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Entitled

*ASSESSING THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER OF
ARTIFICIAL GREEN ELEMENTS IN HOT ARID REGION*

by

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Abstract

Recently, global statistics demonstrated a continued increase in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) worldwide, especially in Gulf countries, where the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ranks second in terms of autism prevalence. Studies emphasized the positive effects of green elements on the academic performance and skills of school children. The presence of indoor plants can lead to benefits such as stress reduction and positive health and well-being in children with ASD. However, green elements are less utilized in Al Ain schools due to difficulty in maintaining natural plants in buildings. This study aims to examine the perceptions of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) of artificial green elements (AGEs). We hypothesize that AGEs will exert the same positive impact as real green elements (RGEs) on the psychological and emotional health of children with ASD. Toward this end, the study recruited 17 children with ASD and 20 children without ASD aged 5–11 years. This study employed personal construct psychology (PCP) by using qualitative grids for construing children's meanings. The results showed that children with autism spectrum disorder enjoyed spending long periods in spaces with AGEs, which is considered a positive response. The findings contribute to reflect the green elements importance for children with and without ASD, that can enhance the school design guideline in Al Ain city.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder; Personal Construct Psychology; Artificial Green Elements; School Students' Perceptions; Al Ain Schools