

IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION ON BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL- BEHAVIOR DISORDERS

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SESSION ABSTRACT

The national focus on highly effective (versus highly qualified) teachers warrants the need for research on how student outcomes vary in light of teacher preparation. Researchers statistically compared the student disciplinary infractions of teachers holding degrees in special education with those completing an alternative licensure program. Results are presented.

2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current national trend toward ensuring *highly effective* (HE) over *highly qualified* (HQ) teachers reinforces the importance of continuous evaluation of teacher preparation approaches. The emphasis on credentials/licensure (i.e., HQ) is now rightly being redirected toward linking teacher performance with student outcomes (i.e., HE). Peterson and Nadler (2009) noted that most HQ studies “show very little, if any, connection with a teachers’...effectiveness.”

3

Moreover, few studies to date have investigated whether student outcomes vary based on teacher preparation approaches (traditional versus alternative). The present study addresses this research void, specifically, the extent to which traditionally- and alternatively prepared special education teachers impact behavior outcomes (i.e., discipline infractions) of students with emotional-behavior disorders (EBD).

4

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Rosenberg's (2007) contention that alternative routes to certification (ARC) programs can produce competent special educators on par with traditionally-prepared teachers is a notion that remains largely untested. The quality and rigor of ARC programs varies widely and is not well-reported (Qu & Becker, 2003; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2005). Moreover, Keller et al. (2008) maintain that "there is value in distinguishing

5

between the effectiveness of ARC programs and their success," suggesting that we must move beyond merely addressing the critical teacher shortage issue by producing more candidates to fill capacity. In a data-based student outcome study, Shepherd and Brown (2003) concluded that traditional bachelor's-level prepared special education teachers were better qualified to teach than their counterparts from ARC programs, which begs the further question from Qu and Becker, "Is alternative certification impairing student learning?"

6

RESEARCH QUESTION

Do the rates of disciplinary infractions of students with EBD incurred by special education teachers prepared through alternative licensure programs vary significantly from those of their traditionally-prepared counterparts?

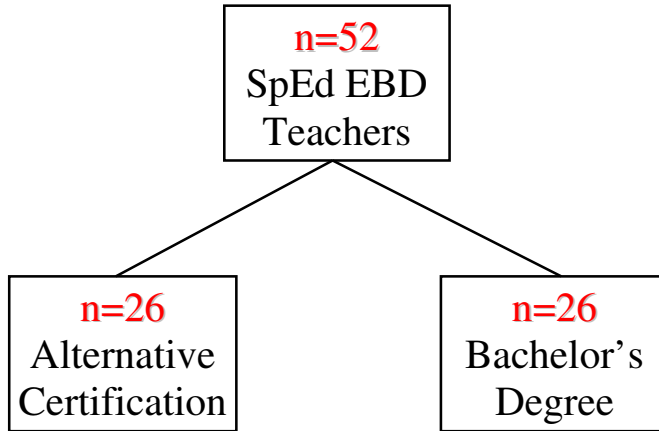
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NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean rate of EBD student disciplinary infractions incurred by special education teachers prepared through alternative licensure programs and the mean rate of EBD student disciplinary infractions incurred by traditionally-prepared special education teachers.

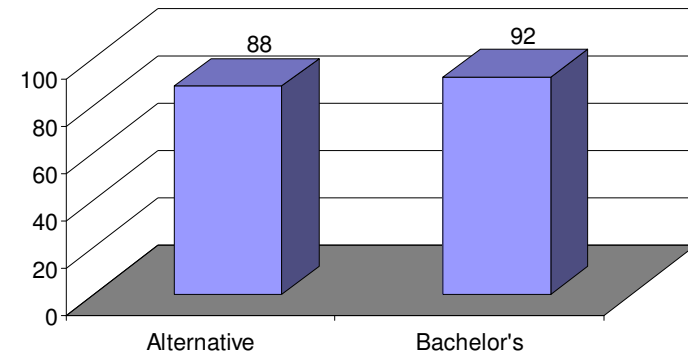
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SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY



9

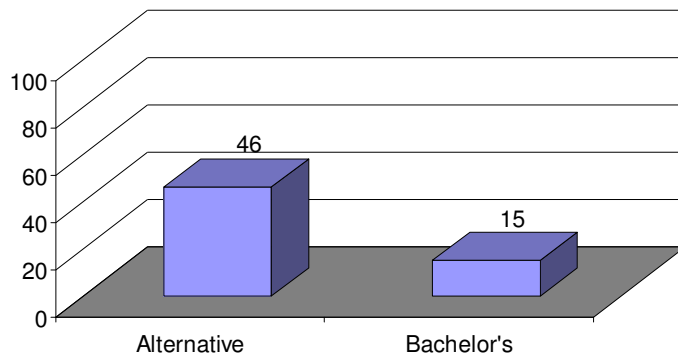
GENDER OF SAMPLE



Percentage of Female Teachers

10

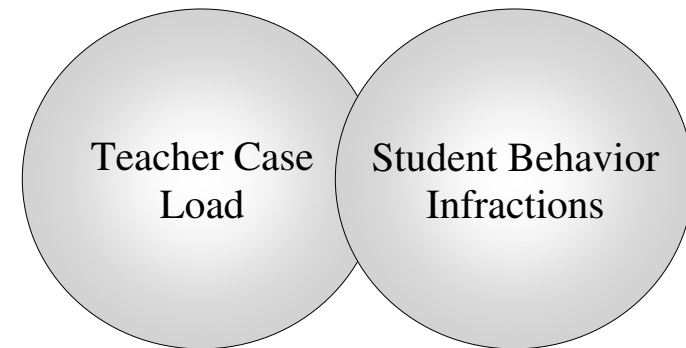
ETHNICITY OF SAMPLE



Percentage of Minority Teachers

11

DATA FOR THE STUDY



Data supplied by the South Carolina Department of Education.

12

PRIMARY DATA POINT

Average Student Behavior Infraction ASBI Index

The ASBI index is calculated by dividing the total student behavior infractions incurred in a teacher's classroom over a given period of time by the teacher's case load (i.e., number of students in the classroom).

13

RESEARCH DESIGN

Dependent variable

- ▶ Mean ASBI index scores

Independent variable

- ▶ Teacher licensure approach
 - Alternative licensure
 - Bachelor's degree licensure

Statistical Test

- ▶ One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Significance

- ▶ Alpha level of $p \leq .05$

14

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Type of Licensure	
	Alternative	Bachelor's
Infractions: Total	1,259	531
Infractions: Range	0–316	0–111
Students: Total	378	345
Students: Range	5–36	3–31
ASBI Index: Range	0–15.13	0–4.89

15

BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS

Most Frequent

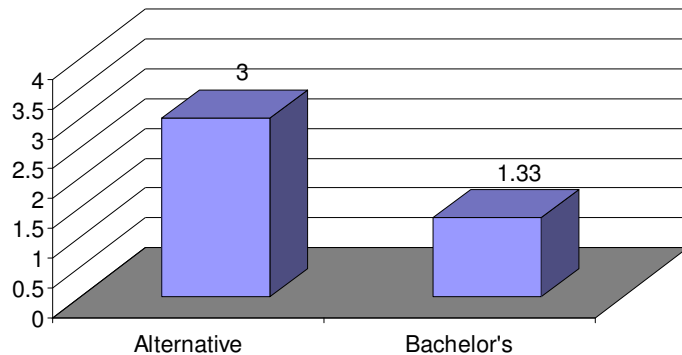
	Alternative			Bachelor's		
	Rank	Raw	%*	Rank	Raw	%^
Cutting Class	3	85	6.8	4	23	4.3
Disrespect	5	74	5.9	2	36	6.8
Profanity	4	82	6.4	3	33	6.2
Refusal to Obey	1	122	9.7	5	22	4.1
Tardy to Class	2	121	9.6	1	57	10.7
TOTALS:		484	38.4		171	32.2

* Calculated from a total of 1,259 behavior infractions.

^ Calculated from a total of 531 behavior infractions.

16

GROUP MEAN COMPARISONS



Average ASBI Index Scores for EBD Teachers With Alternative and Bachelor's Licensure

17

ANOVA RESULTS

▶ ASBI Means & Standard Deviations

Group	n	Mean	SD
Alternative	26	3.00	3.20
Bachelor's	26	1.33	1.36

▶ ANOVA Test

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups:	36.25	1	36.25	5.99	.018*
Within Groups:	302.24	50	6.04		
Total:	338.49	51			

* Significant result, $p \leq .05$

18

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- ▶ Ratio of mean ASBI scores of alternative ($M=3.00$) group to bachelor's/traditional ($M=1.33$) group was approximately 2.3 to 1.
- ▶ ANOVA resulted in a significant difference ($F=5.99$; $df=1,50$; $p=0.018$) between mean ASBI indices (traditional < alternative).
- ▶ Highest (#1) incidence behavior infraction for alternative group was 'refusal to obey' but it was lowest (#5) for traditional group.
- ▶ Higher (#2) incidence behavior infraction for traditional group was 'disrespect' but it was lowest (#5) for alternative group.

19

IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

- ▶ This study's finding that the higher rate of EBD student disciplinary infractions incurred by alternatively-prepared teachers differs significantly from the lower rate of their traditionally-prepared counterparts may simply reflect differences between teachers' perceptions and expectations regarding student behavior rather than actual differences in student behavior in these classrooms.
- ▶ Results do not support Glazerman, Mayer, & Decker (2006) who found no impact of alternatively-prepared (Teach for America) teachers on student disciplinary incidents.

20

- ▶ The observably higher standard deviation from mean ASBI scores of alternatively-prepared teachers may suggest greater variance and limitations in their knowledge, which may stem from their preparation program that requires only three (3) graduate certification courses (i.e., Characteristics of EBD, Methods for EBD, and Behavior Management).
- ▶ The top-ranked 'refusal to obey' infraction (prompting immediate non-compliance) for alternatively-prepared teachers may suggest they simply do not possess as many behavioral strategies in their knowledge base as do traditionally prepared teachers, in which 'refusal to obey' was lowest-ranked.

21

- ▶ Higher-ranked 'disrespect' (suggesting verbal engagement) for traditionally-prepared teachers may indicate their confidence and competence in attempting to help students conform their behavior, all possibly due to their comprehensive preparation program, whereas 'disrespect' was lowest-ranked for alternatively-prepared teachers who may not feel as confident or competent in verbally engaging students due to a more limited preparation program.
- ▶ Results suggest the need to reconsider the alternative certification program model and possibly to bolster program requirements with respect to course work in student behavior interventions as well as providing additional professional development opportunities.

22

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23

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24

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