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Relation Between Academic Achievement and Social Adjustment: Evidence From Chinese Children

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Chen, X., Rubin, K.H., & Li, D. (1997). Relation Between Academic Achievement and Social Adjustment: Evidence From Chinese Children. *Developmental Psychology*, 33(3), 518-525.

Abstract :

Study Objectives

The purpose of this study conducted in China was to examine the relationship between social adjustment and academic achievement. Researchers pursued two objectives: 1) To study to what extent social and emotional adjustment can predict student academic achievement and 2) To study to which extent academic achievement or failure can contribute to successful social adjustment or not.

Methodology

The sample consisted of 245 four-graders and 237 six-graders (mean age of 9 years, 11 months and 12 years, 1 month, respectively). These students were selected randomly from four Shanghai schools and all participated in the initial data collection. Two years later, a second sample of 282 six-graders, including 91 four-graders from the original sample and 237 eight-graders, including 215 six-graders from the original sample participated in the second data collection. This study involved gathering data on academic achievement (native language and mathematics), leadership, social competence, social status and peer acceptance.

Main Results and Conclusion

The results of this research have shown that academic achievement was linked to the social adjustment of Chinese students.

More precisely, the authors observed that social competence was positively correlated with academic achievement and that this correlation was reciprocal in that academic achievement observed at the first time of measure (T1) predicted social competence at the second time of measure (T2), and vice-versa.

Unlike this bidirectional link, the relationship between aggressive-disruptive behaviour and academic achievement was negative and unidirectional. Following more analyses to ensure stability of the variables studied, the authors observed that only the relationship between social competence and academic achievement remained bidirectional. Indeed, although aggressive-disruptive behaviour predicted academic achievement (negative relationship) significantly, the academic performance observed at T1 did not constitute a predictive factor of aggressive-disruptive behaviour at T2.

Shyness and social inhibition positively correlated with academic achievement. Lastly, peer acceptance, considered as a social resource, fostered academic achievement. This confirmed the initial hypothesis that social adjustment and academic achievement are inseparable with regard to academic achievement.

In light of their research results, the authors emphasized the importance of paying as much attention to students' social development as their academic achievement.

Links :

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Key Words :

Behavioural Disorders, Predictors, Social Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment, Academic Performance, School Failure, Social Competence, Social Status, Peer Acceptance, Longitudinal Study, Quantitative Analysis, Primary, Elementary

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