

EUROPEAN EDUCATION



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Issues and Studies

Call for Contributions to a Special issue on

Comparative perspectives on school attendance, absenteeism, and preventive measures in Europe and beyond

Guest editors: Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg & Ulf Fredriksson (Stockholm University)

School non-attendance has been described as an underresearched problem (e.g. Kearney, 2008; Dannow, 2018), but as researchers in the field we have witnessed increasing interest in recent years. The causes of absenteeism are heterogeneous, dimensional, and multi-factorial (Gregory & Purcell, 2014), and a lack of attendance is better described as a symptom of many other underlying problems than as a clearly defined, monodimensional phenomenon. School attendance problems come in many different forms, labeled for instance as school refusal, truancy, school withdrawal, and school exclusion (Heyne, et al. 2018). We know that school attendance problems mirror social inequality in society and the school system (Klein et al., 2020). Recent studies taking into account the perspectives of pupils, parents, and teachers have shown, for example, that it is important for students that schooling be organized in predictable ways (Warne, et al., 2020). A positive school climate was also important for facilitating students' willingness to attend school regularly (Karlberg, et al., 2020).

International comparative studies on school attendance are rare. Using data from the PISA study, Keppens and Spruyt (2018) were able to show that absence can be related to the specifics of different school systems. However, much more research needs to be done if we are to understand the relationship between truancy and the characteristics/organization of the educational system. A scoping review of literature during the period 1980-2020 on school attendance and related problems shows a dominance of publications from the US, Australia, the UK, and Japan, but also lists articles from India, China and Singapore, as well as European countries like the Netherlands, Finland, Spain, and Sweden (Heyne, et al., 2020). The field is definitely international, but this does not necessarily mean it is sufficiently represented through comparative studies. Comparative education studies can search, for example, for the reasons behind why certain problems find their expression in attendance problems. Investigating school attendance through a comparative perspective will help shed light on differences and similarities in the educational systems of Europe.

We are interested in qualitative and quantitative studies that can shed new light on attendance and absence, their backgrounds, and measures and policies for counteracting

related problems. Understanding, for example, children's perspectives or parents' experiences, or teachers' or other stakeholders' views, is in line with what we hope to present to readers in order to gain new understandings of related problems. Quantitative data offers other options and opens up for broad understandings, for example of the relevance of school belonging or the role positive relationships in school play in high attendance. We are hoping for articles that allow new insights into educational policy, instructional practices, issues of organization, and management of the educational system and the importance of these aspects in relation to school attendance.

We invite researchers to suggest articles that take up questions related to school attendance from international and comparative perspectives. All articles should explicitly develop how and/or why the chosen comparative perspective contributes relevant knowledge on school attendance. The dimension of comparison – speaking with Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) – can follow horizontal, vertical, or transversal dimensions, including comparison between different countries or cases, apply different actors' perspectives, dig into historical dimensions or take specific institutional organization and much more into account.

Please submit methodological, theoretical, and state-of-the-art contributions to the knowledge in the field of school absenteeism, its backgrounds, and how to prevent and deal with the problem. Each contribution should contain 5,000-7,000 words.

Submission Deadlines

The deadline for abstracts is 15 September 2022 (150-300 words). Full articles are due 15 January 2023, and will undergo rigorous double-blind review. The publication of the special edition is planned for Autumn 2023.

Please send your abstract to one of the following E-mails:

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About the guest editors

The idea for this special volume has grown out of an international comparative research project on structural, relational, and individual dimensions of school attendance. We want to address researchers from the field of international and comparative education and other relevant areas. The main criteria for articles to be included in this special issue will be the quality of the article and its contribution to research on *school attendance, absenteeism, and preventive measures in Europe and beyond*, with focus on methodological and theoretical questions in the international and comparative education field.