

A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis of Student Experiences of School Belonging

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Abstract

Studies, which show the effects of school belonging on students' learning experiences, academic development, psychological well-being, and school health, have inspired researchers to focus deeply on students' sense of belonging to their schools. This meta-synthesis aims to explore and deepen students' views about their experience of belonging to school. This study raises the following questions: What common themes can be identified from research on school belonging? What is the final synthesis that could guide the development of school belonging in the future? Fifteen qualitative studies which were selected using the Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) databases, will be examined through a three-stage thematic synthesis; line-by-line coding of the findings section of the selected studies, development of descriptive themes from this section, finally, creation of analytical themes. The expected outcome of the meta-synthesis is to reveal the concept of belonging to school as a higher-level concept. It is hoped that the presented synthesis will offer a comprehensive model for a more nuanced understanding of the antecedents of school belonging from the students' perspective.

Keywords: Academic Development; School Climate; Student Engagement; Student Well-Being; Thematic Synthesis