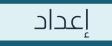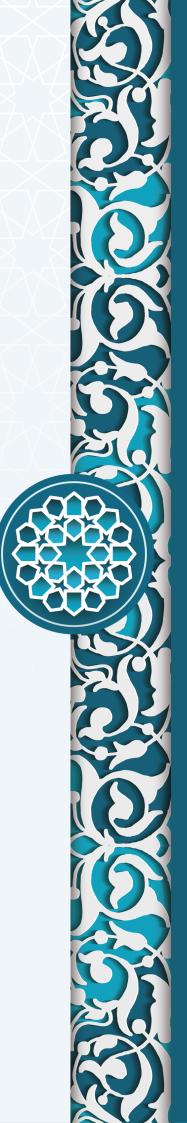# Obstacles to Integrating Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Regular Pre-schools in the Arab World

إعداد

Doaa Bassam Mahmoud Qatanani

Doaa_qatanani@yahoo.com

00962788003520

الجامعة الإسلامية بمنيسوتا
Islamic University of Minnesota
المركز الرئيسي
IUM

Abstract:

This study explores the challenges of integrating children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) into regular pre-schools across the Arab world. Using a survey methodology based on previous research and interviews with special education experts and teachers, the study identifies several barriers, such as a lack of awareness about ASD, insufficient resources in regular schools, and inadequate training for teachers in handling children with autism. The research underscores the importance of raising awareness, providing teacher training, and creating an environment conducive to successful integration.

Keywords
1. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
2. Inclusion of children with autism
3. Inclusive education
4. Pre-school stage
5. Educational challenges in the Arab world
6. Lack of autism awareness
7. Teacher training
8. Educational resources for children with special needs
9. Support for children with autism
10. Social adaptation in schools
11. Educational infrastructure in the Arab world
12. Inclusive education policies
13. Social awareness of autism
14. Inclusive education in the Arab world
15. Special needs in regular schools

الملخص

باللغـة العربيـة: البحـث تنـاول معوقـات دمـج الأطفـال ذوي طيف التوحـد فـي المدارس العاديـة في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسـة فـي العالم العربي. واسـتخدم الباحـث منهجية اسـتقصاء معتمدة على دراسـات سـابقة ومقابلات مع متخصصين فـي التربية الخاصـة ومعلمين. وجد البحـث عـدة معوقـات لدمج هـؤلاء الأطفـال، منهـا: نقـص الوعي والتفهـم لطبيعة اضطراب طيـف التوحد، وعدم توافر المـوارد اللازمة فـي المدارس العاديـة، ونقـص الدعم والتدريب للمعلميـن في التعامل مـع الأطفـال ذوي اضطراب التوحد. كما أشـار البحث إلـى أهمية تعزيز الوعـي وتوفير التدريب المناسـب للمعلمين والتأكيد علـى أهمية توفير البيئة المناسـبة داخل المدرسـة لتسـهيل عملية دمج هؤلاء الأطفال.

الكلمات المفتاحية

1-اضطراب طيف التوحد (ASD)
2-دمج الأطفال ذوي التوحد
3-التعليم الشامل
4-مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة
5-التحديات التعليمية في العالم العربي
6-نقص الوعي بالتوحد
7- تدريب المعلمين
8-الموارد التعليمية للأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة
9-دعم الأطفال ذوي التوحد
10-التكيف الاجتماعي في المدارس
11-البنية التحتية التعليمية في العالم العربي
12-سياسات التعليم الشامل
13-الوعي الاجتماعي بالتوحد
14-التعليم الدامج في العالم العربي
15-الاحتياجات الخاصة في المدارس العادية

Introduction:

In recent decades, there has been a growing global focus on providing appropriate education for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). As awareness of the diverse needs of these children expands, finding effective ways to integrate them into regular schools has become crucial. The integration of children with ASD into mainstream schools enhances their personal and social growth and reflects society›s commitment to diversity and inclusiveness. Despite ongoing efforts to achieve inclusive education, several obstacles hinder the implementation of this goal, particularly in pre-school education across the Arab world. This study aims to explore these barriers and provide recommendations to support the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools.
The study analyzes the challenges to implementing inclusive education policies for children with ASD in the Arab world's pre-school stage. Through a thorough review of existing literature and reliable sources, the study aims to guide policy development and sustainable educational practices that align with global inclusive education standards.(Abdi-kader Hassan Abdi,2023) By highlighting these challenges and offering proposed solutions, this research seeks to enhance understanding of the issues faced and provide practical guidelines to promote inclusive educational practices for all students.

Research Problem:

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in pre-schools across the Arab world face unique challenges in adapting to the

learning environment. Despite continuous efforts to achieve educational integration and inclusion, various obstacles hinder these children's ability to be included in regular pre-schools during this critical stage of their development. A major challenge is the lack of awareness and understanding of the needs of children with ASD by teachers and school staff. This lack of awareness often results in insufficient and ineffective support, limiting learning opportunities and hindering both personal and social development.

Additionally, many pre-school teachers lack specialized training to understand and meet the needs of children with ASD effectively. Without adequate training, teachers struggle to provide the necessary support and create a suitable learning environment, making successful integration difficult. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate and analyze the barriers that impede the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools across the Arab world. Moreover, solutions and recommendations must be provided to enhance the effectiveness of this process and ensure a comprehensive and inclusive educational environment for all students.

Research Questions:

1. What challenges hinder the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools in the Arab world?
2. How does the lack of awareness and understanding of the needs of children with ASD affect their integration into the classroom environment?
3. What difficulties do regular school teachers face in understanding and meeting the needs of children with ASD?

4 How can teacher training and support be improved to enable them to effectively handle children with ASD?

5 What educational policies and practices can be adopted to promote the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools in the Arab world?

6 What practical solutions can be implemented to overcome these challenges and achieve comprehensive inclusion for children with ASD in the educational environment?

Research Objectives:

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the barriers to integrating children with Autism Spectrum Disorder into regular pre-schools in the Arab world and to identify policies and practices that can enhance this process. The research seeks to uncover the challenges faced by teachers and staff in understanding and meeting the needs of children with ASD. Additionally, the study provides practical recommendations for improving teacher training and support. It also aims to offer guidelines for developing educational policies and classroom practices that contribute to the full inclusion of children with ASD and ensure a supportive educational environment conducive to their personal and social growth.

Significance of the Study:

The importance of this research stems from the challenges that hinder the process of integrating children with ASD into regular pre-schools across the Arab world. Given the global advancements in inclusive education and the difficulties in implementing these initiatives in the Arab context, this study

is critical to understanding the barriers and offering practical solutions to support the integration of children with ASD into regular schools.

The findings of this research will contribute to shaping educational policies that develop specialized training programs for teachers and school staff, improving their understanding and skills in addressing the needs of children with ASD. Additionally, the study will raise awareness about the importance of providing a comprehensive and inclusive educational environment that allows these children to reach their full potential and develop essential personal and social skills. Moreover, the results of the study will aid in the development of inclusive educational policies that guarantee support for all students, including those with ASD, thus advancing educational equity and excellence in the Arab world.

Research Methodology:

1. Literature Review:

A comprehensive review of the literature on the integration of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) into regular pre-schools in the Arab world will be conducted. This review will cover academic articles, previous studies, government reports, and other relevant resources.

2. Identifying Barriers:

The study will identify and analyze the obstacles hindering the integration of children with ASD into regular schools. Qualitative research methods will be employed to explore and understand these barriers from the perspectives of teachers, parents, and special education experts.

3.Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the literature review and the analysis of the barriers, recommendations will be made to enhance the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools. These recommendations will focus on improving educational policies and professional training for teachers and staff.

4.Questionnaire Implementation:

A questionnaire will be designed to collect data from teachers in regular schools to understand their challenges and needs concerning the integration of children with ASD. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis.

5.Case Studies:

Several regular schools that are integrating children with ASD will be selected for case studies. Data will be collected through participatory observation and personal interviews with teachers, staff, and parents.

6.Data Analysis:

The collected data from the questionnaires and case studies will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The results will be interpreted to understand the main challenges and guide the recommendations accordingly.

7.Presenting Recommendations and Conclusions:

The study will conclude with the presentation of the main findings and recommendations. The recommendations will suggest future steps to improve the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools across the Arab world.

Research Hypotheses:

1. There are significant obstacles affecting the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools in the Arab world.
2. The challenges to integrating children with ASD vary between different countries in the Arab world.
3. There are tangible efforts in Arab countries to support the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools.
4. Specialized training for teachers has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the integration process.
5. Progress in integrating children with ASD can be achieved through tailored educational programs and sufficient support.

Sample Population:

1. Teachers: Pre-school teachers working in regular schools across the Arab world.
2. Parents: Parents of children with ASD who are enrolled in regular schools.
3. Special Education Experts: Experts in special education and inclusive education with experience supporting children with ASD.
4. Children with ASD: Children diagnosed with ASD who are enrolled in regular pre-schools.
5. School Administrative Staff: Administrative staff in regular schools who are responsible for implementing policies and programs related to the integration of children with ASD.

Key Terms:

1. **ASD Integration in Regular Schools:**
   The process of including children with ASD in general learning environments within regular schools instead of segregating them into special education settings.
2. **Barriers to Education for Children with ASD:**
   The obstacles and challenges that hinder the provision of effective and suitable education for children with ASD.
3. **Pre-school Learning Challenges:**
   The difficulties faced by children in pre-school as they attempt to acquire basic, social, and educational skills.

Summary of Findings:

1.Analysis of Barriers:

The research is expected to reveal a range of barriers that hinder the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools. These barriers may include a lack of specialized teacher training, insufficient financial resources, and cultural and social challenges.

2.Differences Between Countries:

The study will likely show variations in the obstacles faced by different Arab countries, emphasizing the need for context-specific strategies tailored to each educational environment.

3.Concrete Efforts:

The research will highlight the tangible efforts being made by various Arab countries to support the integration of children with ASD. Successful initiatives will be identified, offering insights for broader application.

4.Impact of Teacher Training:

The findings will demonstrate the positive effect of specialized training for teachers on the quality and effectiveness of ASD integration. This could enhance teachers› ability to provide the necessary support.

5.Challenges and Recommendations:

The study will identify the key challenges in integrating children with ASD and provide recommendations for future policies and practices that will support this process in regular pre-schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Based on the challenges identified in the integration of children with ASD into regular pre-schools in the Arab world, the following recommendations are proposed:

1 **Provide Specialized Teacher Training:**
Implement specialized training programs for teachers and school staff to equip them with the skills needed to handle the specific needs of children with ASD.

2 **Develop Appropriate Educational Programs:**
Tailor educational programs to meet the individual needs of children with ASD, providing personalized support and educational resources to foster their learning and development.

3 **Increase Awareness and Understanding:**
Conduct awareness campaigns to increase understanding of ASD and the needs of children with the disorder, promoting acceptance in both classrooms and the broader school environment.

4 **Offer Psychological and Social Support:**
Provide psychological and social support for children with

ASD and their families, including counseling services and community guidance to facilitate their social integration.

5 **Enhance Collaboration Among Stakeholders:**

Strengthen collaboration between key stakeholders, including educational ministries, healthcare providers, social services, and civil society organizations, to ensure comprehensive strategies for the successful integration of children with ASD.

6 **Ensure Financial and Logistical Support:**

Allocate sufficient financial and logistical resources to support the development of inclusive education infrastructures that are capable of meeting the needs of children with ASD.

7 **Invest in Research and Development:**

Promote investment in research and development to innovate new techniques and educational programs that enhance the learning experience and social integration of children with ASD in regular schools.

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