

Educator Knowledge for Educating Students with Autism in Nigeria

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Abstract

Global research about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is highly important as ASD is universal and occurs across cultures and geographical regions. To better understand the knowledge level of Nigerian educators of children with ASD, this study was an examination of two domains in understanding ASD. First, it assessed basic knowledge of ASD, and second, it assessed the misperception of ASD. Also, it measured the relationship between educators' prior training and their knowledge of ASD in Nigeria. The result shows that there is a significant positive relationship between educators who received prior training in ASD, educators who are certified in Applied Behavior Analysis, those who have received training from the college of education and current knowledge of ASD. The relationship between current teachers of students with ASD and the knowledge of ASD was significantly negatively related.

Methods

- Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved this study.
- Collaboration with a teacher in Nigeria who helped with distribution to schools in Nigeria.
- Some of the surveys were completed online and others were printed, completed, and scanned due to lack of Internet access for some teachers in Nigeria.
- Data were collected within a period of 3 months. Data obtained were analyzed using (SPSS) (Version 20).
- Demographic variables of the participants and Research Question 1 were analyzed using descriptive statistics.
- Pearson correlation testing was used to answer Research Question 2.
- The *P*-values of 0.05 and 0.01 were used for the test of statistical significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of Nigerian educators teaching students with ASD?

- The results from Table 2 shows that 82.3% of participants that responded to the questions got the knowledge domain questions correct.
- 17.7% of participants gave incorrect responses to the knowledge domain questions.
- On the misperception domain, 33.5% of respondents answered the questions correctly while 66.5% of respondents gave an incorrect response.



Table showing correlation of Prior Professional Training and Knowledge of Autism

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SPED teacher	392	0.20	0.40							
ASD Training	391	0.20	0.37	.08						
Hands On	391	0.30	0.4	.01	.10					
Curr. ASD	391	0.30	0.45	-.20**	-.20**	-.28**				
Teacher (experience only)										
Certified ABA	390	0.20	0.40	.09	.12*	.23**	-.22**			
College of Ed	391	0.04	0.19	.01	-.01	-.08	-.09	-.02		
Other Training	388	0.11	0.31	-.18**	-.13**	-.20**	-.20**	-.14**	-.02	
Total Knowledge	477	11.93	3.32	.08	.12*	.10	-.11*	.11*	.10*	.02

Note. ** Correlations are significant at 0.01, ***p* < .01; * Correlations are significant at 0.05, * *p* < .05.

Summary of the frequency table statistics of knowledge and misperception responses.

	<i>n</i>	<i>nCR</i>	<i>nICR</i>	%CR	%ICR
Knowledge	448	369	79	82.3	17.7
Misperception	451	151	300	33.5	66.5

Note. *nCR* is "Number of correct responses", *nICR* is "Number of incorrect responses". %CR is "percentage of correct responses" and %ICR is "percentage of incorrect responses".

Results cont'd.

- The overall total responses from the knowledge domain were N=448 while the responses from the misperception domain were N=451.
- **Research Question 2: What is the relationship between Nigerian teachers prior training and their knowledge of ASD?**
- There was a significant positive correlation between educators who have received a training on ASD and knowledge of autism ($r = .12, p < 0.05$).
- There was also a significant positive correlation between educators who are certified in applied behavior analysis (ABA) and knowledge of autism ($r = .11, p < 0.05$).
- There was a significant positive correlation between educators who had received a training from the college of education and knowledge of autism ($r = .10, p < 0.05$).
- There was a significant negative correlation between current teachers of students with autism and knowledge of autism ($r = -.11, p < 0.05$).
- There was no significant correlation between total knowledge of autism and being a special education teacher or being an educator with either hands on training or other training.

Conclusion

- The findings of the study emphasize the need to train educators to identify and manage students who exhibit characteristics of ASD.
- There is a need for a standard curriculum that would eliminate the low-level knowledge about ASD and about creating individualized interventions.
- Value should be placed on organizing seminars, workshops, and conferences to better prepare educators to teach students with ASD.
- Nigerian children with ASD need an academic environment tailored to their needs and teachers with adequate knowledge of the disorder to help them succeed.
- Educators' knowledge of ASD will reduce misconceptions and stigmatization of students with ASD.



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