



# Investigating the causes of academic failure in children with mental disorders and management strategies

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## ABSTRACT

The academic failure of children with mental disorders is a significant and challenging issue in the fields of psychology and educational management. Effective management strategies to address this issue must be comprehensive and consider all contributing factors. This article examines the various reasons behind academic failure in children with mental disorders and offers management strategies to address this issue. The causes discussed include cognitive problems, behavioral disorders, insufficient support from family and teachers, and deficiencies in educational programs. Management strategies include designing individualized educational programs, training teachers and parents, and enhancing school support systems to improve the academic performance of these children by reducing the challenges they face in school.

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## INTRODUCTION

Academic failure among children with mental disorders is one of the major challenges in educational and mental health systems. These children often face significant learning and academic progress issues due to cognitive and behavioral problems stemming from their mental disorders. Furthermore, insufficient support from parents, teachers, and educational systems can exacerbate these problems. This article seeks to scientifically examine the reasons for this academic failure and provide effective management strategies to improve the academic situation of these children. Academic failure in children is a serious and complex issue with long-term impacts on their personal and social lives. This problem can result from a combination of individual, family, social, and educational factors. A scientific and specialized investigation of this issue is crucial, as accurately identifying the factors associated with academic failure can help in devising effective strategies for its prevention and resolution.

## Investigating the causes of academic failure in children with mental disorders

### Individual and cognitive factors

Children with mental disorders often face cognitive and learning challenges, which may include attention disorders, memory issues, information processing difficulties, and problem-solving abilities. These challenges significantly affect the children's ability to learn new material and make academic progress. Cognitive and learning disorders are one of the primary reasons for academic failure in children with mental disorders. These children may struggle to understand basic concepts and may not effectively grasp educational content. Individual factors are among the most important reasons for academic failure in children and are influenced by each child's specific characteristics and conditions. These factors can include the following:

### Learning disabilities

Learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia can directly impact a child's ability to learn.

These disorders, stemming from neurological and cognitive differences, lead to difficulties in processing information and utilizing it in educational settings (Ranjbar and Amini, 2019).

#### **Psychological issues**

Mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, and attention disorders can lead to reduced focus and motivation in children. These psychological issues are often accompanied by feelings of hopelessness, lack of self-confidence, and persistent worries, all of which can negatively affect children's academic performance (Mousavi, 2019).

#### **Lack of motivation and interest**

Lack of motivation and interest in learning is another significant individual factor in the academic failure of children. This issue may result from unclear goals, lack of positive reinforcement from parents and teachers, or negative experiences in educational settings (Naderi, 2022).

#### **Physical and health problems**

Some physical problems, such as visual or hearing impairments, chronic illnesses, and nutritional issues, can reduce learning abilities and lead to academic failure.

#### **Behavioral and social disorders**

Many children with mental disorders also have behavioral and social issues. These problems may include aggression, disorganization, inability to interact with peers, and inability to follow classroom rules. Such behaviors can disrupt the learning environment and lead to reduced academic performance in children. Social factors also play a crucial role in shaping children's academic behaviors and ultimately determining their success or failure. These factors include:

#### **Discrimination and labeling**

Children with mental disorders often face discrimination and negative labeling, which can reduce their motivation and self-confidence. Children living in communities with severe economic and social inequalities may have limited access to educational opportunities and support resources. These inequalities can lead to a lack of motivation and decreased effort in academics (Zarei, 2020).

#### **Lack of social support**

Children without adequate social support are more likely to experience academic decline. The prevailing culture and values in society can influence

children's attitudes toward education. Communities that place less value on education or have unrealistic expectations from children may negatively impact their academic performance (Zarei, 2020).

#### **Peer pressure**

Peer influence can play a decisive role in children's academic behaviors. Pressure to conform to peer groups or to adopt their values and behaviors may lead to reduced motivation and academic performance in children (Lyons and Fletcher, 2022).

#### **Lack of adequate support from family and teachers**

The family environment and family interactions play a crucial role in children's academic success or failure. The following factors are particularly significant in this context:

#### **Communication patterns**

Families with ineffective communication patterns may fail to properly understand and respond to the emotional and psychological needs of the child (Menzies and Jackson, 2017).

#### **Low emotional support**

Children growing up in families with low levels of emotional support may have lower self-esteem and confidence, which can negatively affect their academic performance (Arcia et al., 2020).

#### **Inadequate parental support**

Parents who, due to work commitments, personal issues, or a lack of awareness about the importance of education, cannot adequately support their children's education may contribute to their academic failure (Bradley et al., 2021).

#### **Economic problems**

Financial issues within the family can reduce a child's access to appropriate educational resources, books, and necessary equipment. Additionally, these problems can impose additional stress on children, negatively affecting their academic performance (Zarei, 2020).

#### **Family conflicts**

Family conflicts, disputes, and crises can create an unstable and stressful environment that diminishes children's focus and motivation for education (Rajabi, 2021).

#### **Parental education levels**

Parents' education and knowledge levels can also impact children's academic success. Parents with higher education levels are typically better able to provide support and create a more conducive

educational environment for their children. Support for children with mental disorders plays a significant role in their academic success. However, in many cases, parents and teachers may lack the necessary awareness of these children's problems, resulting in inadequate support, which can exacerbate academic issues and lead to school failure (Menzies and Jackson, 2017).

#### **Deficiencies in educational programs and support systems**

Standard educational programs may not meet the specific needs of children with mental disorders. These children require individualized educational programs and special support that are often lacking in existing educational systems. The inability to access such programs can result in academic lag and failure in school. Educational systems that fail to meet the individual and special needs of children can contribute to their academic failure. This includes inflexibility in curricula, the lack of appropriate teaching methods tailored to the diverse abilities of students, and the shortage of suitable resources and facilities.

#### **Inappropriate teaching methods**

Many teachers may not be aware of these children's specific needs and may use teaching methods that are unsuitable for them. Teachers play a key role in the academic success of students. Teachers who have not received the necessary training or lack motivation for teaching may fail to effectively communicate with students and teach them the material (Kauffman and Landrum, 2018).

#### **Lack of access to counseling and support services**

The absence of specialized counseling and appropriate support programs in schools can exacerbate these children's academic problems (Hosseini, 2020).

#### **Inappropriate educational environment**

Schools with unsuitable physical or psychological environments can lead to academic failure in children. This includes overcrowded classrooms, inadequate facilities, and the presence of destructive and punitive behaviors in the school (Lyons and Fletcher, 2022).

#### **Rigid and inflexible curricula**

Curricula that are overly rigid or inflexible can cause significant stress and pressure on students, ultimately reducing their academic performance (Hosseini, 2020).

#### **Management strategies for addressing academic failure**

Managing and improving the academic success of children with disorders such as learning, psychological, and behavioral disorders requires specialized and targeted approaches. These strategies must be designed to meet the specific needs of these children and create a conducive educational environment. The following are some management strategies that can help address academic failure in these children:

#### **Accurate assessment and diagnosis of disorders**

The first step in managing the academic success of children with disorders is the timely and accurate diagnosis of their conditions. School administrators and educational specialists should use comprehensive psychological and educational assessments to identify the type and severity of the disorder. These assessments aid in developing effective educational and therapeutic plans. (Cullinan and Sabornie, 2020)

#### **Designing individualized educational plans (IEPs)**

One of the most crucial management strategies for improving the academic performance of children with mental disorders is the development of individualized educational plans. These plans should be tailored to the specific needs of each child, incorporating specialized teaching methods, appropriate scheduling, and periodic evaluations. Schools and teachers should focus on the individual needs of children and use methods suited to their abilities and talents. (Heidari and Ghaffari, 2019)

#### **Teacher and parent training**

Teachers play a vital role in the academic success of children, especially those with disorders. Training and educating teachers specialized in teaching children with special needs help them employ teaching methods suitable for these children. This training should include behavior management techniques, motivation enhancement methods, and the use of educational aids. Specific training for teachers and parents on how to deal with children with mental disorders and practical strategies for supporting them can improve these children's academic performance (Tehrani and Maleki, 2020).

#### **Enhancing school support systems**

Schools must have strong support systems to assist children with mental disorders. These systems

may include psychological counselors, special education staff, and support programs that help children overcome academic and social challenges. The quality of education should be enhanced by improving teaching methods, providing appropriate facilities, and offering continuous teacher training (Karimi and Salimi, 2017).

#### **Collaboration between educational and mental health sectors**

Collaboration between educational and mental health sectors is essential to comprehensively address the needs of children with mental disorders. This collaboration can include joint assessments, coordinated educational and therapeutic planning, and regular monitoring. Curricula should be flexible and designed to benefit all students while reducing academic stress (Alavi, 2020).

#### **Development of specialized educational programs:**

Educational programs should be designed to meet the specific needs of children with disorders. These programs may include special education classes, the use of assistive learning technologies, and the development of educational content suited to the children's abilities. Individualized and flexible educational programs can increase these children's motivation and participation in the learning process (Heidari and Ghaffari, 2019).

#### **Use of assistive learning technologies**

Assistive learning technologies such as specialized educational software, learning apps, and digital tools can help children with disorders align with their learning pace and style. Using these technologies can make learning easier and more engaging for these children (Tehrani and Maleki, 2020).

#### **Parent-school collaboration**

Close collaboration between parents and the school is crucial for successfully managing the academic success of children with disorders. Parents should be aware of their children's specific needs and work with teachers and school administrators to implement educational and support programs. Organizing counseling sessions and training for parents can increase their awareness and ability to support their children (Alavi, 2020).

#### **Development of psychological and social support programs**

Children with disorders may face psychological and social problems such as anxiety, depression, or communication difficulties. Providing psychological counseling and social support services at school can improve these children's mental health and boost their confidence. These services should ensure that children feel safe and supported to overcome their academic challenges (Wagner and Cameto, 2019).

#### **Creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment**

The educational environment should be designed so that all children, including those with disorders, feel accepted and valued. Creating inclusive environments where individual differences are respected and necessary support is provided can enhance children's motivation and participation in the learning process. (Lyons and Fletcher, 2022).

#### **Continuous monitoring and evaluation of academic performance**

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the academic performance of children with disorders enable administrators and teachers to regularly review the children's progress and make necessary adjustments to educational and support programs. These evaluations should include regular psychological and academic assessments to ensure the children's progress (Heidari and Ghaffari, 2019).

#### **Empowerment programs and life skills training**

Teaching life skills such as social skills, stress management, and problem-solving to children with disorders helps them better cope with everyday challenges. These skills can reduce anxiety and increase children's confidence in the educational environment. (Kauffman and Landrum, 2018)

#### **Establishing multi-disciplinary support teams**

Establishing support teams consisting of psychologists, educational counselors, specialist teachers, and parents can improve the academic situation of children with disorders. These teams should collaborate regularly to develop and implement appropriate educational and support programs for each child (Alavi, 2020).

**Table 1.** Management strategies, their effects on academic performance, and reasons for academic failure

Reasons for academic failure	Effects on academic performance	Management strategies
Attention and concentration disorders (ADHD)	Reduced attention, inability to follow tasks	- Using specialized educational methods - Creating a calm and orderly educational environment - Implementing time management and reminder techniques
Anxiety disorders	Excessive worry, difficulty in concentrating and learning	- Counseling and anxiety treatment - Relaxation techniques and breathing exercises - Creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment
Mood disorders (e.g., depression)	Decreased motivation, academic decline, lack of interest	- Providing psychological counseling and therapy - Encouragement and emotional support - Implementing flexible educational programs
Learning disorders (e.g., dyslexia)	Difficulties in reading, writing, and understanding material	- Using specialized educational methods for learning disorders - Employing educational technologies - Special education and individual support
Behavioral disorders (e.g., conduct disorder)	Problems in interactions with teachers and peers	- Using positive educational methods - Behavioral intervention programs - Close collaboration with parents and educational advisors
Social and family problems	Stress and pressure at home, problems in social interactions	- Implementing family support programs - Family counseling - Collaboration with other support organizations
Lack of emotional and psychological support	Decreased self-esteem, feelings of loneliness	- Establishing a positive and supportive relationship with teachers and advisors - Support groups and counseling - Encouragement and confidence-building

## ■ RESULTS

### **Anxiety disorders**

Constant anxiety and worry hinder children's focus and learning. These children often struggle academically, as they are unable to maintain concentration and calmness in educational settings.

### **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**

ADHD significantly affects a child's ability to concentrate on learning and manage academic tasks. Children with ADHD often face challenges in scheduling and prioritizing assignments.

### **Childhood depression**

Depression decreases motivation and focus and negatively affects children's social interactions, often leading to a decline in academic performance.

### **Lack of social support**

Children with psychological disorders who lack adequate support in educational environments may feel isolated and rejected, which lowers motivation and impacts academic performance.

### **Insufficient training for parents and teachers**

Many parents and teachers lack sufficient knowledge on interacting with children with psychological disorders. This lack of understanding leads to inadequate emotional and educational support.

### **Discrimination and stigma**

Many children face judgment and discrimination due to psychological issues, which lowers their self-esteem and academic motivation.

### **Mismatch of educational programs with special needs**

Many educational systems fail to address these children's specific needs, and standard teaching methods may not effectively serve them.

### **Lack of counseling and psychological support in schools**

School counselors and psychologists can help identify children's psychological issues early and provide necessary support, though this service is unavailable in many schools.

### **Developing tailored educational programs for children with psychological disorders**

Creating flexible and adaptive educational programs can help children succeed academically without additional pressures.

### **Raising awareness and training for parents and teachers**

Workshops and training courses on interacting with children with psychological disorders are essential. This training can help parents and teachers provide a safe, supportive environment.

### **Providing counseling and support services in schools**

Hiring counselors and psychologists in schools who can identify and address issues in a timely manner is highly beneficial for preventing academic decline.

### **Reducing stigma and fostering a supportive environment**

Promoting inclusive educational environments and social acceptance for children with psychological disorders can help boost their self-esteem and motivation.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Children with mental disorders require special support to succeed in educational environments. Academic failure in these children can stem from various factors, including cognitive issues, behavioral disorders, and insufficient support from both family and teachers. Management strategies to address academic failure in children with disorders require a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that considers all educational, psychological, and social aspects. By implementing these strategies, it is possible to create a suitable environment for the learning and growth of children with disorders, ultimately contributing to their academic success.

Management strategies such as designing individualized educational plans, training teachers and parents, and enhancing school support systems can help improve the academic performance of these children. By implementing these strategies and fostering collaboration among various sectors, it is possible to enhance academic performance and reduce the challenges these children face in school.

Academic failure in children is a multidimensional issue that depends on various factors. By accurately identifying these factors and providing effective solutions, we can improve children's academic performance and create the necessary conditions for their success. This not only helps improve the individual conditions of the children but also has positive effects on society and their future.

Parents and teachers must be sensitive to changes in the student's mood, behavior, unusual drops in grades, or negative remarks about school and continuing education. In this way, they can take timely action if issues arise that lead to academic decline.

## **DECLARATIONS**

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### **Authors' contribution**

Both authors contributed equally in this work.

### **Competing interests**

The authors declare no competing interests in this research and publication.

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