

The Link Between Behavioral/Emotional Risk and Academic Motivation

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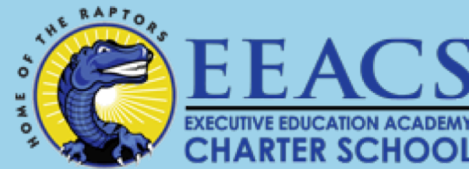
Introduction

- Response-to-Intervention (RTI) was initially developed to address academic needs, with a focus on screening and improved outcomes for students with learning disabilities (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Although RTI is most commonly used for academic supports, its three-tiered logic is similar to that used for behavior within a Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) framework.
- Universal screening for behavioral/emotional risk (BER) at Tier 1 allows schools to identify students with need for intervention (Stiffler & Dever, 2015); although many schools conduct academic screening, only approximately one in eight schools conducts BER screening (Bruhn, Woods-Groves, & Huddle, 2014).
- The purpose of this poster is to understand the association between BER screening data and student motivation in mathematics, which may serve as an early indicator of academic challenges.
- Motivation was considered using an Expectancy-Value framework, with student efficacy, interest, utility value, and cost of success serving as the outcomes of interest (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Method

Participants/Procedures

- The setting for the present study is a K-12 charter school in the Northeast U.S with a PBS system in place.
- Students in grades 6-8 participated, with a total sample of 221 students. Approximately 53% were female, 75% Hispanic/Latino, 17% Black/African American, and 6% White.
- Students completed the behavioral/emotional risk screening measure in homeroom and the motivation measure in their math classrooms. Students completed each measure in approximately 15 minutes.



These results support the link between early behavioral/emotional symptoms and academic motivation, an important precursor to academic success.



Table 1
Summary of Regression Analysis Predicting Motivation Domains

	B	SE	t	p	R ²
<i>Utility</i>					
Inattention/Hyp.	.37	.19	1.92	.056	.05
Internalizing	.38	.13	2.88	.004*	
Pers. Adjustment	-.43	.17	-2.44	.015	
Overall T	-.44	.15	-2.98	.003*	
<i>Efficacy</i>					
Inattention/Hyp.	.40	.18	2.16	.032	.13
Internalizing	.23	.13	1.79	.075	
Pers. Adjustment	-.24	.17	-1.44	.152	
Overall T	-.40	.14	-2.81	.005*	
<i>Cost</i>					
Inattention/Hyp.	-.34	.18	-1.86	.065	.07
Internalizing	-.19	.13	-1.51	.134	
Pers. Adjustment	.25	.17	1.51	.132	
Overall T	.35	.14	2.53	.012	
<i>Interest</i>					
Inattention/Hyp.	.62	.26	2.34	.020	.06
Internalizing	.58	.19	3.14	.002*	
Pers. Adjustment	-.60	.24	-2.50	.013	
Overall T	-.69	.20	-3.36	.001*	
<i>Attainment</i>					
Inattention/Hyp.	.18	.24	.75	.452	.06
Internalizing	.10	.17	.60	.549	
Pers. Adjustment	-.02	.22	-.10	.917	
Overall T	-.22	.18	-1.22	.223	

Note. *p<.01; **p<.001; SE= standard error; DF= degrees of freedom

Method (continued)

Measures

Behavioral/Emotional Risk

- The BASC-3 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System Student-report form (BASC-3; BESS; Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015) is a universal screener designed to measure self-reported behavioral and emotional difficulties, including internalizing, inattention/hyperactivity, and personal adjustment.
- 28 items on a 4-point ordinal (i.e., Never, Sometimes, Often, Almost Always) scale.
- Total raw scores are transformed into T-scores, with higher scores reflecting greater risk.

Motivation

- OnPoint, an electronic assessment was used to measure student motivation levels in math class.
- The items were selected and adapted based on various published instruments (e.g., PALS; Midgley et al., 2000; MSLQ; Pintrich, 1991).
- The 40-item measure included the efficacy, utility (usefulness), interest, and cost domains.

Results/Discussion

- A series of regression analyses indicated that the overall BER T-score predicted efficacy, utility, and interest ($p < .01$). See Table 1.
- No one BER domain predicted cost. A combination of comorbid problems was associated with students perceiving an increasing cost to success in math.
- The results support the link between early behavioral/emotional symptoms and academic motivation, an important predictor of academic success.
- Domain specificity was found. Those with internalizing problems found math less useful and those with inattention/hyperactivity felt that they are less likely to succeed in math.
- This study provides evidence that early symptoms of behavioral and academic difficulties are intertwined, supporting the notion that supporting positive behavior will also support positive academic trajectories (e.g., Bradshaw et al., 2010).
- These results have serious implications for both researchers and practitioners for they highlight the importance of comprehensively supporting a student's social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

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