

Children's academic performance and its association with adaptive functioning and emotional and behavior problem

Angela Helena Marin
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
marin.angelah@gmail.com

Ana Carolina de Souza Fonseca
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
carolina.ana243@gmail.com

Thaís Pinto Teixeira
Instituto de Desenvolvimento Educacional do Alto Uruguai
thais-teixeira@hotmail.com

Thematic importance: The impact of emotional and behavioral problems (EBP) on children's academic performance (AP) is one of the main complaints that lead to the search for mental health services. High prevalence rates of EBP are indicated in children, achieving 30% of Brazilian schoolchildren. There is consistent evidence on the negative association of EBP with AP, but there are few studies related to the global assessment of child development, considering aspects of their adaptive functioning (AF). Thus, the focus of the present study is in accordance with the theme "Social support and education outcomes", because it highlights the necessary attention to each of the basic and fundamental skills involved in AP (writing, arithmetic and reading) and how much they are influenced by emotional, behavioral, clinical and functional aspects. **Introduction and objectives:** EBP are symptomatic patterns, classified as internalizing (expressed in relation to the individual, including feelings of sadness, withdrawal, somatic complaints, anxiety, fear, excessive worries, insecurity and school refusal) and externalizing (manifested in relation to other people, covering behaviors such as impulsivity, aggression, hyperactivity, defiant behavior and antisocial manifestations). The AF, in turn, are the conceptual, social and practical skills acquired by the child to respond to the demands of daily life, considering the effort to perform activities, the ability to learn and be happy. The objective of this study was to compare the presence of EBP and AF indicators among groups of children enrolled between the 1st and 5th grades of Elementary School. The groups were organized according to the AP classified as inferior, medium and superior in writing, arithmetic and reading. The teacher's perception was

considered, because they are present in a significant way in the students' daily life, being pertinent to consider their point of view when evaluating children's emotional and behavioral issues. **Method:** This is an observational and comparative study, cross-sectional and quantitative, in which 171 children and 84 teachers from public schools in the city of São Leopoldo, of the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Sul, participated. Teachers answered the Sociodemographic Questionnaire and the Inventory of Children's and Adolescents's Behaviors. (investigates AF, total behavior problems, internalizing problems and externalizing problems) and the children answered the School Performance Test (assesses the basic and fundamental abilities involved in writing, reading and arithmetic). **Results:** Descriptive analysis indicated that children had lower AP in writing and arithmetic and superior performance in reading. They had a high level of AF and low levels of clinical indicators of EBP. ANOVAs indicated that children with AP classified as superior differed from the others in relation to AF, being the variable that revealed more differences between the groups. Also, more indicators of adaptive behavior and learning ability were identified in the groups of children with superior performance in arithmetic and reading, as well as indicators of engagement and happiness in the group with superior performance in arithmetic. On the other hand, the data did not reveal associations between EBP and AP, indicating only a difference in relation to attention problems and to the attention deficit and hyperactivity indicators presented by the group with lower performance in reading. **Conclusions and implications:** The importance of child functioning was evidenced, an aspect that can harm or promote their AP, depending on the emotional and behavioral profile presented. Therefore, the relevance of providing an environment where children can learn adaptive skills that stimulate them cognitively is indicated, which can be offered by the implementation of intervention strategies with the purpose of developing social, emotional and academic competences in the school context.