Issues that Affect Academic Achievement at Escuela Primaria de Parita: A case study of equity and inclusion in a diverse rural community in Panama.

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Abstract

The academic achievement is affected by internal factors such as availability of educational resources and teachers' attitudes; and by external factors such as parental support, and socioeconomic and cultural aspects. In Panama, these factors affect mainly schools in the public education system. The following case study focuses on three of the main issues that affect the learning process at Escuela Primaria de Parita (Parita Elementary School), a rural community in the countryside of the Republic of Panama. Issues such as teacher training and lack of [educational] materials, students’ bad behavior, and dropout rates were identified as the top three issues at Escuela Primaria de Parita. For the purpose of the present case study, the methodology, results, and limitations will only focus on school dropout, which is also the factor that affects academic achievement at Escuela Primaria de Parita the most, and ways to integrate students so that dropout levels decrease. Therefore, the final outcome of this case study is to identify ways in which the research can shed light on understanding the issue better and how to deal with it as we explore possible solutions to this issue.

Keywords: elementary education, academic achievement, learning process, rural, professional development, student behavior, educational resources, human resources, dropout.