

Course: BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care

Module: Independent Project (BMHP6020_BIRM)

Component 1: Element 1 - Project Proposal

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Project Title: The Role of Occupational Therapy in Supporting Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the UK School System

1) Aim

This study seeks to examine the role of occupational therapy (OT) in helping children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the school system in the UK. It aims to compare the effectiveness of OT interventions in the enhancement of functional, social, and educational outcomes and the effect of multidisciplinary teamworking on inclusion and the well-being of individuals.

2) Objectives

- Clarify and analyse the standards and procedures of occupational therapy used with children with ASD in the UK education system.
- Evaluate how the sensory integration, motor skills training and adaptive strategies can influence the participation in academic and social life.
- Analyse the existing policies and frameworks in the UK (e.g., SEND Code of Practice, 2015) according to which occupational therapy intervention in schools is organised.
- Recommend ways of improving accessibility, interprofessional collaboration, and long-term support of children with ASD using evidence-based OT practices.

3) Background/Rationale

In the UK, Autism Spectrum Disorder occurs at a rate of about 1 in 100 children (NICE, 2021), which in many instances impacts the sensory processing, communication, and engagement in learning activities. The role of the occupational therapists is essential to assist children with ASD to develop daily living and classroom skills (Ashburner et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the inconsistency in service delivery and knowledge of the role of OT in inclusive education is still present (Case-Smith et al., 2015). The UK schools usually have difficulties in applying individualised OT interventions because of the shortage of funds and personnel (Lamb et al., 2019). The importance of the study is that it

will give a better insight into how OTs can work together with teachers and parents to establish adaptive learning environments. This study will examine both academic and policy sources of evidence by synthesising them to draw up the best practices that would support the participation and well-being of autistic students in an educational context in the United Kingdom.

4) Methods

The present study will involve a secondary form of qualitative research in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports in the UK, and professional OT guidelines. The databases that will be chosen to select the sources include PubMed, Google Scholar, and CINAHL, though publications published in the last 10 years will be selected. The inclusion criteria will focus on the studies associated with occupational therapy, autism, and educational inclusion. A thematic analysis will be used to identify patterns in intervention effectiveness and implementation of policies. The ethical standards will be ensured by proper citation, preventing any form of plagiarism, and following the UWTSD Harvard format of referencing.

5) Resources

- Google Scholar and PubMed
- CINAHL and NHS Evidence databases.
- UWTSD library e-resources
- Zotero referencing tool and Microsoft Word.

6) Timescale

Duration	Work Done
- Week 1-2:	Literature research and review.
- Weeks 3- 4:	Thematic analysis and synthesis.
- Weeks 5–6:	Drafting and editing
- Week 7:	Final proofing and submission.

7) Researcher self-reflection

Being a young researcher, I have powerful analytical and organisational abilities, yet I should improve my skills of critical assessment and writing papers. The project will enhance my skills to interpret empirical findings, interact with policy frameworks and implement professional ethics in the research on health and social care practice.

References

Ashburner, J., Rodger, S. and Ziviani, J. (2014) 'Sensory processing and classroom emotional, behavioural, and educational outcomes in children with autism spectrum disorder', *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 68(5), pp. 562–573.

Case-Smith, J., Weaver, L.L. and Fristad, M.A. (2015) 'A systematic review of sensory processing interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders', *Autism*, 19(2), pp. 133–148.

Lamb, G., Smith, K. and Green, D. (2019) 'The role of occupational therapy in mainstream schools for children with autism spectrum disorder: A UK perspective', *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 82(8), pp. 475–483.

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