



Evaluating School-Based Mental Health Support Services for Children with Disabilities in South Africa: An Implementation Effectiveness Analysis

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Abstract

School-based mental health support services for children with disabilities in South Africa have been introduced to address growing mental health needs among this vulnerable population. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including a quantitative survey of parents and teachers to assess service usage and satisfaction, and qualitative interviews with service providers and beneficiaries to explore experiences and challenges. The survey revealed that while over 70% of schools reported using the services, only about half of children with disabilities had received support. Parents expressed higher levels of satisfaction compared to teachers, highlighting potential disparities in implementation. Despite initial positive uptake, significant barriers remain in ensuring equitable access and utilization of these mental health support services for children with disabilities. Enhanced training programmes for educators and policy advocacy on the importance of inclusive mental healthcare are recommended to improve service delivery and outcomes.

Keywords: *African context, disability studies, implementation science, outcome evaluation, qualitative methods*

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