

A Meta-Analysis of the Academic Achievement of Students With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders in Traditional Public Schools in the United States

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Abstract : Extensive research has been conducted on students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) and their rates of challenging behavior. In the past, however, less attention has been given to their academic achievement and outcomes. Recent research examining outcomes for students with EBD has indicated that these students receive lower grades, are less likely to pass classes, and experience higher rates of school dropout than students without disabilities and students with other high incidence disabilities. Given that between 2% and 20% of the school-age population is likely to have EBD (though many may not be identified as such), this is no small problem. Despite the need for increased examination of this population's academic achievement, research on the actual performance of students with EBD has been minimal. This study reports the results of a meta-analysis of the limited research examining academic achievement of students with EBD, including effect sizes of assessment scores and discussion of moderators potentially impacting academic outcomes. Researchers conducted a thorough literature search to identify potentially relevant documents before screening studies for inclusion in the systematic review. Screening identified 35 studies that reported results of academic assessment scores for students with EBD. These studies were then coded to extract descriptive data across multiple domains, including placement of students, participant demographics, and academic assessment scores. Results indicated possible collinearity between EBD disability status and lower academic assessment scores, despite a lack of association between EBD eligibility and lower cognitive ability. Quantitative analysis of assessment results yielded effect sizes for academic achievement of student participants, indicating lower performance levels and potential moderators (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, and gender) impacting student academic performance. In addition to discussing results of the meta-analysis, implications and areas for future research, policy, and practice are discussed.

Keywords : students with emotional behavioral disorders, academic achievement, systematic review, meta-analysis

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