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Master Thesis Defense

Entitled

*SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE EFFICACY OF ABA STRATEGIES ON
CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN THE UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES*

by

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Abstract

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), especially the ones who display challenging behaviors, are more likely to benefit from Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) teaching strategies. This study aimed to investigate special education teachers' perspectives on the efficacy of ABA strategies on challenging behaviors for students with ASD in the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This research used a two-phase mixed methods design, which included questionnaires (phase one) and semi-structured interviews (phase two) to collect data. Ninety-two special education teachers from the UAE responded to questionnaires carefully designed to indicate their attitudes on the efficacy of ABA strategies. Four special education teachers were selected for semi-structured interviews to ascertain their views on challenges and recommendations. Findings revealed that special education teachers with varied ABA backgrounds generally held a positive view of ABA strategies for managing challenging behaviors in students with ASD. Challenges in implementing ABA in the UAE encompass cultural awareness, teacher-student ratio, and procedural regulations. Recommendations involved increasing parental involvement and ensuring quality control in ABA services. Additionally, findings indicated that support received by teachers was deemed sufficient. Future research topics on implementing ABA in the context of UAE were discussed. Presently, there is a lack of studies on the effectiveness of employing services pertinent to ABA in the UAE. This study is one of the infrequent attempts. Therefore, the results of this paper will be significantly informative for service providers and leaders in identifying key areas for change.

Keywords: ASD, Challenging Behaviors, Efficacy of ABA, Teachers, UAE