

SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN EGYPT AND ENGLAND: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract. *This study aims to compare the development of special education practices for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Egypt and England and gain an understanding of those factors that enhance or hinder special education in both countries. The study applies a comparative framework method. The findings provide a better understanding of special education practices and factors that enhanced or hindered the special education for ASD across the two countries. The findings reveal that special education practice in Egypt was hindered by low economic status, scarcity of cultural awareness, inadequate financial support, absence of education policy for ASD, and political orientation towards centralization. While, in England education policy, cultural awareness, economy, and scientific technology have been identified as important enhancing factors for special education. The study suggests some recommendations for developing special education for ASD in Egypt.*

Key words: *Autism spectrum disorders, mothers, Special Education, Egypt, England*

1. INTRODUCTION

Special education (SE) for children with disabilities is grounded in the United Nations (UN) convention on the right of the child and the Salamanca framework for special education needs (SEN). Convention Article 26 of the UN has emphasized that children with disabilities are entitled to their basic human rights and have equal opportunity to be educated and live like other children (UNICEF, 2014; UNICEF, 1989). The Salamanca

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has affirmed the UN declaration that everyone has the right to education (UNESCO, 1994).

Increasing the prevalence of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is of interest to professionals of SE all over the world. Recent estimates of the prevalence of ASD indicated that one in 58 children is affected (CDC, 2020). The prevalence of ASD in Europe has increased rapidly, due to an increased awareness of autism and hence an increased like-lihood of the condition being diagnosed (Chiarotti and Venerosi, 2020). Data suggest that around 700,000 individuals have ASD in the UK, including one in 100 children with an ASD diagnosis (BMA, 2020). There are no accurate epidemiological data for ASD in Egypt (Taha & Hussein, 2014). However, available data indicate that about one in every 160 children has ASD in Egypt, according to the Social Solidarity Ministry (Al-Youm, 2017).

This data suggest increasing rates of children with ASD in every society. Hence, increasing demand for the educational system and how to best provide education for those children. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive educational practice to support children with ASD and support teachers with best practices based on resources and information (National Education Association, 2003). Receiving the right education that meets the special needs of exceptional individuals makes tangible improvements in the lives of those individuals and their families. And yet, children with ASD in Egypt as one of the low and middle income countries (LMICs) experience poor education and encounter major barriers in accessing education. The majority of children with ASD remain at home uneducated (Gobrial, 2018; Omar et al., 2017; Costandi, 2011). Special schools for ASD are absent in Egypt. They are often excluded from regular school due to the inability of the education system to meet their complex needs. As a result, this contributes to the unmet needs of pupils with ASD in Egypt, which could have a dramatic impact on the child and family's well-being (Gobrial, 2018; Taha & Hussein, 2014). Further challenges include scarce knowledge of ASD, scarcity of professionals, barriers to diagnosis and treatment, limited resources for ASD and lack access to intervention services (Ibrahim et al., 2020; Gobrial et al., 2019; Ghoneim, 2014; Gobrial, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2010). The current situation in Egypt identifies a gap and reflects the need for SE practice for children with ASD. Given that children with ASD find it particularly challenging to enroll in the education system in Egypt, developing a quality education is vital for these children.

Consistent with the development and global interest in the field of SE, it has become imperative to pay attention to SE for children with ASD. Identification of experiences, models and practices in developed countries is important as it contributes to awareness and recognition of how other models can enrich local practices and policies (Courtenay, 2018). Hence, it is necessary to get acquainted with successful international experiences and try to formulate a proposed scenario for implementation in Egypt.

There has been scant research into the SE practices for ASD in Egypt. Analysis and understanding of the specifics of education of any country is almost impossible without comparison (Jovanović & Ćirić, 2017). Hence, it is crucial to investigate how developed countries have successfully developed and established education for ASD. In this context, this study aims to compare the development of special education practices for ASD in Egypt and England, in order to reveal the factors that enhance or hinder the SE practices in both countries.

1.1. Educational practice for ASD in Egypt

The education system in Egypt runs by the government. It is free and compulsory for nine academic years for all children aged between 5 and 14. Although significant progress has been made to improve the education system, the quality of educational experiences remains low and unequally distributed (World Bank, 2007).

There are three obstacles that hinder SE for children with ASD in Egypt. First, a special school for children with ASD is non-existent. There are a few private schools and private daycare centres which are available only in Cairo and major cities. Moreover, a private school that admits children with ASD is very costly and parents invariably find it difficult to sustain and accept mild cases only (Meguid, 2014). Second, children who can make it into private school need to be accompanied by a teaching assistant. Parents are obligated to find a teaching assistant and pay the fees in addition to the school admission fees (with a minimum 1000 L.E. per month, which consists of 50-60% of household income as average wage is 2600 L.E.) (Fathie, 2016). Third, the inclusion classroom for children with disabilities are restricted for pupils with ASD.

Inclusion education (IE) refers to the integration of children with SEN with their peers in a classroom or a provision in mainstream school (Maciver et al., 2018; Department of Education [DoE], 2001). In the context of IE, children with disabilities are seen as paramount and enrolment of pupils with ASD remains limited. IE in a regular school in Egypt is subject to some criteria including children with mild disability (IQ between 65 and 84); excludes children with multiple disabilities; restricting the admission of children with disabilities to 10% of the total number of children in the classroom, and to a maximum of four children with disabilities in a classroom, according to Ministerial decision No.42 for 2015 (Ahramelyoum, 2017; Al-Youm, 2017). Furthermore, teachers have not received adequate training to deal with the special needs of children with ASD and lack the enthusiasm required for inclusion in regular classes (Ghoneim, 2014). This highlights the need to develop SE practice for children with ASD in Egypt.

Although Egypt has positive innovations in establishing SE for major types of disabilities, schools for pupils with ASD are scarce. There is no special education policy that is focused on pupils with ASD. There is still an urgent need to advance the field of SE for children with disabilities in general and ASD specifically. Egypt still has a long way to go in developing effective and affordable education for ASD. Education is vital to develop their skills, abilities and quality of life, not only academically, but also a comprehensive development of various aspects in life. Hence, education policy in Egypt is urgently needed to be drafted to better support students with ASD.

1.2. Educational practice for ASD in England

The education system in England is compulsory and free for all children aged between five and 16 (Schools and Education, Gov.uk. <https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school>. accessed 14 Mar. 2021).

The Warnock Report was a landmark in the development of policy on SE in England (Warnock, 1978). The IE has promoted an increasing number of students with SEN. This includes a provision for children with ASD in a mainstream school (DoE, 2001). The inclusion development program is part of the Government's strategy for children with SEN, which aims to help teachers and practitioners to enhance the skills needed for the early identification and support of children with high incidence needs (DoE, 2009).

The educational practice for ASD in England is an adaptation of several approaches (e.g., computer-assisted learning, Hanen program, Lovaas programs, Waldon approach, Makaton signing and symbols message, music therapy, Sherborne movement and speech and language therapy). Meanwhile, all schools follow the national curriculum (Jordan et al., 1998). Furthermore, schools are working together to participate in ASD expertise through working with mainstream, satellite schools and classrooms, where special schools share their experiences in the external community (NAS, 2020).

The National Autistic Society (NAS) has been providing specialist autism education in the UK since 1962. They support children and young people in their specialist autism eight schools, ages four to 21 years (As of February 27th, 2020, NAS listed on its website <https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools.aspx>).

The present study aims to learn from England as a successful model. England has paid great interest to SE practices for children with ASD. That represented in expanding educational opportunities to include inclusion education, developing curricula, supporting health and guidance aspects, launching the comprehensive Education Health Care (EHC) plan, involving parents and sustaining professional development support for SE leaders by laying the foundations of administrative decentralization (Long et al., 2019; DoE, 2019; Parkin, 2016). The SE practice and EHC plan for children with disabilities in England are based on the right policies (Ramsay et al., 2018). Furthermore, England has superior practice guidelines for children with ASD based on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health UK (Parkin, 2016; NICE, 2014). Thus, England can be an example for SE practices for ASD profiles. Considering a comparison to a well-developed education practice is crucial to support the development and delivery of better care for children with ASD in Egypt.

In this context, the purpose of this study is to compare the special education practices for children with ASD in Egypt and England. The focus is on determining the factors that enhance or hinder meeting the educational needs of children with ASD in light of the comparative country (England). The aim of this is not to make judgments but to examine best practices in SE for ASD that will enhance educational practices in Egypt and evaluate any claim of success.

2. METHODS

A comparative analysis is illustrated in this study. Throughout the paper, we describe and compare SE for ASD in Egypt and England in the 21st century (2000 – 2020). As a comparative examination of SE across two countries, national and international journals, published government reports, and official documents were reviewed in both countries. Databases including ERIC, MEDLINE, Cinhal and PsycINFO (2000 – 2020) were searched for articles describing special education with the term ‘autism’ or ‘autism spectrum disorders’ and were combined with the term ‘Egypt’ or ‘England’. All identified relevant reports were searched for additional references.

A comparison analysis was applied. In this, Esser & Hanitzsch (2012) outline four steps of comparison, these are:

1. Describe the historical development of ASD education in both countries,
2. Explore factors that may be important to explain the similarities and differences,
3. Identify the similarities and differences in the two countries,
4. Explanation and reaching a proposal through which the education for ASD in Egypt could be developed in light of England’s experiences.

3. RESULTS

This study addressed a comparison of special education practices for children with ASD in two contrasting countries, Egypt and England. The overall goal was to identify factors that are considered effective for successful educational practices for children with ASD in England and are commensurate with the possibilities and conditions of Egyptian society. The results suggested some factors which influenced the development of SE practices for children with ASD in Egypt and England. England presented a great example of better practice for SE for ASD from which to learn. We present most important developments in SE in Egypt and England as follows.

3.1. Historical Milestones of SE in the 21st Century in Egypt

Egypt's education system is considered the largest in the Middle East and North Africa region. Egypt is the first Arab country that has shown great interest in SE for blind and deaf pupils (El-Ghunaimi, 2002). Major developments in SE in Egypt are briefly presented as follows:

- In 2002, the Egyptian Minister of Education (MoE) announced the 'ministerial inclusion declaration 2002' declared taking the lead to implement inclusive systems in more than 270 schools across Egypt (Ghoneim, 2014).
- In 2007, Egypt has contributed to international efforts that culminated in the issuance of the International Convention for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (Presidential Decree 400).
- In 2009, the MOE further endorsed the move towards inclusion by announcing the right for pupils with mild disabilities to enroll in public and private schools (MoE, 2013).
- In 2015, Ministerial decision (No.42) was revealed the integration of children with moderate disabilities in mainstream schools to achieve the inclusive principle in education (MOE, 2016).
- In 2018, the Education Ministry sought to integrate students with disabilities and SEN into mainstream schools through Promulgating the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (No.10). The law mandating that individual with SEN comprises 5% of the positions at schools and universities.
- The Egyptian vision 2014 – 2030 has a new strategic plan for pre-university education in Egypt, including SE. This has a strategic goal to provide pupils with disabilities with high-quality educational opportunities and includes pupils with mild disabilities in all pre-university schools (OECD, 2015).

3.2. Milestones of Special Education in the 21st Century in England

The most important developments in SE in England are:

- In 2001, the SEN Code of Practice was introduced for children with SEN to maximize their learning.
- In 2003, Every Child Matters legislation aimed to make every child, enjoy his physical and mental health, contribute to society positively and economically (DfES, 2003).
- In 2004, the individuals with disabilities education Act was introduced the individualized education plan and all related issues as an example of free and appropriate public education (legislative.gov.uk, 2004).

- In 2010, the first autism strategy for people with ASD in England was published ‘Fulfilling and rewarding lives’. The strategy’s implementation was included identification, diagnosis of ASD, training of staff and local service provision.
- 2014, Think Autism strategy was published, which was built on the 2010 strategy and set a renewed focus on three key areas: autism aware communities, promoting autism innovation fund in service provision and providing integrated care (Parkin, 2016).
- Later in 2014, Education Health Care Plan (EHC) was launched in England, which aims to provide more substantial help for children and young people through a unified approach that reaches across education, health care and social care needs (Long et al., 2019).

Comparison of historical developments milestones of SE in the 21st Century in Egypt and England is presented in table 1.

Table 1 Historical Milestones of special education in the 21st Century in Egypt and England

Year	Egypt	Year	England
2002	The ministerial inclusion declaration.	2001	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) and Special Educational Needs Code of Practice
2007	International Convention for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities	2003	Every Child Matters legislation, 2003.
2009	A Ministerial Act “right for students with mild disabilities to enroll in public and private schools”	2004	- Individuals with disabilities education Act. - Individuals with Disabilities Education improvement Act (IDEIA)
2015	Ministerial decision (No.42) ‘acceptance of children with moderate disabilities in mainstream public schools’	2010	Fulfilling and rewarding lives
2017	Inclusion Education for mild disabilities	2014	- Education, Health and Care plan - Think Autism
2014 – 2030	Incheon declaration 2030	--	--
2018	Law No. 10- Promulgating the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	--	--

3.3. Factors influence developments and innovations in ASD special education in Egypt and England

There are interrelationships between social, cultural, economic status and politics involved in developing SE for children with ASD. These factors can illustrate as follows:

3.3.1. Culture/social factor

A cultural belief and stigma associated with ASD may differ in a country with limited resources, Egypt, and a country with substantial ASD resources, England. Cultural differences in Egypt due to rural/urban and social class dimensions can influence the overall quality of education in general (Megahed et al., 2012). Culture can influence the fundamental aspects of education, the likelihood that individuals seek help, how they

have been treated and the ability to participate in society. The autism strategy introduced in 2010 had a positive impact on social acceptance and accessible societies for individuals with ASD (Department of Health, 2014).

Attitudes toward disability may also influence the way people think and act toward disabilities. Egyptian mothers are suffering social stigma and feel shame towards their child with ASD (Gobrial, 2018). Moreover, teacher's attitudes can influence the enrolment and participation of children with SEN (Ismail, 2018; Gobrial, 2015). Developing positive attitudes toward ASD will enhance the integration of children with ASD into society and education.

3.3.2. Economic factor

The economic factor plays a crucial role in shaping SE in a way that countries prioritize their services for children with SEN (Preece & Jordan, 2010). Egyptian families are either from lower or higher socio-economic spheres. Poverty rates are 27.8%, with multidimensional poverty among children, 10M people in Egypt live in conditions with multiple deprivations and privations related to lack of access to services and support (UNICEF, 2017). The finance of ASD's in Egypt is scarce and under-funded. It differs significantly from high-income countries as the care and support for people with ASD rely on a household-provider model (Mendoza, 2010).

Conversely, Britain is ranked the fifth-largest economy in the world (World Economic Outlook Database, 2020). The British economy has a significant impact on the education sector. England has taken decisive measures to address SE. The Autism Education Trust has developed a set of school's autism standards with funding (£4.5M) from the Department of Education to describe key common factors for good practice for pupils with ASD (DoE, 2016). The Government launched an autism innovation fund to develop creative and cost-effective solutions to create new models of good practice (Parkin, 2016).

3.3.3. Political factor

The Egyptian political system is a republican system of government and the president is the head of state and the executive authority. The president appears to take care of the people's interests and preserves the state and the territorial integrity of the country. Hence, the structure of a legislative, executive, and administrative system of education monitors the principle of centralization and decentralization but still, most of this regard is highly centralized (Malgorzata and El-Deabas, 2012), and this has increased the negative impact on the interest of SE and ASD schools.

The UK government invigorates the democracy, with people taking pride in participating in decision-making at all levels, clarifying the role of central and local government, and rebalancing parliament power and government. Parliament has more capability to hold the government to account and works with the British people to achieve a stronger sense of what it means to be British (The Secretary of State for Justice, 2007).

Thus, the political factor was reflected in the educational policy in the field of education by providing an appropriate educational opportunity for every student in an open society and a different perception of the learner about achieving, enhancing himself and meeting his different needs for all categories, especially among children with ASD.

3.3.4. Education policy

Although the Egyptian government places high priority on disability, with governmental and non-governmental organizations working together to address disability issues, the quality of education experience remains low and unequally distributed. Moreover, the new policy provision of community care is limited and only available in major cities (Meguid, 2014). There were several ministerial decisions, such as ministerial decision No.42, in 2015, which concerned the acceptance of children with minor disabilities into general education to achieve an inclusive principle in education.

The Egyptian education vision 2030 'Incheon declaration 2014 – 2030' involves improving the learning experiences and outcomes of special schools and ensuring quality of life for children with disabilities (Bohl et al., 2018). Despite that, SE practices for ASD are not yet a priority in Egypt. There is no single legislation or regulatory policy present in Egypt that directly pertains to ASD. Therefore, children with ASD in Egypt suffer from the scarcity of autism specialised government schools and the high cost of education and intervention in the private sector. It is a common practice for children with ASD in Egypt to be excluded from enrolment in public schools as well as intellectual disabilities schools, or for those who managed to enroll in school, many of them ended up dropping out and uneducated at home (Gabriel, 2018; Costanzia, 2011).

On the contrary, England has better practice guidelines for SE for children with ASD. The education code of practice promoted consistency of approach to meet children's SEN and places the rights of those children with SEN at the heart of the process. The new Act for children and families (2014) provided a significant reform of the system for identifying children and young people in England with SEN, assessing their needs, and making provision for them (Long et al., 2019). Child with ASD in England can attend a school with typically developing children, either in the same classroom, attend a special-education classroom or attend an ASD school. Furthermore, children with ASD are eligible for a free EHC plan and school meals. ASD is considered the most prevalent primary type of need (33% boys and 18% girls) with an EHC plan in England (DoE, 2019).

3.3.5. Technological factor

Technology and digital learning devices introduce a crucial role in SE for pupils with disabilities. Implementing technology in education can improve skills development, enhances motivation to learn and improves the attention of children with ASD (Mosad, 2019). Furthermore, it can help children with ASD manage anxiety or relax while enhancing their abilities to communicate and develop their social skills (Viljoen & Aranda, 2019).

In England, digital tools are designed to support the learning process of children with ASD. Existing solutions range from enabling more effective communication of information between educators and students with ASD, providing robot companions to help them feel more comfortable in classroom settings along with facilitating assistive learning with augmented reality (Viljoen & Aranda, 2019).

In Egypt, the outlook for technology use and impact on teaching and learning is the least favourable for various reasons. This includes lack of financial resources and insufficient technical support to maintain ICT tools on an ongoing basis, lack of adequate training in ICT use, the greater overthrow of untrained teachers and the urgent need for pedagogical capacity of the teacher educators (OECD, 2015).

3.4. The comparative analysis of special education practices for ASD in Egypt and England

The comparative analysis of special education practices for ASD in Egypt and England illustrated some similarities and differences as follows:

3.4.1 Similarities

This article has identified that both countries prioritized improving SE practices for children with SEN. However, England has specific policies for ASD which is absent in Egypt. The evidence has shown in their interest in legislating strategies and projects which have focused on this aspect. Both Egypt and England offer free education for children with SEN.

3.4.2 Differences

This review revealed that each country has its unique educational system that has shaped the nature of SE practice. Although Egypt and England agreed on some basics, there are still many differences between both countries. First, the education system, England's system codifies 12 years, while the Egyptian system codifies only nine years of compulsory education. The concern is not only the number of years but also the law enforcement itself. Egyptian children with ASD are excluded or out of school. There is no concern or punishment if these children drop out of school or are not enrolled due to disabilities. On the contrary, England provides special school for children with ASD and a comprehensive EHC plan. There are no special schools for pupils with ASD available in Egypt. Moreover, every pupil with SEN is provided with a teaching assistant and paid by the local authority in England, while in Egypt, parents must pay a teaching assistant fee in order for their child to be admitted to school. Additionally, parental involvement in education is considered good in England, while this is absent in Egypt (NAS, 2017; Aidarous, 2016).

Social and cultural awareness of the necessity to focus on school practices for children with ASD enhanced more in England than it is in Egypt. This could be due to social growth and prosperity in England. On the contrary, Egyptian society is busy solving more crucial issues related to poverty, diseases and unemployment.

Regarding the financial of SE practices for ASD, this study revealed that England overtook Egypt in providing funding for ASD. Evidence shows England's interest in establishing schools for ASD at all stages. In Egypt, the presence of some centres that concerned with ASD children is limited. These could be due to the different economic situations of these countries.

In terms of political awareness of ASD practices, it is observed that the interest of the English government in providing political support, opportunity and freedom to various state agencies and civil society institutions has a crucial influence in achieving the goals of SE practices. This is because of the democratic style prevailing in England. As for Egypt, it is noted that the central government is likely to make decisions, which negatively affected the interest in ASD special education practices.

4. DISCUSSION

This study provided useful insights into the relative factors that influenced the developments and innovations of the SE practices in Egypt and England. It is critical to

emphasize the strong relationship between culture, social deprivation, economics, politics, and SEN that deserves careful consideration by the Government in both countries (Parliament UK, 2006).

The non-existent education practice for children with ASD in Egypt can have significant consequences for their wellbeing in both the immediate and long-term alongside family wellbeing. Early intervention and education are vital for those children (Koegel et al., 2014). Investing in early intervention for children with ASD can lead to the most critical influences on children's lives, who later can live independently and support themselves and their families. Thus, there is a tremendous need to develop policy strategies to support SE for children with ASD in Egypt and particularly the needs for early intervention. Furthermore, this will increase integration into society for both children and families.

4.1. Factors enhanced or hindered meeting the educational needs of children with ASD

Given the contextual conditions in each country, Egypt and England each has their unique history of SE, which led to different practices for ASD. Many factors could enhance or hinder the development of SE practices for any country. Our review revealed several factors that influenced the SE practices for children with ASD in both countries. Economic and social factors had a significant impact on SE in England. The legislation and education policies are among the most important factors considered to be a mandatory factor that guided the development of SE in England (DoE, 2019; 2015). However, policies and laws supporting SE practices for ASD were absent in Egypt. Eleweke and Rodda (2002) reported the importance of these policies, which requires:

1. Protective safeguards which guarantee the rights of the beneficiary to receive specific services,
2. Timed onset and phase plans,
3. Consequential effect for non-compliance,
4. Room for litigation,
5. Accountability, evaluation and monitoring procedures and
6. Financial backing and structure.

Furthermore, education policy should be supported by complementary legislation within the field of health, social welfare as currently applied EHC plan in England (DoE, 2019).

On the contrary, Egypt, lacking the policy framework for children with ASD. The required professional training and skills to implement SE for ASD are undervalued. Therefore, SE practice for ASD is absent, alongside Egypt's low resources and funding for children with ASD, with a shortage of professionals, well-trained teachers, and equipped schools. Evidence comes from policy and practice, where regulation is limited. SE practices for children with ASD in Egypt are missing and hindered by policy and poor vision.

The identified factors are consistent with other studies from developing countries and the Middle East (Brown, 2005; Gaad, 2004; Eleweke and Rodda, 2002). Finally, evaluating the English and Egyptian contexts enabled us to understand the gaps and challenges in Egyptian policy. The originality of the study is that this is the only study that compared and reviewed SE practices for ASD in Egypt and England. Previous comparison studies for SE in both countries have reported only SE in general and focused on intellectual disabilities. However, no studies have looked at SE practices for children with ASD. There are good SE practices for children with ASD, as set in England, based on the

current review, which can set an example for education practices for ASD. Such education practices could inform further development of ASD education in Egypt.

4.2. Proposal for developing special education practice for ASD in Egypt

This study can be beneficial to the development of special education practices in Egypt. With regard to the current demand for SE for children with ASD in Egypt, it is crucial that the Egyptian Government, the Ministry of Education, and policymakers recognize the scale of the issue and develop a more in-depth understanding of SE that is urgently needed for children with ASD. Given England's experience, specific actions required include:

1. Adequate long-term funding should be provided to establish special schools to meet the growing demand to support children with ASD,
2. Ministry of Education should establish SE for pupils with ASD in all governorates that enhance the children's development and meet their needs,
3. Developing comprehensive education practices and curricula that support health and guidance aspects for ASD that are similar to EHCP in England,
4. Raise the profile of the profession, provide teachers with the necessary training needed to quality equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for children with ASD by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal),
5. Raising ASD awareness through holding public conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures.

5. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATION

Lack of previous research studies on SE for ASD practice in Egypt has limited published information available. Future projects could pursue qualitative research to identify the reality of SE practices through an interview or focus group discussions with teachers and parents. Future research in other aspects will provide a complete explanation of how the two countries have developed SE for ASD compared with one another. For example, it is necessary to address the question of why certain popular disabilities like ASD in the UK have not been much addressed in Egypt and what is the implication of the lack of identification. Furthermore, this study has implications for policy and education campaigns. This study clarifies the barriers to SE for ASD in Egypt. Thus, there is an urgent need to advocate for a broader global understanding of the needs of children with ASD and help establish and support educational and rehabilitative practices in underserved developing countries. The main implication of this study is that once hindered factors are identified, holistic frameworks that could successfully implement the adoption of good educational practices for ASD in Egypt. This could serve as a guide for improving SE for other developing countries in the Middle East.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study reviewed special education practices for children with ASD and determined some factors that enhanced and hindered the development of SE in Egypt and England. The results indicated that socio-economic, educational policy, resources, awareness, professional

development activities and teacher training had the potential to enhance SE practices for children with ASD. SE in England has been enhanced through factors such as economy, politics and technological development. Increased interest in SE in England is due to economic recovery, cultural awareness and decentralization in the field of education. This study suggests that socio-economic factors had a critical influence on the development of SE for ASD.

Conversely, SE practice in Egypt was hindered by the low economic status, scarcity of cultural awareness, insufficient financial support, absence of education policy for ASD, and political orientation towards centralization. It is a necessity to provide the adequate financial support that is required for developing special schools for ASD in Egypt. Children with ASD who advocate for appropriate services and education can enjoy a better quality of life. SE for those unique children must be met through an adequate SE practice.

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SPECIJALNO OBRAZOVANJE DECE SA AUTISTIČNIM SPEKTROM POREMEĆAJA U EGIPTU I ENGLJSKOJ: KOMPARATIVNA STUDIJA

Cilj studije je da se, kroz poređenje razvoja specijalnog obrazovanja dece sa autističnim spektrom poremećaja (ASD) u Egiptu i Engleskoj, otkriju i razumeju faktori koji ometaju ili doprinose unapređenju razvoja specijalnog obrazovanja u obe zemlje. U okviru studije primenjena je metoda komparativne analize, a rezultati dobijeni uporednim razvojem specijalnog obrazovanja dece sa ovim poremećajima u ove dve zemlje omogućice bolje razumevanje prakse specijalnog obrazovanja kao i

faktora koji utiču na unapređenje ili ometanje razvoja istih. Na osnovu dobijenih rezultata zaključeno je da je unapređenje razvoja specijalnog obrazovanja u Egiptu onemogućeno niskim ekonomskim statusom, nedostatkom kulturne svesti, neadekvatnom finansijskom podrškom, odsustvom obrazovne politike za ASD i političkom orijentacijom koja počiva na principima centralizacije. Nasuprot Egiptu, u Engleskoj su obrazovna politika, kulturna svest, ekonomija i naučna tehnologija identifikovani kao važni faktori koji utiču na unapređenje specijalnog obrazovanja. S obzirom na dobijene rezultate, u radu su dati predlozi i preporuke za razvoj specijalnog obrazovanja dece sa autističnim spektrom poremećaja u Egiptu.

Ključne reči: *Autistični spektar poremećaja (ASD), majke, Specijalno obrazovanje, Egipat, Engleska*