achievement, despite widespread acceptance of this relationship.

The authors of this American study wanted to determine whether there are differences in the academic achievement of students exhibiting behavioural disorders based on age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. They also wished to examine whether there are differences in achievement across academic subjects, placement settings (general education, resource room, self-contained room) and methods used to identify students' behavioural problems.

Methodology

The authors conducted a meta-analysis of studies published between 1961 and 2000. These studies stemmed from several sources: PsychINFO and ERIC databases, *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* and *Behavioral Disorders* journal articles, literature review articles and articles identified by expert researchers in the field.

A total of 205 articles were selected. Then, twenty-five articles were culled from the sample following validation based on certain criteria, including year of publication, type of analyses carried out, identification method of students exhibiting behavioural disorders, age, etc.

Main Conclusions

The authors first expressed reservations, based on the fact that they had used secondary data. According to them, it is hard to determine to what extent students as subjects of the selected studies were representative of the overall population of students with behavioural disorders. In a large number of studies taking into account gender (70% of studies), female students represented only 20% of the sample. In addition, the studies did not provide any information on the students' socioeconomic status.

As part of this study, the authors separated students into two age groups (aged under twelve and aged twelve or older). Unlike previous studies, the authors did not observe any difference in academic achievement across student age.

The studies revealed that students exhibiting behavioural disorders had significantly poorer academic scores than students without behavioural disorders, which confirmed prior research results. However, no information was provided concerning the types of school placement settings or the age at which students were seen to be exhibiting behavioural disorders, which in turn prevented determining whether placement setting was initiated early or not.

In the end, differences in achievement across academic subjects and students' placement settings were not significant.

Links :

This journal is also available in electronic format.

Key Words :

Behavioural Disorders, Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, Meta-analysis, Primary, Secondary/High School, Newsletter1

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