



Public submission made to the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools

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Submitting as a: Academic person or institution
State: NSW

Summary

The purpose of our submission into the “Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools” is to provide two pieces of evidence with regards to:

- a) The association between discipline and academic performance, and;
- b) The relative importance of school discipline in comparison to education investment on educational performance.

We have conducted two independent pieces of research that resulted in two scholarly peer-reviewed publications in the International Journal of Educational Management.

In this submission, we provide the abstract of the two articles. In addition, we encourage the Review Panel to consult the actual publications as empirical evidence of the research findings.

Main submission

Introduction

The purpose of our submission into the “Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools” is to provide two pieces of evidence with regards to:

- a) The association between discipline and academic performance, and;
- b) The relative importance of school discipline in comparison to education investment on educational performance.

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In essence, our submission addresses the overall question posed by the Review Panel: “What actions can be taken to improve practice and outcomes? What evidence is there to support taking these actions?”

1) Discipline as driver of academic performance

The first area we would like to address is the following question posed by the Review Panel:

“What should educational success for Australian students and schools look like?”, specifically “what capabilities, skills and knowledge should students learn at school to prepare them for the future?”

In our study (abstract below) we found that the following areas of school discipline associate with academic performance:

- students listen to teachers;
- where noise levels in the classroom are low;
- teachers do not have to wait to start class and teach.

In other words, students peak perform when teachers create a disciplined atmosphere.

We therefore propose to consider these school discipline dimensions to be a focus in teacher training and to include them in school policy.

The abstract of the study follows next.

Baumann, C., & Krskova, H. (2016). School discipline, school uniforms and academic performance. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(6), 1003-1029.

Purpose

- The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of school discipline in achieving academic performance. The study aims to clarify the role of permissive vis-à-vis authoritative teaching styles with an overarching hypothesis that better discipline leads to better academic performance. The authors also probe whether uniformed students have better discipline.

Design/methodology/approach

- The authors analyse Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Programme for International Student Assessment data on school discipline dimensions: students listening well, noise levels, teacher waiting time, students working well, class start time. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with post hoc analysis on five geographic groups established by Baumann and Winzar (2016) was applied to test for geographic differences (Europe, Americas, Far East Asia, Rest of Asia, Anglo-Saxon cluster) in school discipline. ANOVA was further used to test for school discipline and academic

performance. Third, t-tests on five discipline dimensions were run to test for differences between students who wear uniforms and those who do not.

Findings

- The results demonstrate differences in school discipline across five geographic clusters, with East Asia leading the way. The authors demonstrate significant differences in discipline for low, medium and high performing students. Peak-performing students have the highest level of discipline. Students wearing a uniform listen better with lower teacher waiting times.

Originality/value

- Students peak perform when teachers create a disciplined atmosphere where students listen to teachers, where noise levels in the classroom are low and they do not have to wait to start class and teach. Good discipline allows students to work well and this ultimately leads to better academic performance. Uniforms contribute to better discipline in everyday school operations. The findings support that in general, implementing school uniforms at schools might enhance discipline and allow for better learning. The authors recommend keeping uniforms where they are already used and to consider introducing uniforms where they are not yet common.

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/IJEM-09-2015-0118>

- 2) Relative importance of school discipline in comparison to education investment on educational performance

Our second point to put forward to the Review Panel relates to our second scholarly paper in the International Journal of Educational Management. It relates to the following question put forward by the Review Panel:

“What can we do to improve and how can we support ongoing improvement over time?”, specifically to “how could schools funding be used more effectively and efficiently (at the classroom, school or system level) to have a significant impact on learning outcomes for all students including disadvantaged and vulnerable students and academically advanced students?”

In this study (abstract below) we found that “the relative importance of school discipline (88 per cent) in comparison to education investment (12 per cent) on educational performance, with both variables also being found to be significantly associated with competitiveness directly”.

We therefore propose to consider the demonstrated effectiveness of school discipline on performance in contrast to budget allocation. This does, of course, not undermine the importance of allocating sufficient funds for education.

The point is to understand the importance of simply focusing on basic discipline dimensions such as punctuality (start class on time; students listen to teachers; low noise levels in the classroom), in everyday school operations. This allows for a clear focus on teaching and learning as evidenced by the strong association with academic performance as found in the following study.

The abstract of the study follows next.

Krskova, H., & Baumann, C. (2017). School discipline, investment, competitiveness and mediating educational performance. *International journal of educational management*, 31(3), 293-319.

Purpose

- The purpose of this paper is to combine seemingly unrelated factors to explain global competitiveness. The study argues that school discipline and education investment affect competitiveness with the association being mediated by educational performance. Crucially, diachronic effects of discipline on performance are tested to demonstrate effects over time.

Design/methodology/approach

- Partial least square (PLS) modelling is used to analyse the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data. The study further draws from World Bank data on Government Expenditure and World Economic Forum data on competitiveness. Five PISA dimensions of school discipline (students listening well, noise levels, teacher waiting time, students working well, class start time) are hypothesised to affect academic performance in reading, math and science, and to ultimately impact competitiveness.

Findings

- Findings confirm the relative importance of school discipline (88 per cent) in comparison to education investment (12 per cent) on educational performance, with both variables also being found to be significantly associated with competitiveness directly.

Originality/value

- This study demonstrates the time effects of discipline, more specifically that discipline dimensions (students listen well in 2003 and students work well in 2009) are associated with competitiveness in 2012. Implications for school policy and further research are discussed.

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/IJEM-05-2016-0099>

Submission authors

Please note that this is a joint submission of the authors of the two studies provided as evidence, namely by Associate Professor Chris Baumann and PhD candidate Hana Krskova.