

# Article critique

Education



The review 2 paragraphs) What is the problem (problem ment)? This article focuses on social participation with special needs. Inclusion of students with disabilities has been a topical issue and researchers as well as educators are trying to evaluate benefits and disadvantages (if any) of this approach.

What is the purpose?

The purpose of the present study is to examine social participation of students with disabilities in Dutch primary schools.

What are the research questions? Koster, Pijl, Nakken and Van Houten (2010) put two research questions. First, the researchers try to identify whether social participation of students with disabilities differs from the social participation of students without disabilities. Secondly, Koster et al. (2010) try to identify whether the social participation of groups of students with different disabilities differs.

General description of the methodology

Who are the subjects? The participants were divided into two sub-samples in accordance with their grades. Overall, 590 students (both males and females) of first, second and third grades (including 237 students with mild disabilities) were involved in the research.

What procedures did the authors use? The participants completed social subscales of the CBSK and the Pictorial Scale depending on the grade to assess social self-perception. They completed rating scales to assess acceptance by classmates. The participants had to nominate up to five of their classmates as their friends. Observations were also used and students were observed during classes.

Overall results and “ take home” message of the study

What are the results of the study? Koster et al. (2010) report the following  
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results: there is no significant difference between social participation among students with different disabilities. It was also found that the size of social participation of students without disabilities was significantly larger than that of students with disabilities.

What are the final conclusions of the study? Koster et al. (2010) conclude that inclusion can be an inefficient approach but further research is required as it is not known whether students have the same social participation in special educational establishments.

Critical eye to evaluate the work

Strengths of the article

Was the article written for the general audience of the journal? In the first place, it is necessary to note that the article can be appropriate for a wide audience. Although there are some terms and significant number of data, educators, researchers as well as parents can benefit from reading the article.

Did the work clearly answer the research questions? The article is relevant and well-grounded. It includes direct answers to the research questions as Koster et al. (2010) report that there is no difference in social participation among different categories of students and that there is significant difference in the size of social participation among students with and without disabilities.

Other strengths of the research. Some of the strengths of the research are the significant number of participants, sophisticated procedure with several scales assessing social participation. The researchers also employed observation, which can be regarded as a strength of the article as the results of students' surveys can be supported by data obtained from direct

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observations. The data are presented in a coherent, detailed and clear way, which is also a positive feature.

What are the weaknesses of the work? At the same time, it is possible to identify certain downsides in the research. One of them was mentioned in the article as the researchers could have included both regular and special schools. This would equip the researchers with more comprehensive data. Besides, it could be beneficial to pay more attention to gender differences as it is unclear whether girls with disabilities have the same degree of social participation as boys with special needs.

Could you replicate this study by the detail given in the methodology? As has been mentioned above, the article provides all meaningful details and it is possible to replicate the procedure. I would implement a similar research in the US setting.

Suggestions made for improvement in future studies

What could be improved? However, I would slightly improve it by paying more attention to gender differences. I would analyze the degree of social participation of male and female students with disabilities as compared to students without disabilities. I would also include both regular and special schools in the research.

Reference List

Koster, M., Pijl, S. J., Nakken, H., & Van Houten, E. (2010). Social participation of students with special needs in regular primary education in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 57(1), 59-75.