

Impact of Disability and Childhood Abuse on Academics: A Proposal

Introduction

Academic success is a very important indicator of a strong educational foundation for students both with and without disabilities. Although unfair, the same yardstick is used for all students for measuring their capabilities in higher education as well as employment opportunities (Wasielewski, 2016). Here, disability is defined as any physical or mental health condition that interferes with a healthy childhood and concentration on academics. This may either be due to a congenital learning disability, or it may be due to a non-conducive home and school environment where the child is exposed to physical, mental, and emotional abuse, domestic violence, and bullying. Regardless of the underlying issue, students with disabilities face difficulties, humiliation, and discrimination on a regular basis (Ali and Rafi, 2016).

Problem Statement

Several studies have shown that although students with disabilities go for higher education, they face considerably more problems as compared to students without disabilities (Wagner et al., 2005). It has been estimated that at least half the students who have disabilities drop out from high school before completion of their program as opposed to one-third students without disabilities (Carlson, 2014). A study that specifically studied the impact of physical abuse on secondary school students found that a significant number of students who were physically abused achieved lower grades as compared to other students (Elarousy and Shaiqi, 2017). However, no study has provided a comprehensive overview of the academic progression of students who have been afflicted with abuse and/or learning disabilities.

Aims and Objectives

This research study aims to identify and evaluate the impacts of childhood abuse and learning disabilities along with associated mental health conditions on academic progression of children and adolescents.

The objectives of this research study are as follows:

- To identify the impacts of abuse and learning disabilities on the extent to which students pursue their education
- To identify the impacts of abuse and learning disabilities on the students' grades or GPA acquired in school and college
- To identify and evaluate the specific prejudices that are associated with learning disabilities and mental health conditions in academic institutions
- To evaluate the role of media in presenting students with learning disabilities and mental health conditions to the audience

Proposed Methodology

In order to address the aims and objectives of this research study, a comprehensive literature search will be undertaken using sociology databases such as ProQuest, SocINDEX, JSTOR, and ASSIA. The keywords used in these databases will include "learning disabilities", "childhood abuse", "childhood trauma", "academic achievement", "academic progression", "prejudice in academics and workplace", and "role of media". Articles dated from 2000 to 2020 will be selected based on relevance to the study. The data obtained will be analysed using the sociological theories of social constructionism and the role of society in labelling children with disabilities, interactional theories where the interaction of children with their family and other students is studied, institutional theories where the behaviour of students in an academic institution is evaluated, and structural theories where the forces that shape the viewpoints of academic and professional institutions are evaluated (Anyon, 2009).

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