WHAT QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH CAN TELL US ABOUT CHILDREN'S LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT?

Pam Sammons\textsuperscript{1}, Kathy Sylva\textsuperscript{1}, Edward Melhuish\textsuperscript{1}, Iram Siraj\textsuperscript{2}, Brenda Taggart\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}University of Oxford, Oxford, UK, \textsuperscript{2}Institute of Education, University of London, London, UK

Background to the topic

Since 1997, the Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE) project has investigated the attainment and development of approximately 3,000 children from age 3+ to age 16+ (post compulsory schooling). The project came to an end in March 2014 after 17 years.

Research questions/focus of the enquiry

Throughout the EPPSE study, the research has explored the contribution of background characteristics (individual children, families, neighbourhoods etc.) and institutions (pre-school and school) to students' academic attainment, social-behavioural development and dispositions, and other characteristics that predict developmental change over Key Stages. The longitudinal nature of the EPPSE study allows the research to explore how early experiences help 'shape' later learning trajectories. The EPPSE research acknowledges that institutions (from pre-school onwards) are not the only influence on students' development; peers, families and communities matter too and studying these 'social' influences has been an enduring theme throughout the 17 years of the EPPSE project.

Research methods/or mapping the literature

When EPPSE reports on the influence of institutions, this is set within a 'nested' framework (children in families, in communities) and therefore the effects of schooling are reported after taking account of individual student and background influences making them 'net' of the family and the neighbourhood. The young adults in the EPPSE study also shape their own pathways as much as their schools, family or neighbourhood and for this reason the EPPSE analyses includes students' perceptions of themselves as learners along with their views of school.

Analytical and/or theoretical framework

For 17 years EPPSE's quantitative analytical strategy has been determined by 'fitness for purpose'. The quantitative analyses has, at different times, included: Descriptive analyses, Multivariate analyses, Exploratory & confirmatory factor analyses, Multilevel (value added) analyses, Growth curve modelling, Structural equation modelling, Trajectory analyses and Multiple imputation.

Research findings and /or contribution to knowledge

EPPSE findings are of national and international importance and have contributed to the development of major policy initiatives (e.g. Sure Start Children's Centres). They have also made a major contribution to the knowledge about effective educational practices.

This paper describes the main EPPSE research findings from the quantitative analyses and explores the endurance of key influences on children's development, and how these change over time.