

Indigenous Student Attendance in Australia

Posted on October 23, 2018

Research Purpose and Sections

The research under critical analysis is based on the increasing urban Indigenous students' attendance in primary schools in the Australian state of Victoria. It was conducted by Lindy P. Baxter and Noel M. Meyers and published in 2016. In their research, the authors explained the rationale behind the conduction of the research in the abstract. They stated that the school attendance rates were growing in spite of the poverty that has hamstrung the course in the past. In this research, the authors set out to prove that, indeed, there has been an increase in school attendance and establish the causes of this trend. We are then introduced to the situation in an urban Victorian school, Carrington Primary School, which is attended by a number of Indigenous students. In this introduction, the authors explore the effects of the non-attendance of the schools by the indigenous students, which ultimately results in a poor economic situation for the community.

The population increase in recent times is also highlighted, and the mission of the research is to establish the reasons for increased school attendance in urban Australia. The next step is explaining the method that the research used to prove the hypothesis. They state that the research took three years to conduct, and various methods were used to achieve this. These include the use of descriptive statistics to conduct the quantitative phase of the research, various methods of data collection to collect data for the qualitative phase of the research, and finally, peer reviewing for a different perspective. The results section is divided to discuss three different aspects of the research. First, it explains the general observations from the time of research. Secondly, it analyses student attendance over the years of the research, and finally, it relates the issues of family and socio-economic circumstances to school attendance. The discussion section explains how the school has managed to counter the issues of poverty that affect most Indigenous students and improve their school attendance records. The authors finally conclude their research by stating how they achieved their objective of establishing the reasons for increased school attendance by Indigenous students.

Evaluating the Research Methods

The research methods involved a quantitative phase and a qualitative phase. The researchers preferred to conduct field data collection on-site instead of relying on other methods of data collection, such as the content analysis of other research articles. By relying on their data collection, they allowed for direct comparison with other research articles instead of being part of that research. Since the data collection and methods involved were hands-on, the literature review was not necessary, and instead, the preceding literature was used mainly as a reference to explain various

concepts (Kumar & Phrommathed, 2005). There is only one school involved in the study, which makes the data collection methods used very effective. Over a small study group, a collection of data by collecting data on student attendance for three years and using focus group discussions, interviews, and observation is very effective (Merriam, 1998). The decision to study one school means that the results do not reflect the situation in the whole country or even in the whole state. It is vindicated, though, by the accuracy of the results obtained since the methods used here are highly accurate. The period of study (3 years) also allows for the development of a pattern, which contributes to the high accuracy of the results obtained. To complement this research, the authors went through extensive research, and this enabled them to come up with the factors that supported their hypothesis: that the school culture, safety, relationships, support of culture, and the monetary support of the students have negated the effect of poverty on the school attendance of the region.

Evaluating the Results

The results show this effect when school support is used to improve attendance. The results of the methods used are extensive. The observational data collected give rise to the general results whereby the authors say that CPS has embraced its Indigenous students, thus encouraging them to attend school. We expect that the quantitative data collected will be tabulated to show the school's attendance statistics over the three years of data collection. There is also anticipation of the comparison of the attendance results between indigenous students and non-indigenous students. Baxter and Meyers compiled the results and found that there is a difference of 4.1% among the median attendance of the non-indigenous and the Indigenous students, with the population of the non-indigenous students being higher. The analysis of data in this research report is adequate since the numerical data collected is first categorized in the model established by Murphy (2009) and then related to the established goal, which is to show the increase in the attendance rates of Indigenous students in the school. On top of that, the research relates these attendance figures with the family structure and the socioeconomic structure of the students. The analysis is accurately interpreted, and thus, the objective of the research is achieved.

Evaluating the Conclusion

The authors conclude that the CPS's partnership with the community has helped tackle poor attendance by addressing the socio-economic hamstrings. The conclusion, therefore, restates the problems that were under research before justifying the research method used. The discussion of the issues faced when trying to achieve the highest attendance rates is articulate. The conclusion sources the other studies for comparison with the other schools. This factor remains the underbelly of the whole research: the fact that the research is limited to one school only.

Conclusion

The research identifies a trend in Australia's education system and sets out to prove the hypothesis that the rate of school attendance among Indigenous people has increased. It points out the challenges of attendance and identifies the methods of collecting data to prove the hypothesis. The results show that school-community partnerships have increased the attendance rate. The limitation of this research is the fact that it was conducted in only one school, and thus, its compliance with the rest of the country may not be accurate.

References

- Baxter, L. P., & Meyers, N. M. (2016). Increasing urban Indigenous students' attendance: Mitigating the influence of poverty through community partnership. *Australian Journal of Education*, 60(3), 211-228.
- Beresford, Q., & Gray, J. (2012). Models of policy development in Aboriginal education. *Reform and resistance in Aboriginal education*, 120.
- Gray, J., & Beresford, Q. (2008). A 'formidable challenge': Australia's quest for equity in Indigenous education. *Australian Journal of Education*, 52(2), 197-223.
- Helme, S., & Lamb, S. (2011). Closing the School Completion Gap for Indigenous Students. Resource Sheet No. 6. *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*.
- Kumar, S., & Phrommathed, P. (2005). *Research methodology* (pp. 43-50). Springer US.
- Lamb, S., Walstab, A., Teese, R., Vickers, M., & Rumberger, R. (2004). Staying on at school: Improving student retention in Australia. *Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education and the Arts*.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from "Case Study Research in Education."*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104.
- Purdie, N., & Buckley, S. (2010). School attendance and retention of Indigenous Australian students.
- Savage, C., Hindle, R., Meyer, L. H., Hynds, A., Penetito, W., & Sleeter, C. E. (2011). Culturally responsive pedagogies in the classroom: Indigenous student experiences across the curriculum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(3), 183-198.
- Subban, P., & Sharma, U. (2006). Primary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in Victoria, Australia. *International Journal of Special Education*, 21(1), 42-52.