

Influence of Grade Repetition on Reading Achievement: A Cross-Country Analysis Through PISA 2018 Data

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Abstract

The study of grade repetition is of great importance in today's societies, as it is closely related to early school leaving and, consequently, to school failure. Therefore, the aim of this research is to determine the influence of grade repetition on reading literacy in Mediterranean countries (Greece, Portugal, France, Italy, Spain and Malta). The sample consists of a total of 69734 students who participated in the PISA 2018 international assessment. This region has been selected as these countries share a similar culture. The dependent variable is reading literacy, which is the major domain of assessment in the latest edition of this large-scale assessment; while the independent variable is grade repetition. The data were analysed using Student's t-test and Welch's t-test and the effect size was analysed using Cohen's d. The main results show that there is a significant difference between the two variables. The main results show the strong influence of grade repetition on reading literacy, with a large effect size in all countries. This finding is particularly worrying in Greece ($d = 1.699$) and Portugal ($d = 1.620$), as they have the largest effect. In conclusion, it can be affirmed that education policies are not very effective in reducing the impact of repetition on achievement in the Mediterranean region.

Keywords: educational assessment, grade repetition, large-scale assessment, reading literacy, PISA