Lärare, socialexekreterare och barn som far illa
Om sociala representationer och interprofessionell samverkan

av

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract


The aim of the thesis is, through use of the theory of social representations, to increase knowledge about the meeting between social workers and teachers, as professional groups, during collaboration with regard to the target group, children at risk. The thesis intends to capture the parties’ perceptions of one another and of that about which they are cooperating, as well as to discuss possible consequences of these perceptions in the context of interprofessional collaboration on children at risk.

Empirical data was collected through an association study. The informants consisted of 200 teachers and social workers who had participated in various collaborative projects concerning the target group of children at risk.

The study shows that the two professional groups have similar representations of children at risk. The social workers’ representations of the teachers are mostly positive, but the teachers are perceived, in many cases, to lack knowledge about social workers and their field of expertise. Teachers’ representations of social workers are colored to a much greater extent by negative associations. The negative image is primarily related to social services as an organization, not to social workers as individuals.

In relation to the specific area of interprofessional collaboration on children at risk, the study indicates that the involved parties’ social representations play a significant role in the collaboration process. The research of this thesis has shown that the theory of social representations provides an effective framework for the study of the collaborating professionals’ group perceptions of one another and of children at risk. A preliminary model that seeks to illuminate the role of social representations, trust, and communication in the collaborative process has been presented.

Keywords: Children at risk, interprofessional collaboration, cooperation, teachers, social workers, social representations.

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