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Outcome-Based Education and Children's Mental Health Exploring Performance Pressure and Anxiety in Primary Learners

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ABSTRACT

Outcome-based education has gained widespread adoption for its emphasis on clearly defined competencies, measurable standards, and continuous assessment. While this approach aims to enhance accountability and learning effectiveness, its intensive focus on performance targets may generate unintended psychological pressures, particularly among primary school children who are still developing emotional regulation and coping capacities. This research explores the relationship between outcome-based education practices and children's mental health, with specific attention to performance pressure and anxiety experienced by primary learners. Drawing on educational psychology and developmental frameworks, the study investigates how curriculum design, assessment frequency, teacher expectations, and accountability mechanisms contribute to heightened stress, fear of failure, and anxiety symptoms in young students. Using a mixed-methods design that combines quantitative measures of anxiety and self-reported pressure with qualitative insights from classroom observations, student interviews, and teacher perspectives, the research identifies both risk and protective factors within outcome-based environments. The findings are expected to illuminate the pathways through which performance-oriented practices affect emotional well-being and to offer evidence-based recommendations for designing more balanced outcome-based systems that support academic growth without compromising children's mental health. This work contributes to the growing discourse on the psychological sustainability of contemporary educational reforms in primary education.

Keywords: *Outcome-Based Education; Performance Pressure; Children's Mental Health.*