Research Proposal

Educational Research and Assessment

Liberty University

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Abstract

- The following research looks at the relationship regarding the impact that socioeconomic status (SES) has on a student's ability to successfully read on or above grade level.
- Findings suggest that students who come from low SES have lower reading achievement.
- Themes present include
    - The Home Literacy Environment
    - Income Segregation and Achievement Gaps
    - Reading Volume and Literacy Exposure
    - Targeted Interventions

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of the study is to determine the impact that poverty has on reading fluency.

Research Question

- The research question is “What is the relationship between students who fall below the poverty line and their ability to read fluently at grade level?”

Hypothesis

- Low economic status negatively impacts a student's ability to read fluently on grade level.

Variables

- Independent variable -Family income
- Dependent variable-Student's reading level
- Control group-the reading standard in the school district of the population tested

Key Terms

- **Low socioeconomic status (SES)**
    - “People with a lower socioeconomic status usually have less access to financial, educational, social, and health resources than those with a higher socioeconomic status” (NCI Dictionary of Cancer).
- **HLE- Home Literacy Environment**
    - “An umbrella term used to describe the literacy-related interactions, resources, and attitudes that children experience at home” (Hamilton et al., 2016).

Key Terms

- **OST**
    - Outside of school time reading (Zucker et al., 2022)
- **Gifted services**
    - "...Enhancements and support to academically gifted and talented students whose academic needs may not be met in typical general education settings (Grissom et al., 2019).
- **Literacy skills**
    - Reading, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Operational Definitions

- Family Income
  - Defined as the combined total income received by all members of a family before taxes
- Student reading level defined as
  - A student's instructional reading level is the highest level at which the student has scored on accuracy and comprehension
- Reading standard
  - Measured grade level assessment of student reading proficiency through DRA's (Developmental Reading Assessment)

Review of the Literature

- There literature examines the relationship between socioeconomic status and the impacts that it has on academic achievement, specifically regarding literacy skills.
- Themes of relevance include Home Literacy Environment, Income Segregation and Achievement Gap, Reading Volume and Literacy Exposure and Targeted Interventions

Review of the Literature

- Includes important considerations for administrators, stakeholders, educators and parents/guardians to address concerns that keep all students from any SES status in reaching their full academic potential starting with the building blocks of early literacy skills.

Summary of Themes

HLE- Home Literacy Environment

- Parents/guardians frequent literacy engagement and practices have a positive impact on emerging readers
- “One of the key findings was that parents’ motivation to read was an important predictor of home literacy environment” (Bojczyk et al., 2019, p. 508).
- Important to establish relationships within the community and provide the necessary education to reach young students within the low SES population.

Summary of Themes

Income Segregation and Achievement Gaps

- Prior research has shown students from low income homes and students of color may benefit more from gifted services than their advantaged peers (Grissom, Redding, & Bleiberg, 2019).
- The income disparities result in a lack of resources that could improve education and academic achievement for low SES students
- Important considerations for Educators
    - Student absences, fostering parent/teacher relationships, identifying personal biases when it comes to giftedness referrals and providing access to helpful resources for all students.

Summary of Themes

Reading Volume and Literacy Exposure

- Motivation to read and students' access to books was a large predictor of student's literacy skills
- A study found that students who are living in poverty had very limited access to books for outside of school time reading; more specifically 16 times more books per middle-income child compared to children from low-income backgrounds (Zucker et al., 2022).
- OST, self-selecting books, book access, summer reading programs impact students literacy skills
- Considerations
    - Students from low income homes lose two to three months of reading achievement every summer (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2021)

Summary of Themes

Targeted Interventions

- Emergent skills are foundational for students to be successful with comprehension, drawing inferences and monitoring.
    - Educators should implement explicit interventions early on and assess the data for gaps in emergent literacy skills.
- Interventions should ideally be completed for low SES students who are at risk of reading difficulties by kindergarten and first grade (Suggate, 2016).
- Literature review suggests there is a great need to train children from low SES backgrounds in morphological skills.

Research Design

- Experimental Research is the design for this quantitative study.
- This specific design works for my question because it has the correct components, being a control, manipulation of an independent variable and is able to be observed and measured.

Sampling

- The participants in this study are kindergartners, first graders, second graders, and 3rd graders in a specific public school in my hometown.
- This will be a purposive sampling study because the grade levels to be observed and analyzed represent some of the most important years of reading development (Ary Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2019).

Methods of Data Collection

- Surveys to measure family income
- Surveys would be completed by guardians of the student in the population- (Selection of specific income range)
- Parents or guardians of K-3rd graders who come to the open house would complete the questionnaire
- The surveys would identify who the guardian's child is, as to correlate income to child's reading level

Methods of Data Collection

- Teachers are trained in completing and assessing DRA's (Developmental Reading Assessment)
- Classroom teachers are the ones conducting the assessment
- Benchmark DRA's
- DRA's will measure the students accuracy and comprehension and the score will determine whether or not the student is meeting expected grade level reading
- Tested in the beginning of the school year, middle of fall semester after interventions are given and at the end of the first semester

Data-analysis Procedures

- Data will be inputted into spreadsheets including family income and K-3rd student's reading scores (those who participated) using frequency distribution
- The correlational relationship between the two variables will be analyzed
- The data analysis will reveal whether or not there is a trend between low income students and their individual reading assessment scores
- Results will be examined, interpreted and defined

Ethics and Human Relations

- Participants have the right to fully understand the purpose of the study
  - This includes risks, benefits, confidentiality, compensation and questions
- Researcher must obtain informed consent from all participants
- Participants have the right to accept or deny participating in the study
- It should be made clear that the participant will be given the respect of privacy with the information given and reported on.

Ethics and Human Relations

- Researcher is expected to report on findings honestly, even if it does not corroborate their hypothesis
- Researcher should consult IRB to determine approval of study
- Abide by and implement AERA's Code of Ethics as standards to guide the completion of the research

Timeline

- Data Collection and Assessments will begin at the beginning of the Fall semester starting at the school's open house (August)
- End results will be collected at the end of the Fall semester (December)

References

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