

Child welfare clients and school satisfaction

Barnevernsbarn og skoletrivsel

Notes on contributor:

...holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and is a researcher at Norwegian Social Research.

Abstract

Despite long-standing knowledge about child welfare clients' poor educational outcomes, we know less about these vulnerable young people's situation in school. This article addresses school satisfaction among upper secondary students who have been in contact with the child welfare services. These child welfare clients' school satisfaction is compared with their peers' satisfaction. The results from a survey indicated that the majority of child welfare clients were satisfied with school but that they were less satisfied with school than were their peers. The results showed that the association between school satisfaction and positive school experiences explains a large part of this difference. Among students who reported they were doing well in school, had supportive teachers and friends at school, the difference in school satisfaction between child welfare clients and others was small. Among students who did not report similar positive experiences in school, difference in school satisfaction between child welfare clients and their peers was more substantial. These results show that school can be a good place for child welfare clients, but that facilitating support from teachers, increasing opportunities for making friends at school, and working to develop the child welfare clients' academic performances are important as efforts to improve school satisfaction.

Studier har i lang tid vist at mange barnevernsbarn presterer dårlig på skolen og ofte ender opp med lavt utdanningsnivå. Likevel finnes det lite kunnskap om barnevernsbarnas skolesituasjon. Basert på en spørreskjemaundersøkelse blant elever i videregående opplæring undersøker jeg i denne artikkelen skoletrivsel blant barnevernsbarna. Deres skoletrivsel sammenliknes med elever uten barnevernserfaring. Resultatene viser at flertallet av barnevernsbarna trivdes på skolen, men at deres skoletrivsel var noe lavere enn deres klassekamerater. Videre viser resultatene at forskjell i skoletrivsel mellom barnevernsbarna og

andre elever i stor grad kan forklares med ulike erfaringer på skolen. Blant elever som oppga positive erfaringer på skolen var det lite forskjell i skoletrivsel mellom elever med og uten barnevernserfaring. Blant elever som oppga færre positive erfaringer på skolen, var skoletrivselen mindre og barnevernsbarna oppga oftere enn andre lav skoletrivsel. Resultatene viser at skolen kan være et godt sted for barnevernsbarn, men at for disse elevene er det nødvendig med en skolesituasjon hvor de opplever støtte fra lærere, har venner og opplever at de gjør det faglig godt på skolen.

Keywords:

Child welfare clients, school satisfaction, upper secondary school

Nøkkelord: barnevernsbarn, skoletilfredshet, videregående opplæring

Introduction

Research shows that child welfare clients struggle more in school than do their peers. For several decades, findings have shown that, relative to their peers, children in the child welfare system perform worse in school and are less likely to obtain higher educational degrees (e.g. Berlin, Vinnerljung, & Hjern, 2011; Cheung & Heath, 1994; Clausen & Kristofersen, 2008; Dæhlen, 2014; Jackson & Cameron, 2011; Vinnerljung, Öman, & Gunnarson, 2005). In addition to the central importance of school in the everyday lives of all children, there is no doubt about the close relationship between low educational attainment and negative life outcomes (De Ridder et al., 2012; Hammarström & Janlert, 2002; Rumberger & Lamb, 2003). Yet improving the everyday school lives of children in the child welfare system has not become a priority. Researchers from the cross-national project YIPPEE (Young People in Public Care – Pathways to Education in Europe) concluded that the education of children in care had attracted ‘...almost no attention in any country other than UK, ...’ (Jackson & Höjer, 2013: 1). To improve the adult life chances of these vulnerable young men and women, we must increase our understanding of the factors that promote educational attainment. Good experiences in school are vitally important to enhancing future life opportunities for young people at risk and for those placed in care (Höjer & Johanson, 2013). Based on the assumption that good experiences in school are positively associated with school satisfaction, this article addresses school satisfaction among students in the child welfare system. In this study, child welfare clients are students who have been in contact with the child welfare services, and the majority of them has probably received assistive measures inside the home or other alternatives to placement. If any, students in foster care or other out of home placement constitute a minority. Based on data from a survey of Norwegian students in their second year of upper secondary school, I compared school satisfaction between these child welfare clients and their peers.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. I begin with a brief overview of the Norwegian educational system and child welfare clients in Norway. Next, I review previous research on the education of child welfare clients, and then I present the methods and results from the current study. The article ends with a discussion of the results and a short conclusion summarizing the arguments.

The Norwegian context

In Norway, compulsory education consists of 10 years of schooling: seven years in primary school (Barneskole, ages 6–13) and three years in lower secondary school (Ungdomsskole, ages 13–16). Furthermore, students have a right to upper secondary school (Videregående skole, ages 16–19), a right that almost everybody uses. More than 95 per cent of a given cohort proceed directly to upper secondary education after lower secondary education (Hernes, 2010).

Norwegian studies indicate that former child welfare clients have poor educational records. In 2005, less than 10 per cent of this group had studied at the tertiary levelⁱ by the age of 25, compared with 40 per cent of their peers without a public care background (Clausen & Kristofersen, 2008). However, the percentage of child welfare clients who make the transition from lower secondary school to upper secondary school is probably as high as it is for their peers.ⁱⁱ

Compared with other countries, pupils in Norway report high levels of school satisfaction (Currie et al., 2008 in Danielsen (2012)). Norwegian studies show that more than nine out of 10 students in lower and upper secondary school enjoy school (Frøyland & Gjerustad, 2012; Øia, 2011). Less is known about child welfare clients' school satisfaction in Norway, but a study of 40 children in foster care found that many of them enjoyed school. In lower secondary school, 89 per cent of the children in foster care enjoyed school. In upper

secondary school, 82 per cent of the children in foster care reported that they enjoyed school (Skilbred & Havik, 2011). However, a previous study in Norway has shown that children in foster care perform better in school than other child welfare clients (Clausen & Kristofersen, 2008), which perhaps explains the relatively high level of school satisfaction in the study of children in foster care in Norway. Assistance measures in the home are sufficient for the majority of families who use child welfare services: in 2011, they accounted for about 84 per cent of all measures, whereas care measures accounted for around 16 per cent (Statistics Norway, 2011).

Approximately three per cent of all children 0–17 years old in 2011 were investigated by the Child Welfare Service in Norway (Statistics Norway, 2011). The proportion of children who have contact with the Child Welfare Service differs by age group and place of residence in Norway. In Oslo, where this study was conducted, about one-third of investigations involve the 13–17-year-old age group (Statistics Norway, 2010). Thus, the proportion of child welfare clients in Oslo's teenage population is somewhat higher than three per cent.

School satisfaction – previous research

There are few empirical studies on child welfare clients' school satisfaction, but some studies have shown that adults with only a compulsory education (as is common among child welfare clients) did not like school and related their school failure to their dissatisfaction with school (Illeris, 2003). This finding is supported by an Australian study of former abused/neglected children. As adults, these informants reported that they had experienced problems in the school setting and that they did not like school (Frederick & Goddard, 2010). On the other hand, researchers in a Swedish study concluded that school can provide a place of structure and safety for those placed in care. Based on interviews with young Swedes who had been in

care and showed educational promise, the findings showed that these young men and women regarded school as a place for opportunity and as a stabilizing factor relative to their chaotic family lives (Höjer & Johanson, 2013). In addition, the above-mentioned Norwegian study showed that about eight out of 10 students in foster homes enjoyed school—a high but still somewhat lower share than in the peer population.

The bulk of research on child welfare clients and education has been concerned about young people in placement (e.g. Jackson, 1988; Tilbury, Creed, Buys, Osmond, & Crawford, 2012; Vinnerljung & Hjern, 2011). However, Berridge (2007) draws attention to educational differences within the child welfare population by referring to official statistics in UK. These results show that children who are looked after longer tend to do better educationally than those who stay in care more briefly. Vinnerljung et al. (2005) also found that educational attainment differs within the child welfare population. Their study shows that in-home care before teens or long-term stable foster care are related to low educational attainment. Still, empirical studies on differences within the child welfare population, and studies on child welfare clients receiving assistance measures in the home, which conduct the majority of the child welfare clients in this study, are scarce. Thus, based on the current state of knowledge it is somewhat difficult to make assumptions about school satisfaction in the group that constitute the majority of the child welfare clients in this study. On the one hand, based on previous research, it seems reasonable to assume that child welfare clients are less satisfied with school than are their non-welfare peers. On the other hand, it may also be true that school is a good place for these child welfare clients. In this article, I ask whether child welfare clients, who probably mainly live at home receiving in-home measures from the child welfare services, have a high or a low school satisfaction. Furthermore, I examine the extent to which child welfare clients who enjoy school differ from child welfare clients who do not enjoy school. Previous research has shown that, in general, students' school satisfaction is

related to their social situation at school. Both the relationship to teachers (for a review, see Danielsen, 2012) and having friends at school (Samdal, Wold, & Bronis, 1999) have been found to be important in explaining differences in school satisfaction. Previous research has also shown that children in public care and children whose parents have alcohol- or drug-related problems, experience more difficulties than others in forming relationships with peers/teachers (Veland, Midthassel, & Idsoe, 2009). In addition, because the previously mentioned Australian and Swedish studies of child welfare clients' well-being in school took academic performance into account, I examine whether doing well in school, receiving support from teachers and having friends at school explain any differences in child welfare clients' school satisfaction.

Finally, I also test whether any of the above-mentioned factors explain any differences in school satisfaction between child welfare clients and their peers. I examine this question by estimating probabilities for school satisfaction in the two groups of students, controlling for academic performance, support from teachers and having friends at school.

Method

Data

The data for this study were obtained from a survey conducted in Oslo called LUNO. LUNO is a longitudinal survey that was initiated to monitor transitions from lower secondary school to upper secondary school. In this study, I only use information from the 2009–2010 school year, when the students were in their second year in upper secondary school. The LUNO survey targeted students in Oslo schools; child welfare clients were not emphasized.

However, the students were asked if they had been in contact with the child welfare service from October 2006 to March 2008. Any information about type or length of any intervention was not asked. Consequently, it is not possible to decide if the child welfare clients were in

placement and what type of placement. However, because the majority of child welfare services in Norway are given as assistance measures in the home, it is reasonable to conclude that the majority of the child welfare clients in this study did not live in foster homes or at institutions.

Somewhat less than five per cent (4.9%) reported that they had been in contact with the child welfare service, which roughly reflects the actual percentage of children who receive child welfare services in this part of Norway for this age group.

About 82 per cent of the invited students in the 2009–2010 school year participated in the survey. However, not all of the participants answered all of the questions in the survey. For the analyses conducted in this study, the response rate was 74 per cent.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Norwegian Data Inspectorate approved the survey and the study on which this article is based.

Dependent variable

Enjoy school

Students in the second year of upper secondary school used a four-point scale to answer several questions. They were asked: ‘If you think about the school you are attending now, how accurate are the following statements? The first statement was: ‘I enjoy school’. The response options ranged from 1 to 4: ‘very inaccurate’, ‘inaccurate’, ‘accurate’ and ‘very accurate’. This information was used to construct a bivariate outcome variable in which 0 indicated low school satisfaction (very inaccurate and inaccurate) and 1 indicated high school satisfaction (accurate and very accurate).

Independent variables

The independent variables were also constructed from information obtained from the second year of upper secondary school. However, information about use of the child welfare services was obtained from the survey conducted two years earlier (when the students were in their final year of lower secondary school).

Child welfare clients

In the survey, students were asked if they had during the period October 2006 to March 2008 been in contact with different welfare assistance services, such as Children's and young people's psychiatric outpatient clinics, the Educational psychological service, the Municipal Outreach Service provided by the City of Oslo and/or the child welfare service. The LUNO survey does not contain any information about how long respondents were in contact with these different assistance services, or reasons for their being in contact. Here, I only use information from the question about child welfare services. Based on responses to the question 'were you in contact with the child welfare services from October 2006 to March 2008?', I constructed a variable with two categories that were coded 1 for students who replied 'yes' and 0 for students who replied 'no', respectively.

As mentioned previously, the survey did not specifically target child welfare clients, and any information about type or length of any intervention was not asked. However, since the majority of child welfare services in Norway are given as assistance measures in the home, it is reasonable to conclude that child welfare clients in out-of home care constitute only a minority in this study.

Doing well in school

The students' perceptions of their own school achievement were measured with the statement 'I am doing very well in school'. Responses ranged from 1 (very inaccurate) to 4 (very

accurate). These responses were used to construct a bivariate outcome variable in which 0 indicated not doing well and 1 indicated doing well.

Teacher support

Students' perceptions of their teachers' support were measured with the following five statements: 'my teachers care about me', 'my teachers care if I show up to school or not', 'I get a lot of support from my teachers', 'my teachers care about my school grades', and 'my teachers expect me to do my best'. These questions are a shortened version of School success profile Teacher Support.^{iv} The response format for these statements was a four-point scale from 1 (indicating low support) to 4 (indicating high support). Cronbach's alpha for this variable was 0.88, which is a relatively high intercorrelation. This variable was also converted to a bivariate outcome variable with 0 indicating no support and 1 indicating support.

Friends at school

To measure whether the students had friends at school, they were asked, 'If you think about the school you are attending now, how accurate is the following statement: My friends go here'. The response options ranged from 1 to 4: 'very inaccurate', 'inaccurate', 'accurate and 'very accurate'. These responses were converted to a bivariate outcome variable with the values 0 (no friends at school) and 1 (friends at school).

Statistical analyses

Descriptive statistics are provided below, including mean scores on the dependent and independent variables for students who did and did not have contact with the child welfare services. In addition, the proportions of students who scored 1 on the independent variables are shown separately for child welfare clients who reported high and low school satisfaction. Stepwise logistic regression models were used to estimate the probability of school satisfaction

predicted by the independent variables. However, coefficients in logistic regression can reflect unobserved heterogeneity and not only the effect. Consequently, it can be problematic to compare results between models (Mood, 2010). Therefore, I have carried out the same analyses using linear regression. These results supported the results of the logistic regression analyses between the dependent and the independent variables.

Results

Descriptive statistics – lower school satisfaction among child welfare clients than peers

Table 1 reports means for the child welfare clients and their peers on the variables in this study. There is a noticeable difference between how child welfare clients and their peers assess the school-related questions. The child welfare clients had lower means than their peers on all the questions asked. T-tests indicate that the two groups did not differ in perceived teacher support, but there were significant differences in their assessments of how well they were doing at school and having friends at school.^v

Table 1 about here

Figure 1 illustrates school satisfaction for the child welfare clients and their peer group. The figure shows that the child welfare clients were less satisfied with school than were their peers. About 82 per cent of the child welfare clients reported that they enjoyed school (47.3% reported that the statement was very accurate and 35.1% reported that it was accurate), whereas 95 per cent of their peers reported that they enjoyed school (65.0% reported very accurate and 29.3% accurate). Thus, the child welfare clients' enjoyment of school was 13 percentage points less than that of the other students, which I assess as slightly lower school satisfaction. In addition, the child welfare clients who enjoyed school tended to say that they enjoyed school somewhat less than their peers by a larger share reporting the

statement to be accurate than very accurate. These results indicate that even though many child welfare clients enjoy school, they enjoy it less than their non-welfare peers.

Figure 1 about here

Higher school satisfaction among child welfare clients with positive school experiences

The next question posed in the introduction was whether school-related factors could explain within-group differences in the child welfare clients' school satisfaction. Table 2 reports how child welfare clients, who reported high school satisfaction (i.e. answered accurate or very accurate to the statement about enjoying school) assessed their own school performances (e.g. doing well at school), if they received support from teachers and if they had friends at school. Child welfare clients who were satisfied with school were compared with child welfare clients who were not satisfied (reported inaccurate or very inaccurate).

Table 2 about here

Child welfare clients who were satisfied with school reported more often that they were doing well at school, received more support from their teachers and had more often friends at school than did the child welfare clients who were not satisfied with school. Having friends at school appears to be the most important of these three variables for satisfaction. Among the child welfare clients who were satisfied with school, 82 per cent reported that they had friends. Only 39 per cent of the child welfare clients who were not satisfied reported that they had friends. Doing well at school also seems to be closely related to school satisfaction. Although 74 per cent of the satisfied group of students reported that they did well, only 31 per cent of the non-satisfied group reported doing well. In addition, school satisfaction seems to

be related to the child welfare clients' relationships with their teachers. Sixty-one per cent of the students who were satisfied with school reported that they received support from teachers, but only 23 per cent of the students who were not satisfied with school reported receiving such support.

Lower school satisfaction among child welfare clients than peers, but positive school experiences matter

I used stepwise logistic regression to examine whether differences in the independent variables could explain the difference in school satisfaction between the child welfare clients and their peers. I tested whether the lower school satisfaction of the child welfare group could be explained by the child welfare clients doing worse in school, receiving less support from teachers and being less likely to have friends than their non-welfare peers (as we have seen Table 1). If these factors (doing well in school, receiving support from teachers and having friends at school) are related to school satisfaction, then including these independent variables in the regression models should reduce or even remove the difference in school satisfaction between child welfare clients and their peers.

Table 3 about here

In Model 1 in Table 3, the significant negative coefficient for the child welfare clients confirms that the child welfare clients were less satisfied with school (as seen in Figure 1).

When the independent variables were included in the next models, the respective coefficients for the child welfare clients were still negative and significantly different from their peers at the 0.01 level. The overall results in Models 1 to 4 indicate that the lower school

satisfaction of child welfare clients (relative to their peers) cannot only be explained by differences in the independent variables.

However, the independent variables are related to the general level of school satisfaction. Model 2 indicates that doing well at school correlates to school satisfaction relative to not doing well at school. In addition, the constant coefficient was reduced whereas the coefficient for child welfare clients was more or less unchanged. This implies that even when controlling for the importance of doing well at school, child welfare clients reported lower school satisfaction than did their peers.

Model 3 shows that receiving support from teachers was positive related to school satisfaction; students who reported receiving support from teachers tended to report greater school satisfaction. Nevertheless, child welfare clients tended to report less satisfaction with school than did their peers, even when controlling for doing well in school and receiving support from teachers.

Model 4 included information about friends at school in the regression, and the results show that having friends at school was highly related to school satisfaction. However, even when controlling for having friends at school, doing well at school and receiving support from teachers, the coefficient for child welfare clients was still negative and statistically significant. This indicates that the child welfare clients' lower school satisfaction cannot be fully explained by lower academic skills (i.e. experience of doing well in school), receiving less support from teachers and/or having less often friends at school. Child welfare clients with positive school experiences (doing well in school, receiving support from teachers and having friends at school) were somewhat less satisfied than their non-welfare peers with school. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between school satisfaction and the independent variables included in Model 4 for child welfare clients and their peers.

Figure 2 about here

As seen in Figure 2, experiences in school are important for students' satisfaction with school. Students who reported that they were not doing well in school, received no support from teachers and had no friends at school were less likely to be satisfied with school. The probability of being satisfied with school was 0.39 and 0.64 for child welfare clients and their peer group, respectively. This indicates significantly lower school satisfaction for child welfare clients relative to their non-welfare peers with the same characteristics. Students who reported doing well in school but felt that they did not receive support from teachers and lacked friends at school were somewhat more satisfied with school, but child welfare clients were still considerably less satisfied than were their peers (0.52 and 0.75, respectively). Child welfare clients who reported doing well in school and receiving support from teachers but who lacked friends in school were still somewhat less satisfied with school than were their non-welfare peers with these same characteristics (0.75 and 0.89, respectively). Finally, when we compare students who also stated that they had friends in school, there is only a small difference between child welfare clients and their peers in their probability of being satisfied with school (0.96 and 0.99, respectively).

Discussion

Although 82 per cent of the child welfare clients stated that they enjoyed school (i.e. reported that the statement 'I enjoy school' was very accurate or accurate), somewhat more (95 per cent) of the peer group responded similarly. In addition, child welfare clients who enjoyed school tended to say that they enjoyed school somewhat less than their peers did (child welfare clients stated relatively often that the statement of enjoying school was accurate than very accurate). Furthermore, the analyses provide evidence that positive school experiences

matter. Students who reported that they were doing well academically, experienced support from the teachers and had friends at school, reported that they enjoyed school – both among students with and without contact with the child welfare services. Likewise, students who reported less positive school experiences reported less often that they enjoyed school. However, the probability for being dissatisfied with school in the latter group was much higher among child welfare children compared to their peers. These results indicate that school related factors – like doing well academically, getting support from teachers, and particularly having friends at school – are very important for child welfare children’s school satisfaction and more important than in the peer group. School can be a good place for child welfare children, as argued by (Höjer & Johanson, 2013), but among child welfare children, who had few positive school experiences (lacking friends etc.) the results show that relatively many did not enjoy school.

An obvious question is why child welfare children stated that they had less positive experiences at school than did their peers, which the results in table 1 show regarding the questions ‘doing well at school’ and ‘having friends at school’.^{vi} Veland et al. (2009) show that students with additional social background disadvantages (like child welfare children) have difficulties in forming social relationships with young people in more prosperous families, and perhaps this can explain why relatively many child welfare students stated that they did not have friends at school.^{vii}

Höjer and Johanson (2013) argue that school is an opportunity and resilience factor for young people placed in care. The results in this study show that this also applies to child welfare clients in Norway, who in general, live with their parent(s), but get assistance measures from the child welfare services. However, the results show that child welfare children more than others need positive school experiences in order to enjoy school. Improving the everyday school lives of children in the child welfare system should become a

priority – because school can be a resilience factor for child welfare children and due to the importance of obtaining an educational degree and positive life outcomes. School satisfaction is, both in the child welfare group and the peer group, related to them having friends at school or not. In improving child welfare children's school satisfaction social workers and teachers should facilitate for peer relations in school. However, the importance of academic skills and having supportive teachers should not be neglected. In order to make school an opportunity for these vulnerable teenagers, the child welfare services should take the whole school situation into consideration. Positive experiences in school is highly related to school satisfaction, and good school experiences seem very important in increasing future life opportunities for young people at risk (Höjer & Johanson, 2013).

Conclusion

In the introduction, I argued for the importance of increasing our knowledge about child welfare clients' school situations in order to promote their educational achievements. The purpose of this study was to see whether school satisfaction among students who have had contact with the child welfare system differed from that of students who had no contact with the child welfare system. The results indicated that the majority of the child welfare clients were satisfied with school but that they were less satisfied than were their peers. Child welfare clients who were satisfied with school were more likely to say that they were doing well in school, that they received support from teachers and that they had friends in school than were child welfare clients who were not satisfied with school. Consequently, improving these school-related factors seems very important for increasing child welfare clients' satisfaction with school. These results are consistent with previous research showing that school can be a good place, even if one's family life seems chaotic (Höjer & Johansson 2013). Few studies on child welfare clients' school satisfaction are conducted, and studies with a more qualitative

approach than the present examining how perception of school differs within the child welfare population, seem necessary. However, future research should take into account the present findings that child welfare clients' school satisfaction is related to different experiences in school.

The results also indicated that positive school experiences can explain a large part of differences in school satisfaction between students with and without contact with child welfare services. Among students who reported that they are doing well in school, have supportive teachers, and have friends in school, there was very little difference in school satisfaction between child welfare clients and their peers. Among students who did not report positive experiences on the above-mentioned school-related factors, satisfaction with school is substantially different between these two student groups. The results from this study show that school can be a good place for child welfare clients. However, the importance of providing a good school for these students, as argued by Höjer and Johansson (2013), cannot be overstated. Facilitating support from teachers, increasing opportunities for making friends at school, and working to develop child welfare clients' academic performance are important as efforts to improve school satisfaction.

Acknowledgements

This article is part of the project Qualification and Social Inclusion in Upper Secondary VET: Longitudinal Studies of Gendered Education and Marginalized Groups (Safety-VET) funded by the Research Council of Norway [grant number 212293].

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for independent variables

| | Child Welfare clients | | Peers | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------|-------|------|----|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| Doing well at school ¹ | 2,78 | 0,83 | 3,00 | 0,69 | * |
| Teacher support ¹ | 2,49 | 0,83 | 2,63 | 0,70 | |
| Friends at school ¹ | 3,00 | 0,89 | 3,29 | 0,86 | ** |
| N | 74 | | 1436 | | |

Note: the means between child welfare children and peers are significant at ** $p < 0,01$ and

* $p < 0,05$ (independent sample test)

¹ Means from 1.0 (low) to 4.0 (high). SD = standard deviation

Table 2. Child welfare clients with high and low school satisfaction (per cent)

| | High school satisfaction | Low school satisfaction | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| Doing well at school | 73,8 | 30,8 | ** |
| Get support from teacher | 60,7 | 23,1 | * |
| Have friends at school | 82,0 | 38,5 | ** |
| N | 61 | 13 | |

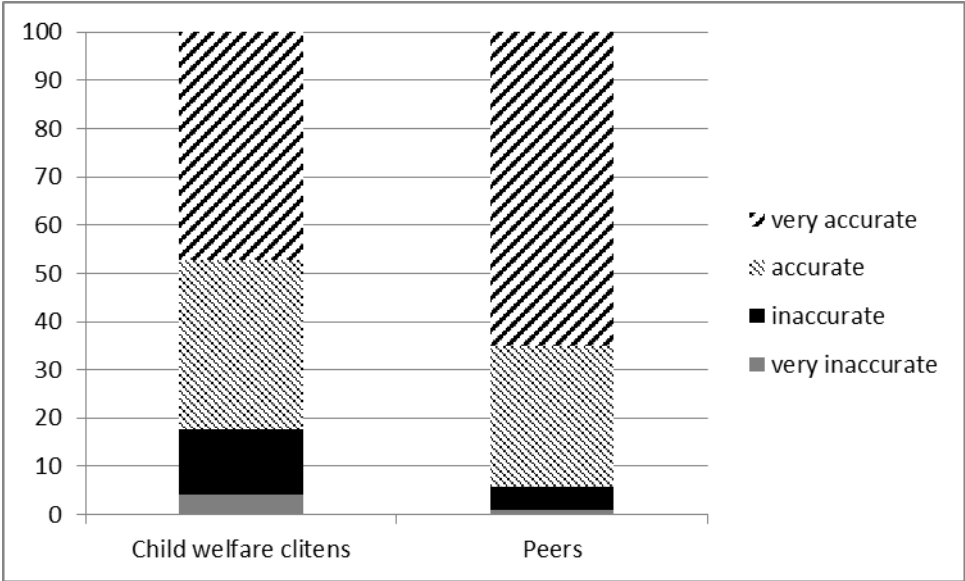
Note: the differences between child welfare children who enjoy school and do not enjoy school are significant at ** $p < 0,01$ og * $p < 0,05$ (chi-square test)

Table 3. Logistic regression of being a child welfare client, doing well in school, receiving support from teachers and having friends at school on school satisfaction

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | | Model 4 | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|
| | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE |
| Constant | 2,80 ** | ,11 | 2,00 ** | ,17 | 1,70 ** | ,18 | ,56 ** | ,21 |
| Child welfare clients | -1,26 ** | ,33 | -1,12 ** | ,33 | -1,14 ** | ,34 | -1,02 ** | ,37 |
| Doing well at school (ref = no) | | | 1,16 ** | ,22 | ,84 ** | ,23 | ,56 * | ,24 |
| Support from teacher (ref = no) | | | | | 1,16 ** | ,24 | ,98 ** | ,25 |
| Have friends at school (ref = no) | | | | | | | 2,12 ** | ,23 |
| -2loglikelihood | 696,53 | | 670,41 | | 646,48 | | 563,88 | |
| N | 1510 | | 1510 | | 1510 | | 1510 | |

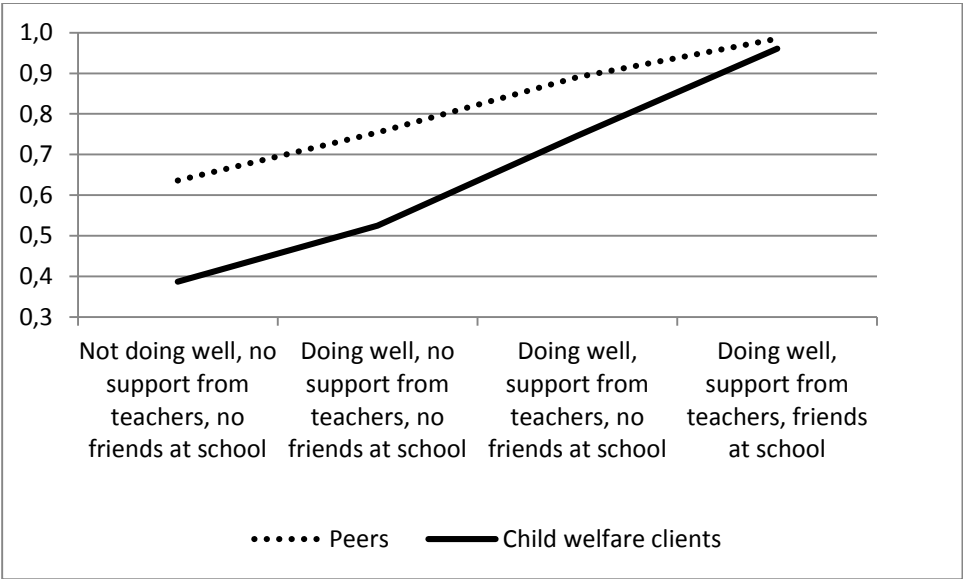
Note: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01 (waldtest). B= coefficient, SE= Standard errors

Figure 1. School satisfaction - responses to the statement: I enjoy school (N = 1510)



Note: the differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ (chi-square test)

Figure 2. Probabilities of school satisfaction for child welfare clients and their peers with different school experiences



Note: From Table 3, model 4

References

- Berlin, M., Vinnerljung, B., & Hjern, A. (2011). School performance in primary school and psychosocial problems in young adulthood among care leavers from long term foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*(12), 2489-2497.
- Berridge, D. (2007). Theory and explanation in child welfare: education and looked-after children. *Child & Family Social Work, 12*(1), 1 - 10.
- Cheung, s. Y., & Heath, A. (1994). After Care: the education and occupation of adults who have been in care. *Oxford Review of Education, 20*(3), 361-374.
- Clausen, S.-E., & Kristofersen, L. B. (2008). Barneverns klienter i Norge 1990-2005 : en longitudinell studie [Child welfare clients in Norway between 1990 and 2005: a longitudinal study] *NOVA rapport*. Oslo: Norwegian Social Research
- Currie, C., Gabhainn, S. N., Godeau, E., Roberts, C., Smith, R., Currie, D., . . . Barnekow, V. (2008). Inequalities in young people's health. HBSO international report from the 2005/2006 survey. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- Danielsen, A. G. (2012). Hva henger sammen med skoletrivselen til norske ungdomsskoleelever? [What are related to school satisfaction in Norwegian lower secondary schools?]. *Nordic Studies in Education, 32*(2), 114-125.
- De Ridder, K. A. A., Pape, K., Johnsen, R., Westin, S., Holmen, T. L., & Bjørngaard, J. H. (2012). School dropout: a major public health challenge: a 10-year prospective study on medical and non-medical social insurance benefits in young adulthood, the Young-HUNT 1 Study (Norway). *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 66*(11), 995-1000. doi: 10.1136/jech-2011-200047
- Dæhlen, M. (2014). Child welfare clients' first step away from higher education. The influence of school performances, educational aspirations and background factors on choosing the vocational track after compulsory school. *Nordic Social Work Research, 4*(1), 22 - 36. doi: 10.1080/2156857X.2013.779933
- Frederick, J., & Goddard, C. (2010). 'School was just a nightmare': childhood abuse and neglect and school experiences. *Child & Family Social Work, 15*(1), 22-30.
- Frøyland, L. R., & Gjerustad, C. (2012). Venenskap, utdanning og framtidsplaner. Forskjeller og likheter blant ungdom med og uten innvandrerbakgrunn i Oslo. [Friendship, education and aspirations. Differences and similarities between youths with and without immigrant background] (Vol. 5). Oslo: NOVA.
- Hammarström, A., & Janlert, U. (2002). Early unemployment can contribute to adult health problems: results from a longitudinal study of school leavers. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 56*(8), 624-630.
- Höjer, I., & Johanson, H. (2013). School as an opportunity and resilience factor for young people placed in care. *European Journal of Social Work, 16*(1), 22-36.
- Illeris, K. (2003). Adult education as experienced by the learners. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 22*(1), 13-23.
- Jackson, S. (1988). Residential care and education. *Children & Society, 2*(4), 335-350.
- Jackson, S., & Cameron, C. (2011). Young people from a public care background: pathways to further and higher education in five European countries. Final report of the YIPPEE project. London: Thomas Coram Research Unit. Institute of Education, University of London.
- Jackson, S., & Höjer, I. (2013). Prioritising education for children looked after away from home. *European Journal of Social Work, 16*(1), 1-5.
- Mood, C. (2010). Logistic Regression: Why We Cannot Do What We Think We Can Do, and What We Can Do About It. *European Sociological Review, 26*(1), 67-82.

- Rumberger, R. W., & Lamb, S. P. (2003). The early employment and further education experiences of high school dropouts: a comparative study of the United States and Australia. *Economics of Education Review*, 22(4), 353-366.
- Samdal, O., Wold, B., & Bronis, M. (1999). Relationship between Students' Perceptions of School Environment, Their Satisfaction with School and Perceived Academic Achievement: An International Study. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement: An International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice*, 10(3), 296-320.
- Skilbred, D., & Havik, T. (2011). Barn og unge som bor i fosterhjem - mestring og trivsel i skolen. [Children and youth in foster care - learning and well-being in school]. *Tidsskriftet Norges Barnevern*, 88(3), 147-156.
- Statistics Norway. (2010). Barn med barneverntiltak 31. desember, etter alder, tiltak og fylke [Children with measures from the Child Welfare Services per 31 December by age, measures and county] Retrieved 13.07.12, from http://www.ssb.no/emner/02/barn_og_unge/2011/tabeller/barnevern/barnev0203.html
- Statistics Norway. (2011). Increase in employees and children in the Child Welfare Services. Retrieved 13.07.12, from http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/03/03/barneverng_en/
- Tilbury, C., Creed, P., Buys, N., Osmond, J., & Crawford, M. (2012). Making a connection: school engagement of young people in care. *Child & Family Social Work*. doi: 10.1111/cfs.12045
- Veland, J., Midthassel, U. V., & Idsoe, T. (2009). Perceived Socio-Economic Status and Social Inclusion in School: Interactions of Disadvantages. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 53(6), 515-531.
- Vinnerljung, B., & Hjern, A. (2011). Cognitive, educational and self-support outcomes of long-term foster care versus adoption. A Swedish national cohort study. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(10), 1902-1910.
- Vinnerljung, B., Öman, M., & Gunnarson, T. (2005). Educational attainments of former child welfare clients - a Swedish national cohort study. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 14(4), 265-276.
- Øia, T. (2011). Ungdomsskoleelever. Motivasjon, mestring og resultater [Lower secondary school. Motivation, learning and results]. Oslo: NOVA.

ⁱ Higher education (tertiary level) in Norway is divided into universities, university colleges and private schools.

ⁱⁱ As in other countries mentioned by Jackson and Höjer (2013), the education of children in care has attracted little attention. Consequently, we do not know the child welfare clients' transition rate from lower secondary school to upper secondary school. However, as mentioned, almost everybody in Norway enrolls in upper secondary school, and this is probably true for child welfare children as well. Differences in educational attainment are probably caused by child welfare clients being more likely than non-welfare students to drop out of school after entering upper secondary school.

ⁱⁱⁱ The sample in 2009–2010 is based on students who participated in LUNO two years earlier. In the 2007–2008 sample, the response rate was 85 per cent. Consequently, the response rate for the whole sample is lower than 74 per cent (about 64 per cent).

^{iv} <http://www.uncssp.org/documents/Full%20description%20of%20dimensions.pdf>

^v Analyses (table not shown) showed small and not statistically significant differences by gender. Therefore, gender is not included in Table 1 and the following analyses.

^{vi} The question 'If you think about the school you are attending now, how accurate is the following statement: My friends go here' does not, however, assess how many friends (s)he had at school or how close any relationship was. Even if the question did show a strong relationship to school satisfaction, a more thorough investigation of child welfare children's relation to friends and relation to school satisfaction seems necessary.

^{vii} Previous study shows that children in long-term foster care have more psychosocial problems in young adulthood (Berlin et al., 2011). If this also applies to child welfare children in general, this could explain why

fewer child welfare children have friends at school. However, it seems reasonable to assume that students with (severe) psychosocial problems have dropped-out of school and, consequently, are not included in this study.