Article

Assessing predictors of successful transition services for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: This study examines the factors that predict successful transition outcomes for college students with impairments in Saudi Arabia. A stratified random sample method was employed to survey 500 people across various educational levels and disability categories. The efficacy of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), cultural variables, and perceptions of transition services have been investigated using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The study revealed significant positive correlations between the efficacy of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and favourable impressions of transition services. Additionally, it highlighted the impact of cultural variables on transition results. The assessment of indirect effects confirmed that cultural variables partially mitigate the connection between IEPs and transition assistance. The document provides practical suggestions for enhancing the efficiency of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), improving cultural proficiency among educators, facilitating collaboration among stakeholders, and guiding policies. These findings contribute to ongoing efforts to develop inclusive and culturally appropriate transition programs for students with impairments in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: transition services; individualized education plans (IEPs); cultural factors; inclusive education; Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

Transition services are specifically tailored to assist college students with disabilities in attaining their post-secondary goals, including pursuing higher education, securing employment, or actively participating in community activities. The successful implementation of these interventions is associated with improved academic and life outcomes for individuals with impairments (Alegria et al., 2021). Although the global literature on transition services provides valuable insights, it is crucial to situate these results within the specific socio-cultural framework of Saudi Arabia.

In recent years, the school system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone significant modifications, focusing on the implementation of inclusive practices (Alzahrani, 2020). Nevertheless, there is a lack of thorough investigation of the specific difficulties and advantages that students with impairments encounter during the transfer process. To fill this void, it is crucial to examine the elements that contribute to the attainment of transition services for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Global research highlights the importance of thorough and personalized transition planning (Cleverley et al., 2020). The process of developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for children with disabilities, known as the transition planning approach, requires cooperation among educators, students, and parents. This

collaboration aims to create IEPs that are customized to meet the unique needs and goals of each student (Findley et al., 2022). Collaborative endeavours have been associated with favourable results after completing education, such as increased rates of employment and enhanced community involvement (Joswiak, 2021).

The significance of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in promoting effective transitions cannot be overemphasized. IEPs function as a strategic plan for meeting the educational, social, and career needs of students with disabilities (Shillingford, 2023). According to a study conducted by Almalky (2020), the successful execution of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) was found to be correlated with improved job results for individuals with impairments. Hence, it is crucial to examine the status and efficacy of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) within the Saudi Arabian context to gain insights into the educational environment for students with disabilities during the transition process.

Cultural and social factors significantly influence the experiences of persons with disabilities during the transition process (Babik and Gardner, 2021). In Saudi Arabia, where society's views towards disability are changing, it is important to examine how cultural variables might influence the availability and use of transition services. A study conducted by Aldabas (2020) emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive strategies to improve the efficacy of special education services within the Saudi setting.

Although Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in implementing inclusive education, a more detailed analysis is needed to understand the specific details of the transition programs available for students with disabilities in the country (Alfozan, 2022). Recent research has emphasized the necessity for increased awareness, enhanced expertise, and more collaboration among stakeholders engaged in the transition process (Brunetti et al., 2020). An in-depth understanding of the latest transition services available in Saudi Arabia will provide the basis for providing targeted improvements.

1.1. Problem of study

In Saudi Arabia, the transition of college students with disabilities from faculty to post-school existence is a significant moment that deserves careful consideration. Despite progress in inclusive schooling, there is a dearth of research that specifically examines the factors contributing to successful transition programs for college students with disabilities in the Saudi Arabian context. The limited comprehension in this field presents a hurdle to devising successful interventions and strategies to improve the transition experiences and outcomes for this specific group of students. Understanding the complex dynamics and variables that impact the transition process is crucial to advancing inclusive education and ensuring equal opportunities for all students.

1.2. Research questions

1) What are the key predictors of successful transition offerings for college kids with disabilities in Saudi Arabia?
2) How do the implementation and effectiveness of Individualized Education Plans

(IEPs) contribute to the fulfilment of transition offerings for college kids with disabilities in the Saudi Arabian academic system?

3) To what volume do cultural and societal elements have an impact on the transition outcomes for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia?

1.3. Significance of the study

This has significant ramifications for several stakeholders within the education system. By identifying factors that indicate effective transition services, educators and policymakers may customize interventions to meet individual needs, therefore creating a more supportive and inclusive academic environment. Furthermore, understanding the role of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in the transition process can provide policy recommendations and expert improvement initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of these plans. Lastly, acknowledging the influence of cultural and societal issues provides valuable insights for developing culturally responsive transition services, ensuring that treatments are in line with the specific socio-cultural context of Saudi Arabia. The purpose of this study is to contribute to ongoing efforts to create an inclusive educational environment that enables students with disabilities to succeed beyond their academic years.

1.4. Term of the study

The study was conducted over a 12-month duration, starting from the collection of data until the completion of the research report. The timetable includes many steps, such as literature review, study design formulation, participant recruiting, data collection, analysis, and synthesis of findings. The extensive scope of the examination requires sufficient time to conduct a meticulous investigation of the various complex elements of transition programs for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

1.5. Limitations of the study

While this research intends to offer valuable insights, it is crucial to recognize many constraints that might impact the relevance and scope of the findings. Firstly, the study's emphasis on Saudi Arabia may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data, particularly in the qualitative component of the study, introduces possible biases. Moreover, the dynamic character of educational policies and practices might also impact the relevance of study findings as time progresses. Despite these challenges, the study seeks to offer a thorough comprehension of the experiences of impaired students in Saudi Arabia during their transition, acting as a foundation for future research and improvements in policy.

1.6. Literature review and previous studies

The process of establishing strategies for transitioning is widely acknowledged as a crucial approach for students with impairments (Almalki et al., 2021). Optimal strategies prioritize cooperative endeavours among educators, college students, and parents to expand Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) specifically designed to address the specific needs and goals of students with disabilities (Cioe-Pena, 2020).

These cooperative endeavours are linked to beneficial outcomes after graduation, such as increased rates of employment and involvement in the community (Davis and Lee, 2023). IEPs play a crucial role in supporting smooth transitions (Cumming et al., 2020). Thoma and Hafner's study has demonstrated that effectively implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) is associated with better job outcomes for individuals with disabilities. An examination of the role of IEPs in structuring transition programs worldwide requires an investigation into their function within the Saudi Arabian context.

Cultural and societal elements significantly influence the examination of individuals with impairments during the process of transitioning (Morawska-Jancelewicz, 2022). It is important to analyze how cultural variables may impact the provision and utilization of transition services in Saudi Arabia, where society's views regarding disability are changing. Elhoweris and Efthymiou (2020) advocate for implementing culturally sensitive techniques to enhance the efficacy of distinct educational programs within the Saudi setting.

Although Saudi Arabia's current educational reforms aim to foster inclusion, there is a lack of research on the specific obstacles and advantages faced by students with disabilities during the transition process. Research emphasizes the need for increased attention, professional development, and coordination among stakeholders involved in the transition process (Van Langen et al., 2021). Although limited in scope, few studies have examined transition services within the wider Middle Eastern environment. Al-Hendawi et al. (2022) examined the difficulties associated with the integration of students with disabilities in Kuwait throughout their transition to post-secondary education. This study highlighted the need for early intervention and cooperation between educational institutions and vocational training centres.

Studies indicate that parental engagement has a crucial role in the success of transition services (Pribesh et al., 2020). The research conducted by Kelty and Wakabayashi (2020) emphasizes the significant positive influence of knowledgeable and involved parents on the transition process. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the significance of parental engagement in the specific cultural and societal context of Saudi Arabia is crucial for the development of effective transition programs.

2. Methods

A stratified random sample method was utilized to ensure the inclusion of individuals from various educational levels and disability categories. The strata encompassed primary, secondary, and higher educational levels, as well as several disability classifications. The objective of this strategy was to obtain a varied and expert sample of college students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The participants protected kids with disabilities, as well as their parents or caregivers, and educators or transition service providers. A total of 500 individuals were recruited, with a proportional distribution across strata based only on scholastic levels and disability classes.

The main method employed for gathering factual information was utilizing a structured questionnaire that was principally designed using validated scales and

tailored to suit the specific circumstances of Saudi Arabia. The survey consisted of parts that evaluated demographic data, the efficacy of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), cultural elements impacting transition, and opinions on transition programs. The questionnaire underwent a meticulous validation process to ensure its reliability and validity. The establishment of content validity was achieved by a thorough evaluation conducted by a panel of specialists in the disciplines of special education, transition services, and cultural research. Furthermore, a pilot study with 50 participants was undertaken to assess the legibility and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. The feedback obtained from the pilot check was included in the final model, so boosting the overall validity of the gadget.

The data set was collected using an online survey platform, with a focus on environmentally friendly and comprehensive participation. Obtained from all participants was informed permission, with a focus on voluntary involvement and the confidentiality of their replies. The poll was conducted in Arabic, the main language of instruction in Saudi Arabia, to guarantee that participants understood the questions. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed for data analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a powerful statistical method that allows for the analysis of intricate correlations between variables. This approach enabled the examination of the interplay between several factors that impact the effectiveness of transition programs for college students with disabilities. The SEM study encompassed the assessment of both direct and indirect effects, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to successful transitions.

3. Results

Table 1 presents a detailed analysis of the demographic data of the participants. The sample has a balanced distribution across educational levels and disability classifications, therefore guaranteeing participation from diverse groups.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Educational Level		
• Primary	150	30%
• Secondary	200	40%
• Tertiary	150	30%
Disability Category		
• Physical Impairment	120	24%
• Intellectual Disability	180	36%
• Sensory Impairment	100	20%
• Others	100	20%

Descriptive statistics (**Table 2**) provide information on the average and spread of important variables. The average ratings for IEP efficacy and views of transition services were high among participants, however cultural variables had a somewhat lower mean.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for key variables.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Effectiveness of IEPs	4.25	0.65
Cultural Factors	3.75	0.80
Perceptions of Transition Services	4.00	0.70

The reliability results (**Table 3**) indicate that the questionnaire exhibits internal consistency, as seen by the high Cronbach's alpha values, which suggest a significant level of dependability. Furthermore, the test-retest reliability demonstrates the instrument's stability across time, thus strengthening its consistency.

Table 3. Reliability results.

Reliability Measure	Result
Internal Consistency	High Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs ($\alpha > 0.80$).
Test-Retest Reliability	Stable scores over a two-week interval (correlation coefficient > 0.85).

The presented table (**Table 4**) displays the path coefficients, standard errors, and significance levels for the predicted associations in the study using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The path coefficient of 0.60 between "IEPs" and "Transition" is both positive and significant, showing a strong positive correlation. This shows that when IEPs are viewed as more successful, there is a corresponding increase in positive perceptions of transition services. Moreover, the strong and statistically significant path coefficient (0.35) between "Cultural Factors" and "Transition" indicates that a rise in cultural elements that affect transition leads to a corresponding increase in favourable impressions of transition services.

Table 4. SEM results for predictors of successful transition services.

Path	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	*p*-value
IEPs → Transition	0.60	0.08	< 0.001
Cultural Factors → Transition	0.35	0.10	0.002

Model fit indices (**Table 5**) evaluate the degree to which the proposed model aligns with the actual data. The chi-square test in this case is not statistically significant, suggesting that the fit is satisfactory. Furthermore, the RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR values fall within the acceptable range, providing additional evidence for the model's strong fit.

Table 5. Model fit indices.

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Threshold
χ^2 (Chi-Square)	125.5	$p > 0.05$
RMSEA	0.07	< 0.08
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.94	> 0.90
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.92	> 0.90
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	0.05	< 0.08

Indirect effects (**Table 6**) are the channels that connect variables through mediation. The indirect influence of "IEPs" on "Transition" through the mediator "Cultural Factors" is 0.07, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.03 to 0.12. These findings indicate that cultural variables play a role in mediating the influence of IEPs on transition assistance.

Table 6. Indirect effects.

Indirect Effect	Effect Size	Bootstrap 95% CI
IEPs → Transition	0.15	[0.10, 0.20]
Cultural Factors → Transition	0.07	[0.03, 0.12]

The initial significant finding is the strong correlation between the efficacy of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and individuals' opinions of transition assistance. This is consistent with international research that highlights the crucial role of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in directing the educational and transitional journeys of college students with disabilities (Agran et al., 2000; Grigal and Hart, 2010). The efficacy of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) forms the basis for successful transitions, underscoring the importance of continued focus on personalized strategic planning to enhance post-school results.

The cultural factors that influence transition have also been shown as significant drivers of the perceived quality of transition services. This finding aligns with the broader term used to describe culturally sensitive methods in specialized education (Harry and Klingner, 2014). The changing social perspectives on disability in Saudi Arabia highlight the importance of taking cultural subtleties into account when designing and implementing transition programs. According to Alnahdi (2015), recognizing cultural diversity is essential for developing an inclusive educational system.

The indirect effect study revealed that cultural factors have a mediating role in the relationship between IEPs and transition assistance. This underscores the interdependence of various structures and underscores the necessity for a comprehensive approach to transition planning. The socio-cultural milieu has a role in influencing the transition stories of college students with disabilities, supporting the need for comprehensive and culturally sensitive treatments (Harry and Klingner, 2014).

The practical ramifications of these results go beyond theoretical issues. Educators and career professionals can benefit from focusing on improving the efficacy of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) by integrating individualized needs and transition-oriented goals. Professional development programs should prioritize the development of cultural competency among educators, enabling them to effectively address the diverse cultural backgrounds of college students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia (Alnahdi, 2015). Collaboration among educators, parents, and community stakeholders is essential for developing culturally responsive transition plans that are in line with the unique needs and goals of each student (Carter et al., 2013).

Moreover, policymakers might utilize such discoveries to inform and enhance current regulations about inclusive education and transition services in Saudi Arabia.

In their work, Harry and Klingner (2014) advocate for a scientific and collaborative approach to address the disparity between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation in special education. They emphasize the need to harmonize standards with cultural settings.

Although this examination has made valuable contributions, it is important to identify some obstacles. The cross-sectional design of the study restricts the ability to make causal inferences, and the self-reported data may also induce biases. Furthermore, the applicability of the results may be enhanced by including the distinct demographic characteristics of the sample.

4. Recommendations

According to the findings of this study, several tips are suggested to enhance the efficiency of transition services for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Primarily, there is a requirement for continuous professional development programs for educators that specifically concentrate on the creation and execution of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). These programs should prioritize the implementation of high-quality methods in generating personalized aspirations and transition-related goals to ensure that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) effectively guide students through the transition process.

Furthermore, educators and service firms must give utmost importance to the teaching of cultural competency. The study highlights the influence of cultural factors on transition outcomes, highlighting the need for knowledge and addressing diverse cultural origins. Training initiatives should promote awareness, perceptiveness, and methods for customizing transition services to match the specific socio-cultural environment of Saudi Arabia.

Effective cooperation among educators, parents, and network stakeholders is crucial. Forging strong alliances across universities, families, and local communities can enable a more comprehensive and supportive approach to transition planning. Engaging in regular discourse and cooperation may guarantee the thoroughness of transition plans, encompassing both educational and cultural factors.

Policymakers should incorporate the study's results into existing recommendations and frameworks related to inclusive education and transition services. This may also entail reexamining and enhancing guidelines to incorporate the significance of robust Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and culturally sensitive practices in promoting successful transitions for students with disabilities.

Moreover, it is imperative to actively distribute the findings of research to a wider demographic, encompassing educators, parents, lawmakers, and advocacy organizations. By generating awareness about the primary determinants of effective transition programs, it is possible to cultivate a more informed and empowered community. This, in turn, may promote a collaborative dedication to enhancing outcomes for students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Finally, future research should focus on conducting longitudinal studies to investigate the enduring effects of effective Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and culturally sensitive practices on the post-college success of individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, exploring the distinct challenges and opportunities within

various handicap categories might offer specific insights for improving transition services.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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