THESIS ABSTRACT

Title: Academically Gifted Children: Socioemotional Behavior, Self-Concept, and Parental Involvement

No. of Pages: 149

Year: 2002

Degree Conferred: Master of Arts

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Subject Area: Counseling Psychology

Statement of the Problem

Main Problem:

1. How do parents and teachers perceive the social skills of academically gifted and nonacademically gifted children?

2. How do parents and teachers perceive the problem behavior of academically gifted and nonacademically gifted children?

Sub-Problems:

3. Does the child's gender affect the ratings done by parents and teachers?

4. Do academically gifted children differ in self-concept from nonacademically gifted children?

5. Do academically gifted children have parents with higher educational achievement levels than nonacademically gifted children?

6. Do parents of academically gifted children supervise schoolwork more frequently than parents of nonacademically gifted children?

7. Do parents of academically gifted children engage in school-related activities more frequently than parents of nonacademically gifted children?

Procedure

One hundred two kindergarten students from the Miriam College Child Study Center were classified into two groups: 51 academically gifted students and 51 nonacademically students, based from IQ scores obtained from the Culture Fair Intelligence Test. With the researcher's assistance, they were self-rated using the Pictorial Self-Concept Scale (PSCS). Meanwhile, parents and teachers were asked to rate these children's socioemotional behavior through the Preschool Kindergarten Behavior Scales (PKBS). To measure parental involvement, parents were likewise asked to fill out the Parent Academic Involvement-Behavior Scale (PAI-BS).

Treatment of Data

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measures was conducted to determine differences between the parents and teachers' perception of children's socioemotional behavior. The type of rater, type of student and child's gender were studied to see which of these factors significantly influenced the rating of the PKBS. The subscales highly rated by parents and teachers were identified and a comparison between how parents and teachers rated
each of these subscales were done. The between subject effects showed the main effects of some variables such as, gender and type of student on the ratings done by teachers and parents.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measures was likewise done in computing the results of the Pictorial Self-Concept Scale (PSCS). The between subject effects of gender with the PSCS subscales were also analyzed using this measure.

As for parent involvement construct, the results were analyzed using a simple t test for independent groups to determine whether there was a significant difference between the levels of parental involvement found among academically gifted students with the level of parental involvement found among the non-academically gifted students. For significant items, the mean scores of the two groups were compared to see whether particular items were in favor of academically gifted or non-academically gifted children.

Findings & Conclusion

Based from the results of this study and the literature gathered to support its findings, the following can be said about academically gifted and non-academically gifted kindergarten children: (1) parents and teachers differ in their perception of children’s socioemotional behavior. Parents rated children higher on several social skills and problem behaviors than did teachers. (2) Though parents and teachers differ in their perception, gender and the type of student greatly influenced their rating i.e.; boys were seen to exhibit more problem behaviors than girls and academically gifted children were observed to have more positive social skills than their average peers. (3) Even if the academically gifted were found to be generally well-adjusted, these children were reported to also demonstrate certain problem behaviors such as restlessness, lacking in self-confidence, being hot-tempered, impatient, sensitive and demanding of others, and so forth. (4) The self-concept of children in preschool is basically in its early stages and so does not vary between groups, although children in the Child Study Center generally have a positive view of themselves. And lastly, a majority of the parents of both types of children were college graduates with the exception of a good number of fathers of academically gifted children who pursued further studies in the fields of medicine, business and law. Parents were more or less equally involved in the affairs of their child. Parents of academically gifted children responded more frequently to circulars sent by the school. In addition, these parents show more sensitivity when their children show signs of school-stress. Parents of non-academically gifted children were found to attend parent-teacher conferences more frequently and are likewise found to ask their non-academically gifted child things that were done in school that need their direct attention.

Recommendations

For further studies dealing with the socioemotional behavior, self-concept and parent involvement between academically gifted and non-academically gifted children, it is recommended that the study have more males in its sample. Second, other types of data-gathering procedures, aside from the self-report scales should be explored. Self-report scales combined with naturalistic observations and comprehensive case studies will produce more balanced, bias-free results. Third, since the Miriam College CSC students generally share a more homogeneous profile, perhaps, comparing their self-concept with those of preschool children from public schools can be explored to see whether a significant difference will appear. Lastly, given this study’s findings, one can further explore or experiment on enrichment programs that will meet the needs of academically gifted preschoolers touching on the development of more desirable behaviors, values and attitudes.