

Factors Influencing Academic Performance Of Children With Autism Included In The General Education Classroom: A Case Study

Charizze Mae A. Andoy

**University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines
Claro M. Recto Avenue, Cagayan de Oro City, 9000, Philippines
charzmae89@gmail.com**

Saturnina P. Aberin

**University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines
Claro M. Recto Avenue, Cagayan de Oro City, 9000, Philippines
saturnina.aberin@ustp.gov.ph**

ABSTRACT

Students with autism face diverse challenges in general education classroom and this greatly affect their access and full participation in academic programs. The purpose this case study is to find out the factors influencing the academic performance of children with autism included in general education classroom. The study was guided in establishing the factors influencing the academic performance of children with autism; the instructional strategies; the family involvement; the attitude and their overall academic performance.

The study adopted theories of Bandura Social Cognition and Weiner Attribution. The questionnaires were administered to parents, autism graduates and to their previous teachers in 4 levels. Data were analysed and summarized. Findings indicated that classroom factors, step-by-step method of instructional strategies, the positive feedback; family involvement, character of obedience and persistence of the students that range from average to excellent level influence the academic performance of autism students included in general education classroom. The study recommended that autism students should work hard despite of their condition. Parents should find ways on how to handle their children. Teachers must not only monitor the academic performance and behaviour of students. Community should embrace understanding and acceptance of autism students who have done right and wrong.

KEYWORDS: Academic Performance, Autism, General Education Classroom

1 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

According to the estimation of National Centre for Education Statistics (Statistics, 2018) , 710,294 students are diagnosed with autism where 43,233 of them are Asians. My personal experience inspired me to do further study with respect to special education particularly autism spectrum disorder especially the influence of academic performance in general education classroom.

Unfortunately in Philippine Setting, there are only few autism students that are included in general education classroom because of lack of facilities, lack of teachers, and lack of parental support. Before the special education classes, those students with autism will go directly in general education classroom and the teachers will assist their needs.

Autism also called [autism spectrum disorder](#) (ASD), is a complicated condition that includes problems with communication and behaviour. It can involve a wide range of symptoms and skills.

As a result of the passage of Public Law 94-192, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, all people with disabilities are allowed free access to public education and equal rights to due process procedures. In addition to a free and appropriate education and due process, the law provides for LRE placement (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). LRE, or Least Restrictive Environment, describes a situation in which a child has the greatest possible opportunity to interact with children who do not have a disability and to participate in the general education curriculum (Autism Speaks, Inc., 2010).

The researcher discusses evidence-based practices that aid in the success of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) children in the mainstream classroom. He outlines some strategies that can be used. These strategies were found based on his research and professional knowledge in the field of autism.

Davis (2013) quotes that in order for a student to function in the mainstream classroom, he feels that teachers should not have a preconceived notion about these children. According to him, Teachers also need to make adaptations in a variety of academic subjects and it feel that it is important to modify the conversational language because students with ASD have a difficult time understanding speech that is not literal. It was reported that children with ASD have “trouble using and comprehending verbal and nonverbal communication which is social conversation, interpreting the emotional states of others, forming and maintaining friendships with peers, and developing effective play skills”. Children that are mainstreamed in a classroom still struggle with these issues which can make their experience unsuccessful and cause them to feel alone. In order for these students to be successful in the classroom, teachers need to understand the students’ strengths and know how to best help them participate in a meaningful way. Teachers and others working with the student also need to be given multiple strategies that have been proven successful for that particular student. The evidence-based strategies discussed in this article include: “flexible grouping, concrete supports, self-management, and video modelling”.

This study was employed a case study qualitative methodology to gather data on the factors influencing the academic performance of students with autism. It discusses the challenges

and successes of the subjects which deal with the incidence, distribution, and inter-relations of variables. This method emphasizes on the frequency of answers to the same question by different people. This design aims at obtaining information from a representative selection of the population known as a sample.

The research made questionnaires were for the collection of reliable data from many respondents. The set of questionnaire were administered to the parents/guardians, to the autism graduates and to the teachers in 4 levels (e.g. Kindergarten, Elementary, High School and College). The instrument was based on their experiences on how they handled an autism graduate during their school days and family involvement. Here is the table below:

Table of Interview Questions by Categories

Questions	Students	Parents	Teachers
What are the factors that influence your academic performance in the general education classroom?	✓	✓	✓
What instructional strategies influence your academic performance?	✓	✓	✓
What family involvement influences your academic performance?	✓	✓	✗
What attitude impact academic performance?	✓	✓	✓
What is your academic performance in the general education classroom?	✓	✓	✓

Academic performance represents an absolutely crucial role in producing the most improvement and achievement of pupils with autism. Inclusion opens opportunities for career development, meaningful occupation and a chance for a dignified life for children with Autism.

Autism is a condition that relates to brain development; it impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behaviour. The term "spectrum" defines displaying traits such as awkwardness in social situations, restricted interests, or repetitive patterns of behaviour and refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity.

The inclusion of students with Autism in the general education classroom has been a major topic of discussion for many years because some of teachers and non-disabled students are having a difficulty to deal and teach with them in fact, they have a little or no background experience in dealing those students with ASD. Inclusive classrooms are a general education classroom in which students with and without disabilities learn together. It is essentially the opposite of a special education **classroom**, where students with disabilities learn with only other students with disabilities because in special education classroom, it serves as an primary school if the child is ready to go in inclusive classrooms or not.

2 CONCLUSION

From the study findings it can be concluded that students with autism included in general education classroom face challenges that influence their academic performance. Most of the students indicated that they had strong open communication, support and love.

In comparison, children with autism and the parents in a modern world are just to be contented on what the doctor's assessment stated and they go to school for the sake of compliance unlike in the previous years that the parents are having time to monitor the child's activity. Nowadays, children with autism are exposed to any form of technology which may lose their focus.

Classroom factors can influence the child's academic performance where they can explore, compete, and learn new things. Sometimes they will experience common problems in school such as bullying.

In spite of many challenges and difficulties in life they continue to strive hard in order to reach their goals and making their dreams come true. They always do their best to prove that they can do it.

Overall, they range from average, above average and excellent. They are just not an ordinary but they are always unique totally interesting sometimes mysterious.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adalikwu, S. A., & Iorkpilgh, I. T. (2013). The Influence of instructional materials on academic performance of Senior Secondary School students in Chemistry in Cross River State. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 12(1), 39-46.
- [2] Adams, R. V., & Blair, E. (2019). Impact of time management behaviors on undergraduate engineering students' performance. *SAGE Open*, 9(1), 2158244018824506.
- [3] Afzal, H., Ali, I., Aslam Khan, M., & Hamid, K. (2010). A study of university students' motivation and its relationship with their academic performance. *Available at SSRN 2899435*.
- [4] Alhanati, J. (2014). Follow your passions and success will follow. *Investopedia*. Retrieved from <http://www.investopedia.com/articles/pf/12/passion-success.asp>.
- [5] Al-Kaabi, A. F. (2016). *Effects of collaborative learning on the achievement of students with different learning styles at Qatar University* (Doctoral dissertation, Brunel University London).
- [6] Bailey, T. (2017). The impact of parental involvement on student success: school and family partnership from the perspective of students.
- [7] Baranek, L. K. (1996). The effect of rewards and motivation on student achievement.
- [8] Barbara, G. D. (1993). *Tools for teaching*. Jossey-Bass.
- [9] Bariroh, S. (2018). The Influence of Parents' Involvement on Children with Special Needs' Motivation and Learning Achievement. *International Education Studies*, 11(4), 96-114.
- [10] Bates, A. T. (2015). 3.6 Experiential learning: learning by doing (2). *Teaching in a Digital Age*.
- [11] Blazar, D., & Kraft, M. A. (2017). Teacher and teaching effects on students' attitudes and behaviors. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis*, 39(1), 146-170.
- [12] Brooke, E., Learning, L., & Stone, R. (2017). The Critical Role of Oral Language in Reading for Title I and ELL Students.
- [13] Bush, H. H., Cohen, S. R., Eisenhower, A. S., & Blacher, J. (2017). Parents' Educational Expectations for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 52(4), 357-368.
- [14] Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2019). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, 1-44.
- [15] Daviran, A. (2014). Investigation of impact of educational attitudes of students and teachers on academic achievement of third grade middle school students in

Zanjan. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development IJARPED*.

[16] Davis, A. (2013). Factors That Impact a Child on the Autism Spectrum in the General Education Classroom. *Online Submission*.

[17] Ebele, U. F., & Olofu, P. A. (2017). Study Habit and Its Impact on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Biology in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 12(10), 583-588.

[18] Flashman, J. (2012). Academic achievement and its impact on friend dynamics. *Sociology of education*, 85(1), 61-80.

[19] Forsyth, D. R., Story, P. A., Kelley, K. N., & McMillan, J. H. (2009). What causes failure and success? Students' perceptions of their academic outcomes. *Social Psychology of Education*, 12(2), 157-174.

[20] Groenendijk, T., Janssen, T., Rijlaarsdam, G., & van den Bergh, H. (2013). The effect of observational learning on students' performance, processes, and motivation in two creative domains. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(1), 3-28.

[21] Grogan, K. E., Henrich, C. C., & Malikina, M. V. (2014). Student engagement in after-school programs, academic skills, and social competence among elementary school students. *Child Development Research*, 2014.

[22] Hmedan, H. A. A., & Nafi, J. S. I. (2016). The effect of using inductive and deductive methods on 7th grade students' achievement in grammar in Bethlehem District and their attitudes toward EFL.

[23] Holstermann, N., Grube, D., & Bögeholz, S. (2010). Hands-on activities and their influence on students' interest. *Research in science education*, 40(5), 743-757.

[24] Kapur, R. (2018). Factors influencing the students academic performance in secondary schools in India. *University Of Delhi*.

[25] Kayani, S., Kiyani, T., Wang, J., Zagalaz Sánchez, M. L., Kayani, S., & Qurban, H. (2018). Physical activity and academic performance: the mediating effect of self-esteem and depression. *Sustainability*, 10(10), 3633.

[26] Keen, D., Webster, A., & Ridley, G. (2016). How well are children with autism spectrum disorder doing academically at school? An overview of the literature. *Autism*, 20(3), 276-294.

[27] Krapohl, E., Rimfeld, K., Shakeshaft, N. G., Trzaskowski, M., McMillan, A., Pingault, J. B., ... & Plomin, R. (2014). The high heritability of educational achievement reflects many genetically influenced traits, not just intelligence. *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences*, 111(42), 15273-15278.

[28] Leithwood, K., Seashore, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning.

- [29] Mahuro, G. M., & Hungi, N. (2016). Parental participation improves student academic achievement: A case of Iganga and Mayuge districts in Uganda. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1264170.
- [30] MAINGI-LORE, M. A. R. Y. (2016). *Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Students with Special Needs in Institutions of Higher Learning. The Case of Middle-Level Colleges in Machakos County. Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- [31] Mart, C. T. (2013). A passionate teacher: Teacher commitment and dedication to student learning. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 2(1), 437-442.
- [32] McQuown, A. (2011). Focus and Motivation: Two Contributing Factors That Lead a Student to Academic Success. *Online Submission*.
- [33] Meyer, B., Haywood, N., Sachdev, D., & Faraday, S. (2008). What is independent learning and what are the benefits for students. *Department for Children, Schools and Families Research Report*, 51.
- [34] Mnyandu, P. T. (2001). *The relations between self-determination, achievement motivation and academic achievement* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa).
- [35] Montgomery, J. R. (2009). Using Audio Books to Improve Reading and Academic Performance. *Online Submission*.
- [36] Moradi, K. (2013). The impact of listening strategy instruction on academic lecture comprehension: A case of Iranian EFL learners. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 406-416.
- [37] Mulford, B. (2003). School leaders: Challenging roles and impact on teacher and school effectiveness. *a paper prepared for the OECD Improving School Leadership activity, available at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership*.
- [38] Nardo, M. T. B. (2017). Modular instruction enhances learner autonomy. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 5(10), 1024-1034.
- [39] Nasrullah_PhD, S., & Khan_PhD, M. S. (2015). The impact of time management on the students' academic achievements.
- [40] Newchurch, A. (2017). The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Success: School and Family Partnership from the Perspective of Parents and Teachers.
- [41] Partlo, S. (2018). Meeting Learning Needs of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Elementary Education.
- [42] Perez-Felkner, L. (2013). Socialization in childhood and adolescence. In *Handbook of social psychology* (pp. 119-149). Springer, Dordrecht.

- [43] Prince, M. J., & Felder, R. M. (2006). Inductive teaching and learning methods: Definitions, comparisons, and research bases. *Journal of engineering education*, 95(2), 123-138.
- [44] Ratnasari, S. W., Novandalina, A., & Perhatian, D. (2019). The Effect of Self Efficacy on the Quality of Knowledge to Increase Academic Achievement Students of Gayo in Overseas. *Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies*, 25(2), 1-7.
- [45] Riungu, E. N., & Kinyua, S. M. (2018). Group Obedience and Its Impact on Academic Counseling Among Students: A Comparative Study of Boys and Girls in Public Secondary Schools in Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya.
- [46] Robinson, C. M. (2012). The influence of inclusion on the academic performance of general education students on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge in grades 6, 7, and 8.
- [47] Rugutt, J. K., & Chemosit, C. C. (2005). A Study of Factors that Influence College Academic Achievement: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach. *Journal of Educational Research & Policy Studies*, 5(1), 66-90.
- [48] Sauer, K. (2012). The impact of student interest and instructor effectiveness on student performance.
- [49] Savolainen, T., & Häkkinen, S. (2011). Trusted to lead: Trustworthiness and its impact on leadership. *Open Source Business Resource*, (March 2011).
- [50] Schmuck, J. (2011). Parental Influence on Adolescent's Academic Performance. *The Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 9(1), 11.
- [51] Silvervarg, A., Haake, M., & Gulz, A. (2018, June). Perseverance Is crucial for learning. "OK! but Can I take a break?". In *International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education* (pp. 532-544). Springer, Cham.
- [52] Serly, V. (2018, July). Understanding The Influence of Motives, Preparedness, and Expectations on Accounting Students' Performance: An Indonesian Study. In *First Padang International Conference On Economics Education, Economics, Business and Management, Accounting and Entrepreneurship (PICEEBA 2018)*. Atlantis Press.
- [53] Seymour, K. (2017). Inclusion of Students with Autism: Teacher Perceptions Regarding Evidence-Based Strategies and Staff Supports in Pennsylvania.
- [54] Shahzadi, E., & Ahmad, Z. (2011). A study on academic performance of university students. *Recent Advances in Statistics*, 255.
- [55] Tanujaya, B., Mumu, J., & Margono, G. (2017). The Relationship between Higher Order Thinking Skills and Academic Performance of Student in Mathematics Instruction. *International Education Studies*, 10(11), 78-85.

- [56] Trucchia, S. M., Lucchese, M. S., Enders, J. E., & Fernández, A. R. (2013). Relationship between academic performance, psychological well-being, and coping strategies in medical students. *Revista Facultad de Ciencias Medicas*, 70(3), 144-52.
- [57] Vanthournout, G., Gijbels, D., Coertjens, L., Donche, V., & Van Petegem, P. (2012). Students' persistence and academic success in a first-year professional bachelor program: The influence of students' learning strategies and academic motivation. *Education Research International*, 2012.
- [58] Verešová, M., & Malá, D. (2016). Attitude toward school and learning and academic achievement of adolescents. In *7th International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology*, Published by Future Academy.
- [59] Wilson, N. (2009). Impact of extracurricular activities on students.
- [60] Yusof, A. M. (1984). The relationships between family communication, self-concept, and academic achievement of adolescents in some schools of Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.
- [61] Yusup, N. B., & Mansora, A. A. (2016). The influence of parents support and its relationship with students achievement in English education. In *International Conference on Education and Regional Development (ICERD)*.