

Transition from School to Work for People with Autism

Alanazi Abdullah*

University of Hail, Saudi Arabia

***Corresponding Author:** Alanazi Abdullah, University of Hail, Saudi Arabia.

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Abstract

In this paper, we discuss the issues, challenges and strategies that are involved in helping autistic individuals participate in society. Our focus in this paper is the literature on transition and how to design the supports to expand opportunity and potential. The paper will describe how to help persons with autism move from adolescence to adulthood and overcome the barriers that their disability presents. Growing up is hard enough for most teenagers; for those with autism, there are large additional barriers as well. But before we discuss transition, we must first understand what autism is. This paper provides information and resources concerning several topics relevant to supporting an individual with ASD through the transition from school toward post-school goals. First, there is a discussion of predictors of positive transition including teaching social skills, promoting self-advocacy skills, encouraging work experiences and enhancing collaboration between schools, families and counselors. Next, we review the literature on for writing transition IEP goals for a student with ASD. Finally, there is a focus on the strategies that would facilitate successful transition from school to work for people with autism. It is never too early to consider what can be done to ensure that all individuals with ASD move closer to a meaningful adult life.

Keywords: *School; Work; Autism*

Introduction

Transition from school to work for people with autism entails the movement of these individuals to new environments involving different tasks. Effective management of the transition process from school to work among people with autism is vital to ensure that they adjust appropriately and deliver on their assigned tasks. It is worth noting that educators, parents, and medical practitioners who may be involved in the initial stages of life of autistic people significantly influence the transition process from school to work.

This topic is important because it presents crucial information to educators on the required steps to facilitate successful transition of autistic people from college to work. In line with this topic, educators are able to understand measures and strategies to use in promoting successful transition among individuals living with autism. Cimera [1] opines that the knowledge gained from this topic is vital because it improves the preparation of autistic people for a more challenging working environment once they finish their college education. Additionally, this topic is important because it helps educators understand the crucial elements to incorporate in their training programs for people with autism. The use of the required training elements for educators will play an instrumental role in leading to successful transition from school to work for people with autism.

In this paper, I will be reflecting on the importance of this research to educators in line with understanding what other researchers have found on successful transition from college to work among people with autism. In addition, I will utilize both theoretical and existing written literature to highlight vital elements that make the transition from college to work easy and successful among people with autism. These aims are vital in achieving successful transitions for people with autism in the society.

Reflection

This research is vital for educators as it presents them the opportunity to understand what research papers have found on the successful transition from college to work among people with autism. This sets the basis for the adoption of better strategies to achieve successful transitions from college to work among autistic people. The findings available in research papers offer guidance to educators on the crucial steps they should employ in a bid to realize positive results relating to the transition from college to work among autistic people. Greene and Kochhar-Bryant [2] affirm that this makes it easier for educators to understand the existing gaps in their current programs, hence ensuring they adopt efficient strategies that would promote successful transition from college to work among people with autism. This understanding will ensure that educators work in line with similar strategies, which will ensure successful and easy transition from college to work for people with autism.

Moreover, this research is crucial to educators to understand how to design and implement successful transition plans from college to work for people with autism. Educators will be able to understand key elements relating to the design and implementation of a successful transition program in line with the information found in the research papers. Klein, Cook, and Richardson-Gibbs [3] noted that this would be helpful in ensuring they initiate successful transitions from college to work among individuals with autism. Again, educators will be able to prepare autistic students appropriately, hence ensuring they easily adjust to the work environment once they finish their college education. Plimley and Bowen [4] held the view that this would lead to an improvement in the transition plans utilized by educators, hence leading to successful transition and adaptability of autistic individuals to their working environments once they get out of college.

Literature Review

There exists both theoretical and written literature highlighting the most vital elements that make the transition of autistic people from college to work successful and easy. This part will discuss early training and social support as the two vital elements to facilitate successful and easy transition from college to work among people with autism. This will be done from the perspective of both existing theoretical and research literature on transition among autistic people.

Theoretical Literature

The theory of the mind is an important theory that relates to early training as a crucial step in promoting easy and successful transition among people with autism. This theory explains the ability of individuals to infer to different aspects such as beliefs, intentions, desires, and emotions. Clark, Costley, Keane, and Lane [5] point out that the theory emphasizes continuous and thorough training of autistic people in order to help them understand different beliefs, intentions, and the overall mode of operation among individuals. Early training is crucial in leading to easy and successful transitions because it equips people with autism with a high sense of knowledge and understanding of how to deal with emerging issues in their new environment. According to McDonnell and Hardman [6], this theory affirms the view that early training will help people with autism in diverse aspects, including job interviews and their overall performance in the new working areas. Therefore, training the mind to cope with new environments plays a vital role in leading to easy and successful transition as people with autism respond more effectively to the work environment when they leave college.

Review of Existing Literature

Geller and Greenberg [7] studied the importance of social support programs in promoting easy and successful transition from college to work for people with autism. In the study, Geller and Greenberg [7] noted that transition was a gradual process in the life of individuals and should be taken as such every moment. The results of the study indicated that social support systems played a helping role in the achievement of easy and successful transitions from school to work among people with autism. This program is supposed to be put in place immediately to ensure that the individuals adjust to it, as well as gets in touch with the characteristics that may be exhibited by others. Social support programs will help people with autism develop social skills and aspirations as they move forward into adulthood

and the work environment. Accordingly, the transition process will be easier and successful in cases when social support has been offered because of the level of independence and responsibility it bestows on people with autism.

The research by Standifer [8] was based on adult autism and employment. It begins with the explanation of the transition process of these individuals from a school environment to a work environment. The study revealed that early and continuous training led to successful transitions of people with autism to their work environments. Standifer [8] opined that early training should entail discussions on job opportunities, job performance, and overall operation of individuals in the workplace. These skills must be emphasized to ensure that people with autism understand them as they pursue their college education. This will help create a positive image of the working environment and the required standards of conduct among autistic people, hence boosting easy and fast transitions. The continuous training should also be motivational in the sense that it explains the importance of working and the benefits that come with effective performance in the areas of work. This research concludes with the point that the transition from college to work for people with autism can be simple only in cases when there is dedication from teachers, parents, and medical professionals.

Moreover, the study by Corsello [9] focused on early interventions for people with autism and the promotion of successful future. In the study, Corsello [9] began with the assertion that early interventions through early training could play an assistive role in leading to successful transitions of people with autism from college to work. Early training should incorporate behavioral interventions, cognitive interventions, and developmental interventions. The findings of this study revealed that easy and successful transitions could only be realized among people who received effective early training in behavior and cognitive activities. This implies that early training among people with autism will promote significant behavior control, which leads to easy and successful transition from college to work. This will help people with autism understand behavioral and cognitive control even as they move from school to areas of work. Early training in line with behavioral and cognitive control creates a sense of appreciation, hence creating an enabling environment for successful transitions to occur from college to work. Again, people with autism benefit from this because of the sense of self-conduct that they are able to embrace as they move from one aspect of their lives to the next.

Weiss and Harris [10] studied social support as a vital element in the transition of people with autism from one stage of life to another. The study entailed the use of observational research for new employees who had been diagnosed with autism in the early stages of their lives. The findings of the study indicated that most new employees who had accessed social support systems in their school days had time to easily and successfully transit and adjust in their areas of work. However, the lack of social support programs made it difficult for individuals to move from college and adjust appropriately in their respective areas of work. This implies that social support systems are the backbone of an easy and successful transition from school to work for people with autism. Weiss and Harris [10] affirmed that social support systems helped people with autism orient in social systems, hence transitioning appropriately from colleges to their work environments.

According to the research by Myles, Hagen, Holverstott, Hubbard, Adreon, and Trautman [11], transition from school to work among people with autism is a journey that needs to be carefully considered by educators. The findings of this study point to the view that positive training can facilitate an easy and successful transition from college to work for people with autism. With a view to facilitate successful transition, educators must train their students to improve their intelligence, enthusiasm, and passion in life. Myles, Hagen, Holverstott, Hubbard, Adreon, and Trautman [11] reiterated that such early and positive training was the only way to promote successful transitions of students with autism from college to work. This is because such students are helped to realize their potential and motivation to work better as they move toward the realization of diverse goals in a more challenging environment in the workplace. Therefore, development of intelligence, passion, and enthusiasm among students with autism leads to easier and successful transition from college to work because of the realization of the underlying need to climb the life ladder.

The study by Huff, Michels, Philips, Peyton, and Hartman [12] investigated successful transition from school to work among students with autism. The study revealed that early training with the use of self-determined employment planning could lead to the realization of

successful transitions among people living with autism. A self-determination employment-training plan should entail skills such as goal orientation, self-regulation, and autonomous behavior. Additionally, early training should also lead to the understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the individual, which will play a helpful role in leading to easy and successful transitions from college to work among people with autism. This form of training program should be put in place in the early college days to ensure that students with autism get these skills for life after college. Huff, Michels, Philips, and Hartman [12] emphasized that this form of early training would lead to easy and successful transitions because of the insight gained by people with autism. It helps them realize that their efforts would be appreciated in the workplace, hence making it simpler for them to move and adjust to work.

Alcorn MacKay [13] studied the importance of social support programs in leading to successful transitions at the Ontario University. The study involved 1,400 students who were graduating their diploma course. In this study, Alcorn MacKay [13] found out that at least 90% of these students were experiencing a successful transition from their college life to work. This is because they had received enormous social support since their early days, and they were building on that as they moved into their areas of work. Social support programs should be established in line with the understanding of existing and emerging needs of students in order to promote easy and successful transition from college to work. The fears expressed by people with autism in line with their future endeavors should be appropriately answered as early as possible since it will initiate easy and successful transition from school to work. Overall, this form of social support helps people with autism drive away any fear of the unknown and they are able to transit successfully from college to work.

Friedman, Warfield, and Parish [14] studied the transition to adulthood and work for individuals with autism. They pointed out that the transition process was always challenging for most people with autism. This study revealed that successful transitions could only be realized in line with guided training for people with autism. The training programs should be done on a regular basis and should be accommodative of all students living with autism. Friedman, Warfield, and Parish [14] bring out the view that easy and successful transitions are always realizable in cases when effective training programs that involve students are set in place. These programs must address interests of a student and the need to change in line with the emerging trends. This will help people with autism develop a renewed approach to life and they will be more willing to seek challenging opportunities as they get out of their schools. This will lead to easy and successful transition from school to work among people with autism.

Additionally, Dahl and Arici [15] studied the transition from school to work among these individuals with a consideration of designing an employment plan and training people with autism to embrace it. Early training that comes along with designing employment programs would play an assistive role in leading to an assistive role. The results of the study revealed that supported training in employment and behavioral aspects among individuals would contribute to successful transition from college to work among people with autism. This implies that educators and parents are supposed to start supportive training in employment and behavioral approaches early in the lives of their children in order to facilitate easier transition from college to work. Dahl and Arici [15] opined that the failure to utilize such programs would automatically lead to difficulties in transition. This form of supportive training will help people with autism familiarize themselves with the upcoming challenges in the workplace, hence ensuring that they transit easily and successfully from their college experience to work. The sense of motivation gained from supportive training in employment plans lays the ground for such successful transitions.

Lastly, MacDuff, Krantz, and McClannahan [16] based their study on the strategies that would facilitate successful transition from school to work for people with autism. The study reveals that continuous use of social support skills would lead to easy and successful transitions among people with autism. For instance, MacDuff, Krantz, and McClannahan [16] emphasized that social support programs should be done in a routine manner and should have a sense of feedback that enables people to feel appreciated. Such feedbacks will be a stepping-stone for easy and successful transition from school to work among people with autism. Social support programs should be designed in such a way that they emphasize visual skills in speech and continuous interactions with people. This will be assistive in leading to the required direction as people with autism strive to achieve the tasks emerging in future. This form of social support helps people

with autism gain more confidence in their speech and they become more positive as they move to their respective work. This makes the entire process of transitioning from school to work easy and highly successful.

Conclusion

In summary, students with the autism disorder need to utilize the strategies that have been discussed in this paper in order to have easy and successful transition from college to work. Educators at this level need to play a central role in ensuring that students with autism acquire and utilize these strategies as they move from the college level studies to their areas of work. Most researchers emphasize early training in terms of overall development and behavioral development as leading to successful transitions. Similarly, social support programs help students with autism realize the need to appreciate their external environment and happenings. They will be more prepared to move from college to work in case they get equipped with skills through early training and social support programs.

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