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Negative Effects of Poverty on the Academic Achievement among Children with Special Needs in the Philippines: A Meta-Synthesis

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Abstract: ***This study presented a meta-synthesis on the negative effects of poverty on academic achievement among children with special needs in the Philippines. It utilized 15 of the initial 400 studies from 2013–2021 that screened using the Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis. Constant comparison and the use of Clark and Braune's six-step thematic analysis revealed seven themes: developmental delays; chronic stress; poor educational performance and attainment; disruptive behavior and attention deficits; lower expectations of the society; less involvement of the parents in children's special needs education; dropping out of school. The negative effects of poverty on academic achievement among children with special needs in the Philippines emerged as the meta-theme of the study. Studies revealed that poverty significantly impacts children with disabilities in terms of development, academic achievement, and school attendance. As a result, it recommended that an intervention program, such as positive behavior intervention, student monitoring/higher student engagement, and parenting services, be provided to mitigate the effects of poverty on the academic achievement of children with disabilities.***
Keywords: children with disabilities, the impact of poverty, special education, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic status may be used to predict academic performance (Cedeño, et. al, 2016; Reardon & Portilla, 2016). In today's schools, poverty has emerged as one of the critical predictors of academic success (Mckenzie, 2019). It can cause low academic performance, resulting in higher school dropout rates. Poverty is linked to several negative impacts on students' performance in school, such as health, emotional, cognitive, and academic success (Dike, 2017). Children receiving special education have a more challenging time succeeding in school due to poverty, and it is almost impossible for them to pursue higher education to increase their employment prospects and income (Auge, 2021). In the Philippines, poverty is related to the disability; people with disabilities face a higher likelihood of poverty and lower academic achievement (Soto, 2021). The Philippines is a developing country where several children with special needs cannot attend school because of family and financial problems. The parents' mindset is that these children will rarely find a job in the future due to their conditions (Ambiong, 2020). There is a significant number of children with disabilities who are unable to go to school due to financial challenges in the household or the lack of access to any educational facilities (Mori et al., 2015). To date, no systematic review or meta-studies on the effects of poverty on the academic achievement of children with disabilities have been undertaken in the Philippines alone. Therefore, this study intends to meta-synthesize the effects on academic success among children with disabilities in the Philippines and to provide recommendations based on the findings.

During a public presentation sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The Center for Governance at the Development Academy of the Philippines presented the primary findings of its research on governance on July 24 at the Novotel Manila, a study on the state of children with disabilities. The findings showed that 26.56 percent of impoverished Affected Filipino youngsters do not yet have a reliable referral mechanism. According to the findings of this qualitative study, children aged 0–14 make up one in five people with disabilities, and children make up about 26.56 percent of the disabled poor Filipino population. However, it showed that the link between poverty and disability is regarded and that there is still a lack of an integrated referral system and an inclusive service framework for these kids. On the other hand, access to services is still a problem.

There is still a research deficit since no study has explicitly shown how national and individual poverty affects special education. Many studies have extensively examined the effects of poverty on education, with a few emphasizing special education. (Auge, 2021).

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The New Zealand Child and Youth Epidemiology Service lacks information on how many children and individuals with disabilities live in poverty in New Zealand. There is also inadequate information on the resources that should be made available to lessen this deprivation (Wynd, 2015). The 2010 Census of Population in the Philippines found that children with disabilities may have worse situations than those without disabilities. Unfortunately, less is known about children with disabilities, especially those who live in poverty and face other forms of deprivation (Reyes et al., 2014). While the impacts on national poverty rates might not yet be evident, the impacts on school attendance are clear (Albert et al., 2015).

A. Research Objective

This study aims to determine the negative effects of poverty on the academic success of children with disabilities and to draw recommendations for reducing the negative impacts brought about by poverty through the use of meta-synthesis methods.

B. Methodology

McClean & Shaw (2005) describe meta-synthesis as a method of reinterpreting and reshaping existing qualitative findings. This study uses meta-synthesis to create a fact-based explanation for the phenomenon (Finfgeld-Connet, 2008) of the impact of poverty on the academic achievement of children with special needs in the Philippines.

C. Research Design

This study utilizes a metasynthesis research approach to synthesize evidence concerning the impact of poverty on the academic achievement of children with disabilities. The meta-synthesis is a required method that enriches research with valuable findings (Charistina, 2018).

In this study, qualitative data on the impacts of poverty on the academic achievement of children with disabilities will be analyzed and discussed. Using the method of meta-synthesis, pertinent data will be utilized to determine poverty's effects and formulate recommendations for reducing its negative effects. Specifically, this study is guided by two review questions: what are poverty's impacts on students' academic achievement?

D. Search Strategy

The related works on the negative effects of poverty on the academic achievement of children with special needs in the Philippines have been identified in a scholarly electronic database via Google Scholar and Crossref. The researchers searched and examined related studies on the negative effect of poverty on the academic achievement of children with special needs from 2013 to 2022. The keywords used in the Google Scholar database searches were "children with disabilities," "impact of poverty," "special education," and "Philippines."

E. Selection/Inclusion Criteria

This study includes studies that meet the following criteria: a study involving children with disabilities; special education; effects of poverty; poverty in the Philippines; studies from 2013 to 2022; Google scholar; and English language.

II. DATA ANALYSIS

The identification of prominent themes was accomplished using thematic data analysis. The results were constructed under the specific areas of the study. This paper has outlined our pragmatic use of Braun and Clarke's six steps of reflexive thematic analysis: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes, constructing themes, developing the report and defining and identifying themes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are interpreted based on the purpose of the study based on the chosen studies connected to the chosen meta-synthesis. The negative effect of poverty on the academic achievement among children with special needs in the Philippines was identified as the meta-theme. The seven (7) sub-themes are consequently formed from the fifteen (15) related studies focusing on the negative effect of poverty. The results indicated that children with special needs experienced the highlighted different themes: developmental delay, chronic stress, poor educational performance and attainment, disruptive behavior and attention deficits, lower expectations of the society, less involvement of the parents and (7) school dropout.

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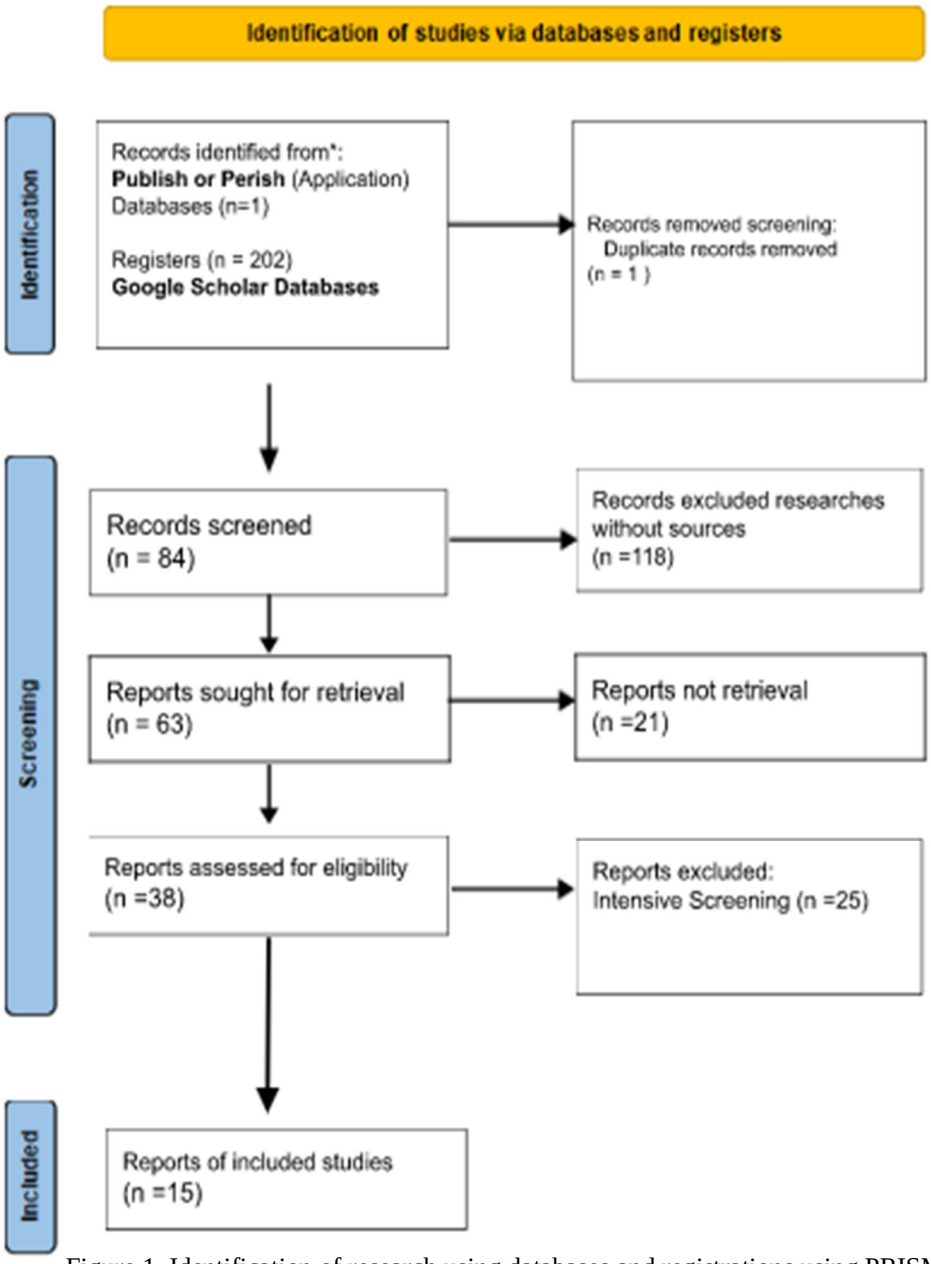


Figure 1. Identification of research using databases and registrations using PRISMA

The PRISMA Flow Diagram is used to select the research papers in three (3) steps. Identification, screening, and inclusion are the three phases. On the identification step, 202 studies that had been first vetted using the Publish or Perish program were registered in Google Scholar. Two Hundred One (201) studies were in the identification stage after one (1) research was eliminated due to duplication in Google Scholar. The screening step was divided into three phases. Eighty-four (84) research were left after One Hundred Eighteen (118) studies were disqualified in the first substage due to the lack of sources. Twenty-One (21) studies were eliminated from the second substage because they could not be recovered, leaving sixty-three (63) investigations. Twenty-five studies (25) were eliminated from the third substage of the screening stage as a consequence of the researchers' re-reading and re-screening, leaving thirty-eight (38) studies for the screening stage's final substage. Twenty-three (23) were excluded in the last stage because another re-screening and using the CASP Checklist resulted in the final fifteen (15) studies.

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Table 1. Studies focusing on the Negative Effects of Poverty on academic achievement are included in the meta-synthesis.

No.	Authors	Year	Setting	General Initial Codes of the Impacts of Poverty on the Academic Achievement
1.	McKenzie, K	2019	Canada	• Emotional and social struggles • They might be incapable of empathizing with others. • Poor social skills • Inability to work well with classmates • Cognitive lags • Developmental delays • Poor performance on tests • Chronic stressors
2.	Morgan M. A.	2021	Minnesota	• Lower academic achievement • Emotional and social struggles • Their impacts on other people's lives • Poor learning performance • Unhealthy behavior
3.	Ambiong, J.	2020	Philippines	• Parents cannot afford to send the child to school, hence, lead to school drop-out
4.	Schifter, L.A., Grindal, T., Schwartz, G., & Hehir, T.	2019	Florida	• Placed in separate classrooms where there is a low expectations of academic success • Worse education outcomes • Stigma is higher
5.	Reyes, C., Tabuga, A., Asis, R., & Mondez, M. B.	2014	Philippines	• School dropout • Could not go to school • Very low level of skills and capabilities
6.	Cedeño, L. F., Martínez-Arias, R., & Bueno, J. A.	2015	Spain	• Decrease the children's confidence • Problems of attention • Chronicity of stress • Attentional deficits
7.	Agbon, A., & Mina, D.	2017	Philippines	• Lower literacy • Lower school participation
8.	McLaughlin, T. & Stansell, A.	2013	Washington	• Decrease IQ • Low academic background • Issues in adaptive and social skills • Parents have less information about their children's special needs • Negative consequences for the intervention

9.	Kizito, W.	2019	Uganda	• Performed less • Experience learning disabilities and developmental delays • Grade failure • Lack of interest in School • High dropout rates • Lower reading abilities in English and Math
10.	Marston, D. C.	2013	Washington	• Greater incidences of intellectual disability, learning difficulties, ADHD, and autism
11.	Lamichhane, K.	2013	Nepal	• Discontinue their education • Vulnerable to being left out
12.	Flores, M. A. & Ferreira, F. I.	2016	Portugal	• Lack of motivation • Lack of interest • Early dropouts
13.	Arce, M.	2021	Washington	• Poor Educational Outcomes for Children • Low educational performance
14.	Huettl, K. J.	2016	United States	• High school dropout • Delays in language development
15.	Banerjee, P. A.	2016	United Kingdom	• Decreasing cumulative GPA • Lower cognitive scores • Absenteeism and low school connectedness • Parents who are unemployed and have low income tend to raise underachieving children

The definitive collection of 15 studies included six (6) journals, four (4) articles, two (2) theses, two (2) discussion papers, and one (1) dissertation. The authors were affiliated with institutes in America (7 publications) and Asia (4 publications). Europe (3 publications) and Africa (1 publication).

A. Meta-theme: Negative Effects of Poverty on the Academic Achievement Among Children with Special Needs in the Philippines

Teachers can make a difference by being aware of the risk factors. Socioeconomic status may be used to predict academic performance. (Cedeño, et. al, 2016; Reardon & Portilla, 2016). Teachers must be aware of how poverty affects student behavior and ability to learn in the classroom while more children are growing up in poverty. Long-term poverty exposure is harmful; the worst impacts seem to affect children who spend a lot of time in these adverse situations.

1) Sub-theme 1. Developmental Delay

Many children who have lived in poverty go to school without having the necessary social-emotional reactions to build connections with their classmates and instructors (Jensen, 2013). They could be unable to sympathize with other people. These pupils struggle to function well in collaborative groups with their classmates due to their lack of empathy. Due to their inability to get along with their peers, students frequently end up being excluded from group activities, which heightens their feelings of inadequacy and causes them to abandon a task before they fully complete it. Academic achievement may suffer from a lack of social skills, which leads to peer rejection (Mckenzie, 2019). Early poverty results in persistent behavioral, health, and learning issues. Children in these settings lack access to primary healthcare and intellectual stimulation. Young people with moderate mental difficulties with adaptive skills, particularly social skills, are more common in those with retardation (McLaughlin & Stansell, 2013).

Additionally, long-term poverty negatively impacts children's cognitive ability more than short-term poverty (McLaughlin & Stansell, 2013). Children living in households with few opportunities for cognitive stimulation will have lower self-confidence, eventually resulting in scholastic failure (Cedeño et al., 2016). Due to considerable alterations in the structure of the brain's memory and emotional processing centers, children raised in poverty are more likely to develop cognitive delays. Differences in vocabulary and reading proficiency are related to family wealth partly because of this (Kizito, 2019). Due to their parent's inability to afford toys and books that stimulate their kids' minds, children who live in poverty may speak more directly and with fewer words (Johnson et al., 2016). Compared to children raised in more affluent environments, those reared in poverty had a higher prevalence of developmental delays. As the number of risk variables rose, the IQs of children living in poverty declined (McLaughlin & Stansell, 2013).

2) Sub-theme 2. Chronic Stress

More research has linked chronic stress and depression to deprivation, which has been found to impact a young child's early brain development (Engle & Black, 2018). Extreme stress and a lack of cognitive stimulation have long-lasting impacts on a person's competence, which is more evident at work or school (Cedeño et al., 2016). Because of the major structural alterations in memory and emotional processing regions caused by repeated stresses, children living in poverty have worse academic success and more behavioral problems in the classroom (McKenzie, 2019).

Toxic stress, which is connected to dangerous environments and affects how the brain develops and works, is experienced by children. This has long-term effects on the mental health of neglected children, who are more likely to experience stress and despair. Financially struggling parents may have experienced poverty as children and may be dealing with unresolved stress, unhappiness, and trauma. It's possible that these parents are unable to give their children a healthy environment (Francies, 2018). Most children who are exposed to high levels of stress from a young age undergo noticeable changes in their brain development, notably in the regions of the brain that is in charge of regulating the emotions and developing the cognitive abilities (Gale, 2016).

3) Sub-theme 3. Poor Educational Performance and Attainment

Poverty affects a child's ability to learn, making it almost hard for them to pursue higher education to increase their employment prospects and income (Auge, 2021). When a family experiences specific shocks leading to poverty, the children may decide to stop attending school. The kids from persistently underprivileged homes had the lowest attendance rates (Reyes et al., 2014). In poor rural communities, residents may not have completed high school and are less likely to have good academic credentials (McLaughlin & Stansell, 2013).

Women and children with disabilities in the Philippines were found to have lower rates of literacy and school enrolment as well as overall lower educational attainment compared to male PWDs and non-disabled children (Reyes, 2015). Studies show that kids from less wealthy homes start school intellectually and behaviorally behind their more affluent peers, and the gap worsens as they go through school (Duncan, Kalil, & Ziol-Guest, 2013). Less advantaged students perform academically than their more advantaged peers (Reardon, 2011; Steele, 2010).

4) Sub-theme 4. Disruptive Behavior and Attention Deficits

According to Morgan (2021), children from low-income families can have mental, emotional, and behavioral issues in childhood and adolescence. Cedeño et al. (2015) Lower-income pupils are more likely to have attention issues. They often encounter more severe hardships early on, which may teach them to maintain awareness and concentrate attention on detecting dangers and the absence of pertinent information, as it seems to occur in cognitively challenging settings like schools. According to Cedeo et al. (2015), neuroscience research seems to support a greater incidence of attentional deficiencies among kids from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds, which might help to explain the success difference.

Additionally, compared to young children who faced adversity early in life, teens who experience poverty later in life will have less of an impact on their development. Deprivation has been discovered to affect a young child's early brain development, as well as depression and chronic stress, which have been related to deprivation. As a consequence, the child's cognition, behavior, and health suffer, which results in long-lasting changes in the brain's structure and function (Morgan, 2021).

5) Sub-theme 5. Lower Expectations of the Society

According to Schifter et al. (2019), students from low-income families are more frequently classified as having more ambiguous disabilities.

After being so classified, they are more frequently assigned to classrooms that are physically separated from others, where the standards for success are typically lower, the quality of the education is typically worse, and the stigma surrounding special education is generally higher. Low-income pupils have a greater frequency of disabilities, which should be reflected in special education. Furthermore, lower expectations, stigma, and exclusion from general education classes are other consequences of being identified for special education.

Low self-esteem and lowered expectations for the extraordinary person might result in a lifetime of underachievement and disregard of realizing their full potential. Lowered standards and excessive protection are both manifestations of intolerance. As a result of internalizing discrimination, people with disabilities come to understand that they are less capable than those without disabilities. Children with special needs may get excessive protection from their parents and guardians, which might increase culpability. Children and teenagers need effective parenting techniques to aid in the development of a healthy self-concept and self-esteem. To help parents, schools, and other professionals deal with the repercussions of overprotection and decreased expectations, procedures have been established.

6) Sub-theme 6. Less Involvement of the Parents

According to research, parental involvement in education has been linked to better classroom success. Parental involvement in the classroom enables parents to support their children in academic endeavors. Parents also learn what is expected of them regarding behavior and schoolwork (Kizito, 2019). Compared to parents with lower socioeconomic positions, parents with more special socioeconomic status are more likely to participate actively in their children's academics. Conversely, poor parents are less likely to have the knowledge or resources necessary to deal with their child's impairment, perpetuating a negative cycle (Heward, 2013). Parents living in poor rural areas are likely to have less information about their child's educational needs (McLaughlin &Stansell, 2013).

Parental involvement in a child’s education is crucial. This is because parental participation motivates and inspires children to put up a lot of effort in their academic pursuits. The establishment of good conduct by families and schools, which is reinforced to kids at home and at school, is another advantage of parental participation in schools (McNeal, 1999, Hill & Taylor, 2004). Children whose parents did not devote a lot of time to their education when they were young have very low grades, and their chances of improving are very slim (Douglas 1964). Parents' lack of interest causes children to believe that education is not necessary; therefore, they never make an attempt to thrive.

7) Sub-theme 7. School Dropout

The common thread among all the issues mentioned above is poverty, which correlates to reduced academic achievement for students (Huettl, 2016). Poverty has been shown to negatively impact preschool performance, test scores in higher grades, which can ultimately lead to grade failure, lack of interest in School, and high dropout rates (Kizito, 2019). According to Jasmin Ambiong (2020), some youngsters had to quit going to school since their families could no longer afford to keep them there. School dropout is largely a problem among older children and is inversely associated with income (Huettl, 2016).

Furthermore, poverty has significant effects on student achievement (Kizito, 2019). Kelly J. Huettl (2016) emphasized that higher high school dropout rates are a reality for adolescents from low-SES backgrounds. According to some experts, this may be because less fortunate children don't have access to the same educational or intellectually engaging materials that more fortunate children have. Low socioeconomic status is directly correlated with high school dropout rates. A student's likelihood of dropping out of high school before graduating is higher if their parents have less education.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the studies, poverty has dramatically affected the academic achievement of students with disabilities which is evident in a way that it has adverse effects on the developmental domains of the students, such as social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive domains. Poverty also hinders the capability of students with disabilities to perform better in school since most of these students attain worse academic outcomes, which can lead to school dropout. The existence of poverty became a factor as to why parents involve themselves less in the special education and services of their children, thus, making it harder for the children to attain a better education. The less the students with disabilities receive special education, the lower society's expectations for them. As a result, there is a strong link between poverty and students with disabilities academic success. It is recommended that an intervention program such as positive behavior intervention, student monitoring/higher student engagement, and parenting services be provided to mitigate the effects of poverty on the academic achievement of children with disabilities.

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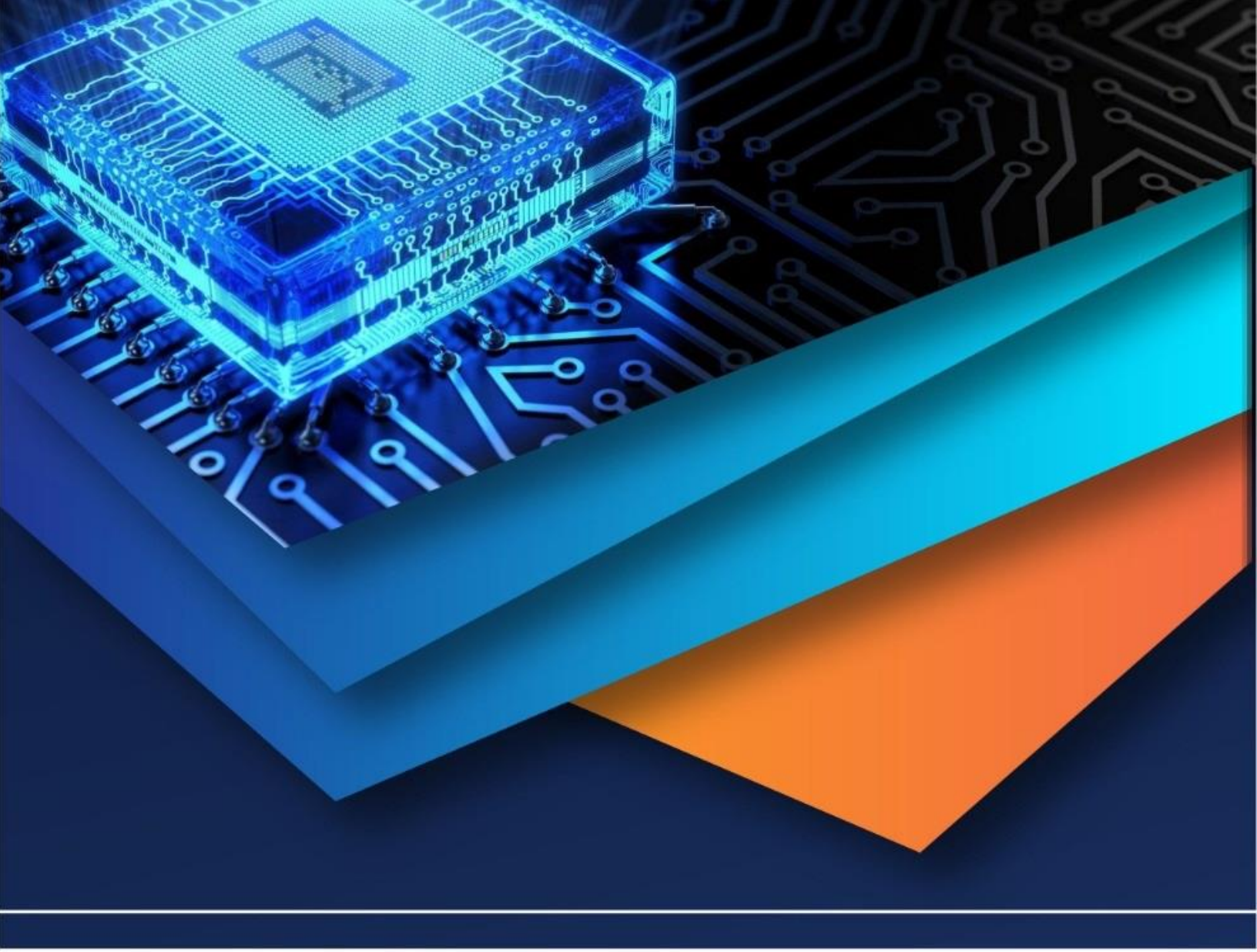
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APPENDIX

Clustering of Codes and Emerging Themes

Themes	Emergent Themes
• Emotional and social struggles (P1) • Poor social skills (P1) • Developmental delays (P1) • Cognitive lags (P1) • They might be incapable of empathizing with others (P1) • Inability to work well with classmates (P1) • Emotional and social struggles (P2) • Decrease the children's confidence (P6) • Lower literacy (P7) • Decrease IQ (P8) • Issues in adaptive and social skills (P8) • Lower reading abilities in English and Math (P9) • Greater incidences of intellectual disability, learning difficulties, ADHD, and autism (P10) • Vulnerable to being left out (P11) • Delays in language development (P14)	Developmental Delays
• Chronic stressors (P1) • Chronicity of stress (P6)	Chronic Stress
• Poor performance on tests (P1) • Lower academic achievement (P2) • Worse education outcomes (P4) • Very low level of skills and capabilities (P5) • Lower school participation (P7) • Low academic background (P8) • Negative consequences for the intervention (P8) • Grade failure (P9) • Performed less (P9) • Low educational performance (P9) • Poor Educational Outcomes for Children (P13) • Lower cognitive scores (P15)	Poor educational performance and attainment
• Unhealthy behavior (P2) • Problems of attention (P6) • Attentional deficits (P6)	Disruptive behavior and attention deficits
• Placed in separate classrooms where there is a low expectations of academic success (P4) • Stigma is higher (P4)	Lower expectations of the society
• Parents cannot afford to send the child to school, hence, lead to school drop-out (P3) • Parents have less information about their children's special needs (P8) • Parents who are unemployed and have low income tend to raise underachieving children (P15)	Less involvement of the parents in children's special needs education
• Parents cannot afford to send the child to school, hence, lead to school drop-out (P3) • School dropout (P5) • Discontinue their education (P11) • Could not go to school (P5) • High dropout rates (P9) • Lack of interest in School (P9) • Early dropouts (P12) • High school dropout (P14) • Absenteeism and low school connectedness (P15)	Dropping out of school



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