

**Level of Expertise of Paraprofessionals in Managing Children with
Autism Spectrum Disorder**



**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Education**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The thesis titled “Level of Expertise of Paraprofessionals in Managing Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder” has been accepted by the faculty of department of Education, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Management and Technology, Lahore in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Education.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

It is certified that this M.Phil. Thesis titled “Level of Expertise of Paraprofessionals in Managing Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder” comprises of original research. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis does not contain any material published or written previously by another person, except where do references are made to the source in the text of the thesis. It is further certified that help received in preparing this thesis, and all resources used have been acknowledged at the appropriate places.

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This is to certify that the research work described in this M.Phil. Thesis is the original work of the author that was carried out under my direct supervision. I have personally gone through all the data, result/contents reported in the manuscript and certify its correctness and authenticity.

I also certify that the thesis has been prepared under my supervision according to the prescribed format, therefore, I endorse its evaluation for the award of M.Phil. Degree through the prescribed procedure of the University.

Supervisor,

Dr. Amna Arif,

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my parents, my supervisor Ms. Amna Arif, Ph.D. And all those teachers who have even taught me a single word. Without their continuous encouragement, guidance and support this study would hardly have been completed.

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Abstract:

Paraprofessionals have become the backbone of special education classes providing services for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Stratton, 2014). Many students with ASD struggle with challenging behaviors that may not only affect their learning environment but the learning environment for all students in their classroom. Paraprofessionals play an important and dynamic role in supporting behavioral and educational opportunities for students with Autism and in helping to make the implementation of instructional activities more efficient and effective. Unfortunately, paraprofessionals are hired with little or no previous experience in working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The purpose of this study is two-fold, one is to explore the skills a paraprofessional need to have to take care of the children with ASD and secondly to determine the degree of competence they owned in their skills. A total of 82 participants were selected from which 7 were the principals of different special schools and 75 were paraprofessionals. Total 16 schools were selected for collecting data for this study. This was a mixed method research in which quantitative phase was developed on the basis of qualitative phase. Thematic technique was used to analyze qualitative data whereas descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to analyze quantitative data. Overall results of this study shows that paraprofessionals have moderate to high level of expertise in managing children with Autism.

Key Words: Autism, paraprofessionals, teaching aids, expertise of paraprofessionals, Para-educators.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Autism is a neurodevelopmental problem which is identified by deficiencies in social interaction as well as language use, the existence of repetitive behaviors and various other signs and symptoms .Autism is thought about to happen along a range because these core attributes existing to varying levels in various people. It refers to the wide range of signs and symptoms and also levels of disability, from mild to severe, people with autism could show (Kirk, Gallagher & Coleman, 2018).