

A comparative perspective on the effectiveness of public schools and private schools

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the effectiveness of public, private, government dependent and private independent schools in 19 OECD countries using PISA 2000 data, which shows the educational achievements of 15-year-old students in reading and math. In a multi-level approach, we check step by step for sociological and demographic characteristics of pupils and parents, behavioral and attitude characteristics of pupils and parents, school composition, teaching and learning conditions of schools and the school climate. Our analysis clearly shows that private government- dependent schools are more effective than comparable public schools with the same pupils, parents and social composition. The main explanation for this higher effectiveness is the better school climate in the first, compared to the second. The different learning and teaching conditions in private, government dependent and public schools do not explain the differences in effectiveness. Our analysis also shows that private independent schools are less effective than public schools with the same pupils, parents and social composition. The most important explanation for their initially higher effectiveness is the better social composition of these schools. These effects are more or less the same in these 19 OECD countries.

Key Words: Public Schools, Private School, Educational Achievements, Social Composition