

THE USE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AMONG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: DESCRIPTIVE QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Background: The prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) appears to be increasing globally due to the complex interaction of multiple biopsychosocial and environmental factors. different electronic gadgets have changed both healthcare and how we learn. These technological enhancements may have a positive impact on the lives of children, but there is currently a global scarcity of information on how information technology influences the education of children with ASD.

Objective: This aimed to understand the perceptions of students with ASD, their parents, and their teachers, on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the education of those with ASD.

Methods: Researchers conducted four focus group discussions (FGDs) with 54 participants from different backgrounds: teachers, parents, and students with ASD. A predefined set of open-ended questions were selected to discover people's perceptions regarding assistive technologies used in ASD, their effectiveness, the scope of using them in their context, and upcoming challenges during implementation.

Results: The findings of the study revealed seven key themes: (1) the use of ICT for the education of children with ASD; (2) existing augmentative facilities for learning; (3) current patterns of use of ICT in education; (4) preferred areas of learning for ASD students; (5) integration of ICT into educational programs; (6) areas of interest outside the classroom; and (7) future opportunities and challenges in Rwanda. We found most of the study participants assumed that appropriate technology and related innovations might solve the challenges faced by learners with ASD in classrooms.

Discussion: The use of various low-cost technical devices can aid with teaching and the education of children with autism in Rwanda. However, this area requires further research to discover the impact ICT can have on the education of children with ASD, so this study may become a starting point for further research in the area.

Authors

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the context in which children with Autism can use ICT tools
2. Identify future research to investigate in the area of Autism in Rwanda

References

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