Citation:

Abstract:
We examined the impact of disability status on disciplinary sanctioning of a student committing a minor versus severe behavioral infraction. We used the status liability hypothesis as a framework. This hypothesis suggests that individuals with a higher personal status receive sanctioning differentially based on the severity of offense. Specifically, individuals of high status are predicted to be sanctioned less severely than persons with lower status given a minor offense. The hypothesis also predicts that individuals accorded high status will receive more punitive sanctioning when the act of deviance from social norms is perceived as severe. Pre-service teachers were randomly assigned to judge the behavior of a student with or without an intellectual disability committing a behavioral offense. A student with an intellectual disability was seen as influenced by dispositional factors, regardless of the offense, while a student without a disability who committed a minor offense was seen as influenced by situational factors. The behavior of a student with an intellectual disability was judged as less severe, and the student was 50% less likely to incur an in-school suspension. When a student with an intellectual disability was sanctioned, the length of suspension was equal to that of a student without a disability.

Subjects:
Mental retardation
Status
Discipline
Sanctions
Student behavior
Pre-service teachers