



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## THE AUTISTIC STUDENT IN THE INCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Autistic Spectrum Disorder is characterized by the early manifestation of significant deficits in communication and social interaction together with the manifestation of restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interest, and activities. Thus, the study aimed to analyze the inclusion of the autistic student, according to the findings of the literature. It is a descriptive / exploratory, documental and retrospective, systematic review type, carried out in the databases SciELO, LILACS and BDeF, from 2014 to 2019. Twelve studies were selected, in which they were divided into the following categories: Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception; The autistic student in the inclusive perspective; Inclusion of the child with autism in the perception of the family. It was possible to understand, to know and understand about autism and throughout the study to have a theoretical basis for the results and discussion presented highlighting that the educator has to be patient, participatory and active, and from his various inquiries, follow up and study, consequently, can change and bring what is best for the learner in the learning process.

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### INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) involves a set of neurodevelopment disorders of organic causes characterized by difficulties of interaction and communication that may be associated with sensory alterations, stereotyped behaviors and / or restricted interests. Its manifestation is very diverse and its signs, although commonly present in childhood, can arise only when social demands extrapolate the limits of their capacities (Schmidt et al., 2016). The manifestations of difficulties in autism may vary according to the developmental level and the chronological age of the child, among other factors (APA, 2013). In addition, the greater the cognitive impairment, the greater the tendency to isolate and not communicate, because of the difficulty in understanding social interactions. However, the idea that the child with autism does not show affection and is unquestionably distant and noncommunicative has not been supported by empirical evidence. In fact, studies have revealed, for example, the ability of these children to develop attachment relationships with their caregivers and to respond

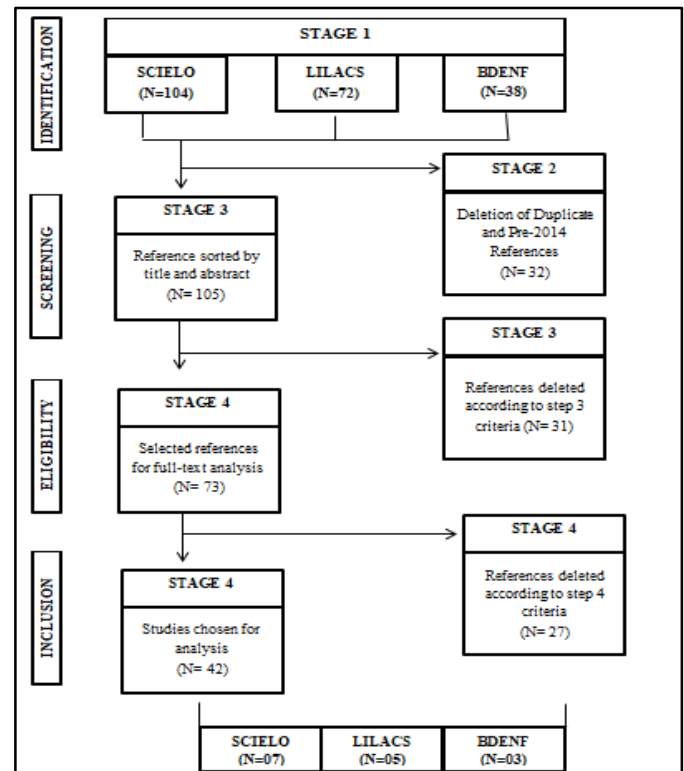
to social interaction in different contexts (SANINI, ALVES, 2015). People with ASD should also be included in the society, since the characteristics of the disorder make them individuals with greater difficulty of communication and socialization. This inclusion must begin in the family itself, every child with ASD has the right to be welcomed by his family who must be informed about the rights that this individual has. Inclusion means understanding its limitations and allowing it to be part of society (FIORINI, 2017). In order for such inclusion to take place, it is also necessary for the child to be included in the teaching and learning process in schools, making possible the contact with other children, providing their development (BOLTE, 2014). However, what is perceived is that there are professionals who are not qualified to teach students with ASD, and the schools do not have adequate structure to receive this kind of student (OLIVEIRA; VELOSO, 2017). Considering the importance of stimulating early skills and fostering social interactions, the inclusion of these children in schools has been indicated by

professionals from different areas. However, the data found in the literature on this subject are not conclusive, since there is no final answer to the question of the schooling of autistic children, since there are no comparative studies methodologically well controlled in this area (LEMOS *et al.*, 2016). For that reason, the importance of inclusion for this public is emphasized. Thus, the law was invested, which were the most relevant to the special education group, especially individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as expressing the movement of inclusion in school, showing the emergence of the diversity of these students in the common classrooms (MONTEIRO; RIBEIRO, 2018). From this, the term inclusion has attracted much attention in recent times. The school inclusion of students with autism aims to include all children and adolescents in the school environment regardless of their degree of development. It was important to report that inclusive education for children with autism should be done in regular schools. Thus, with the purpose of inserting the child without prejudice in the classroom (SILVA; NUNES; SOBRAL, 2019). It is pointed out, therefore, to the relevance of the professionals of the schools to appropriate the proposal of school inclusion, especially the teacher, because when they affirm that this is the professional that deals directly with the student, being the most effective agent in the process of inclusion. In this sense, it is understood that the success or failure of the child's learning with special educational needs is often a reflection of the pedagogical intervention and the teacher profile (LEMOS *et al.*, 2016). Based on this assertion, the present study aimed to analyze the inclusion of the autistic student, according to the findings of the literature.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a descriptive / exploratory, documental and retrospective, systematic review. The descriptive study aims to describe the characteristics of a particular population or phenomenon or the establishment of relationships between variables (PRODONAV and FREITAS, 2013). According to Soares *et al.* (2015), the review is systematic when performed comprehensively, impartially and reproducibly, aiming to answer a specific question of a research problem, locating, evaluating and synthesizing the set of evidences of scientific studies (BRAZIL, 2012). In this way, the present revision was organized following the Prisma recommendation (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyzes), with elaboration of a flowchart in four steps that are described next and illustrated in Figure 1. The Prisma recommendation consists of a checklist with 27 items and a four-step flowchart, both improving the reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyzes and assisting in the critique of published systematic reviews (Galvan and Pansani, 2015). Stage 1 - the search for the articles was carried out in the following databases: SciELO, LILACS and BDenf, with the following descriptors: (autism OR autistic spectrum disorder OR global developmental disorder) AND (teaching OR education OR inclusion), which should be present in the body of the text, without year restriction. The search was made in May 2019. Step 2 - the titles were read to verify the overlap of the studies between the surveys of the three databases and for the exclusion of the articles prior to 2014. Step 3 - Next, the titles and abstracts were read to verify if the studies fit the scope of analysis. The exclusion criteria were: papers that were not in the form of an article; studies that did not have as inclusion thematic for participants with ASD or that were only

evaluating or applying instruments; studies that did not exclusively involve individuals with ASD and articles in another language other than Portuguese. We included articles that addressed the theme of inclusion of the autistic child from the perspective of the student, family and educators. Step 4 - Finally, the articles were selected for subsequent categorization and analysis for the year, database, approach and the type of study, after all the eligibility criteria were applied. The articles were also analyzed according to the level of evidence by type of study, following the Oxford Center for Evidence-based Medicine classification. Regarding the ethical precepts, the study was based on secondary data, of the type Revision, and thus dismissed the Ethics Committee's assessment.



Source: The author, 2019.

Figure 1. Flowchart of selection of articles, Imperatriz, MA, Brazil, 2019

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Twelve articles were selected, five of which were from the Scielo database, four from LILACS and three from Bdenf. As for the year, 2018 was the one that had the most publications, with four articles, followed by the year 2016, with three articles, regarding the type of study, predominated the qualitative studies. Regarding the inclusion of children with autism, the studies were divided into three categories: 1) Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception; 2) Inclusion in the student's perception and 3) Inclusion of the child with autism in the perception of the family (Table 1). Inclusive education has been addressed by several authors in recent years. Much has been said, discussed and studied, because it is a complex subject with no magic recipe, so we need to be cautious and analyze the cases individually, respecting their particularities and stimulating their potentialities. The inclusive process is embedded within the realities of private and public education in Brazilian schools, but it does not guarantee the quality of education, many barriers are encountered in the construction of the knowledge and autonomy of its students (LEAL, 2017).

Table 1. Characteristics of selected studies, Imperatriz, MA, Brazil, 2019

| Data base | Year | Approach  | Type of study     |
|-----------|------|---|-------------------|
| Scielo    | 2017 | Inclusion in student perception                 | Literature review |
| Scielo    | 2016 | Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception | Qualitative       |
| Scielo    | 2018 | Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception | Literature review |
| Scielo    | 2015 | Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception | Qualitative       |
| Scielo    | 2018 | Inclusion in student perception                 | Qualitative       |
| LILACS    | 2019 | Inclusion in student perception                 | Qualitative       |
| LILACS    | 2019 | Inclusion in student perception                 | Literature review |
| LILACS    | 2018 | Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception | Qualitative       |
| LILACS    | 2017 | Inclusion in family perception                  | Literature review |
| BDenf     | 2016 | Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception | Qualitative       |
| BDenf     | 2018 | Inclusion in student perception                 | Literature review |
| BDenf     | 2016 | Inclusion in student perception                 | Qualitative       |

Source: The author, 2019.

Table 2. Description of the articles according to title, objectives, design, results and level of evidence

| Title  | Goals  | Conclusions  | *L/E |
|--|--|--|------|
| School inclusion and autism: an analysis of teacher perception and pedagogical practices                                     | To synthesize the conceptions and practices of teachers who work with students with TEAC in regular classes. This synthesis is fundamental to evaluate the current scenario of the school inclusion of these students. | The results suggest that autism is a condition little known to teachers, who feel unprepared to educate this population. The present study emphasizes the importance of continuing education in order to better prepare teachers to work in inclusive classes.   | 1B   |
| Conception of teachers about the inclusion of the student with autism: a bibliographic research                              | Carry out a bibliographical research and analyze articles related to the conceptions of teachers about the process of school inclusion of people with autism.  | The results pointed out the difficulties of educators with the inclusion of autism, the importance of empowerment, but also their availability to learn. There was a need for quality teaching materials, support from a multiprofessional team and assistance to family members.  | 2B   |
| Autism and inclusion in early childhood education: beliefs and self-efficacy of the educator                                 | Check the beliefs of an educator about her student with autism, early childhood education and her sense of self-efficacy stemming from the work done.  | Regarding the educator's beliefs about autism and its influence on the work with the student, it was possible to identify the positive and accepting attitudes of this child. Even with the initial feelings of fear and insecurity to work with a "different" student, she was able to develop a relationship based on affection, affection, and knowledge about her way of being and responding as experience with him and the orientations which he sought increased. | 1C   |
| The conceptions of coordinating teachers about the inclusion of students with autism: influences on pedagogical performances | Concepts about the inclusion of students with autism, reflecting on how these ideas and conceptions may influence the continued formation of teachers and, consequently, the inclusion of these students.              | The data indicate that, although they know the definitions about autism, they still have a clinical view of their students, which influences inclusion in the common class, as well as the relationship with families.   | 2B   |
| Conceptions of parents and teachers about the inclusion of autistic children   | To analyze the conceptions of parents and teachers about autistic children and their process of school inclusion.  | The results indicated that the parents showed expectations for socialization and for academic learning, while the teachers mentioned in their strategies the adoption of more socialization practices. It was also noted that parents, as they accompany the development of their children, and teachers, from the contact with autistic children, reported having more positive expectations regarding these children.  | 1C   |

\*L/E: Level of Evidence; Source: The author, 2019.

Within this theme, the results of the publications were subdivided into three categories, in order to promote a better organization and discussion of the subject, being the following: Inclusion of autism in the perception of the teacher; The autistic student in the inclusive perspective; Inclusion of the child with autism in the perception of the family.

### Category 1: Inclusion of autism in the teacher's perception

In this category, five articles were selected, in which they addressed the issue of the inclusion of autism in the educator's perception, so the studies were described according to objectives, results and level of evidence (Table 2). The role of the teacher is undoubtedly of paramount importance in the school. Although, his stance has changed over the years, from being a mere transmitter to being a mediator. Observing the attitudes of students in the classroom, it was noticed that many had difficulties to reach the proposed objectives, but they endowed with knowledge and possibilities of learning. The inclusive proposal and the new legislation made many teachers discuss the best way to make the students included have the same opportunity as the others (LEAL, 2017). Regarding teachers' conceptions of children with autism, Vieira (2014) affirms that although the responsibility of impasses in inclusive policy should not only fall on teachers, since they alone become impotent in the face of the complexity of Special Education, the promotion and implementation of educational inclusion are closely linked to them. Research on teachers' conceptions and social attitudes shows their lack of qualified preparation and in-service training for their best performance in inclusive education.

However, the school inclusion of students with autism should not be focused solely on the idea of providing social contacts, but should aim to develop a number of other cognitive abilities. Thus, the teacher, in an inclusive context, should be aware that every training plan should serve for teachers to become able to teach all school demand, their knowledge must go beyond accepting that the common class is a mere space of socialization (CARVALHO, AMORIM, CAPELLINI, 2018). From this, Melo and Ferreira (2009) point out that when caring for a child it is very important to take into account their needs, which, when respected and met, provide important information about the quality of what is received. For Marocco (2012), the proposal of early childhood education is based on the binomial care-educate, these being considered different aspects of the same process. However, Schmidt *et al.* (2016) points out that the lack of knowledge, resulting from gaps in initial and continued formation and, particularly, autistic romanticized perceptions, as a being attached to a world of its own and inaccessible, seem to negatively impact the pedagogical practice of teachers. Thus, the low academic expectation associated with the idea of school as a "space for the socialization" of the student seems to limit the access of this population to the regular curriculum. From this perspective, teachers rarely make adjustments to curriculum or make appropriate curricular adaptations. In addition, some studies emphasize that teachers emphasize the learning of functional skills rather than formal content. As a result, many learners are academically out of phase. Therefore, it is understood that in view of the inherent specificities of Autism Spectrum Disorder, the inclusive practices in this area involve a series of variables, namely: the availability of the direction in receiving

and making the necessary adjustments; experience, training, beliefs and personal characteristics of teachers; characteristics of the other students inserted in the classroom; participation of families; and especially the characteristics of the autistic spectrum in terms of different levels of autistic involvement (LEMOS *et al.*, 2016).

### Category 2: The Autistic Student in Inclusive Perspective

In this category six articles were selected, in which the autistic student is approached in an inclusive perspective, in which the articles were described according to objectives, results and level of evidence (Table 3).

interaction, communication and behavior are intimately articulated in human development from an early age. Considering that individuals with autism present damage in these areas, it is up to the professionals who work with them to use strategies that contemplate the acquisition of skills that are prerequisites for others to take effect. The ideas of this research are based on the relevance of development models to guide the implementation of more effective interventions, allowing an improvement in social skills, considering that the results demonstrate a partial capacity for social achievement by autistic children (Lemos; RAMOS, 2014). Within this scenario, the school plays a fundamental role in the process of the autistic child; where it will contribute all of its resources for improvement in autistic development.

**Table 2. Description of the articles according to title, objectives, design, results and level of evidence**

| Title  | Goals  | Conclusions  | *L/E |
|--|--|--|------|
| <i>The Autistic Student in Inclusive Perspective</i>   | To analyze the evolution of the inclusive educational process, to understand and to understand the importance in the stimulation and valorization of the abilities presented by the student, to know the available resources and the importance of activities directed to stimulate affectivity, socialization, playfulness, language, communication, education, motor area, arts and personal care. | Analyzing the bibliographical references and the discussions that guide the problematic in question, we can cite some achievements, such as: the right to regular classroom teaching in the proposal of an inclusive school, expanding the conviviality, enabling new experiences, stimulating skills and effecting interdisciplinary relationships.   | 1C   |
| <i>The inclusion of the student with autistic spectrum disorder in the classroom</i>                       | To describe the movement necessary for the inclusion of the student with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) in the classroom, through the characterization of the subject, based on a brief analysis of the legislation, in order to contribute to the debate on inclusive education.  | In view of the above, the inclusion of children with ASD in the regular network of education means, in our conception, an initial step that opens possibilities for other transformations not only of thoughts but also of attitudes in society.   | 2B   |
| <i>The educational inclusion of students with autism: challenges and possibilities</i>                     | Understand how the educational inclusion of students with disabilities occurs in regular education.  | Throughout the study, the following results were observed: the importance of the inclusion process in regular education, a factor defended by current law, as well as teacher mediation in this process and the challenge of teaching autistic students to their full development, with their limitations, but never excluded from the process that it is guaranteed the right by law.                             | 1B   |
| <i>Education of people with autism spectrum disorder: perspectives of inclusion</i>                        | To review the causal factors of ASD, focusing a little on genetics, and to discuss the inclusion of the autistic in Brazilian schools, according to the perspectives of Brazilian legislation.   | It allowed to understand that genetic factors are related to the Autism Spectrum Disorder, in addition to other environmental factors. Science is still trying to map the candidate genes for the development of ASD. This disorder has an early onset and compromises the intellectual and behavioral development of the individual at different levels and degrees of impairment.                                | 2B   |
| <i>The inclusion of children with autism in basic education: significant factors for child development</i> | To discuss and to problematize some aspects of the school inclusion of children with autism in the infantile education.  | It was verified that the problematizations and discussions presented emphasize that the educational and social inclusion of these children with ASD is very important for the progression of child development, because it is through the insertion of this child in Early Childhood Education that the school will stimulate their potentialities and capacities and thus contribute to its integral development. | 2B   |
| <i>Inclusion of autistic children: a study on social interactions in the school context</i>                | To analyze the social interactions of children with autistic spectrum in the contexts of regular schools, considering the mediation of the teachers.   | The results showed that the mediation of the teachers was characterized by the use of language directives and physical support. The participation of children with autistic spectrum in interactional terms was characterized by more frequent behaviors of looking at people, initiative directed to action, adequate response and smile.   | 1B   |

\*L/E: Level of Evidence; Source: The author, 2019.

**Table 3. Description of the articles according to title, objectives, design, results and level of evidence**

| Title   | Goals   | Conclusions  | *L/E |
|---|---|--|------|
| <i>Parental involvement and inclusion of students with autism</i> | To constitute through a review the concept of parental involvement and the theoretical models that contemplate the relationships between family and school. | Few studies on this topic related to the inclusion of people with ASD have been identified, suggesting the need for investigations that address the issue in question. | III  |

\*L/E: Level of Evidences; Source: The author, 2019.

Children with ASD were victims of prejudices and stereotyped ideas about their ability. More than others, these children need the conviviality and exchanges with peers of their age. The motor, socialization and language activities are of great contribution to their development, mainly linguistic and postural. Inclusion should occur as early as possible in Early Childhood Education, because its pedagogical work focused on aspects of evolutionary development (MONTEIRO; RIBEIRO, 2018). TEA affects the structure and function of neurons that are shorter in their morphology, and have fewer ramifications than unaffected neurons (APA, 2014). Thus, the child is born with difficulties of language, communication and socialization (DESCHIPPER *et al.*, 2015). Considering the aspects addressed, it is understood that the areas of social

The family for being more experienced with the child seeks to dialogue with the management team, thus explaining all the behavior of them during their day to day. United to school with the family is the most important measure for improving the life of the autistic child. For this inclusion will result in the child feeling more confident during his / her development in school and in society (SILVA, NUNES, SOBRAL, 2019). Thus, in the current perspective of inclusion, it is expected that the autistic student will enter into regular education and that equal opportunities will occur in them, so that these students can develop like the others. However, many doubts are present in this educational process, we are still crawling in search of answers, so the importance of the exchange of information and experiences is paramount to contribute and heal with the

frequent doubts (LEAL, 2014). Based on this assumption, Monteiro and Ribeiro (2018) emphasize that students with ASD can achieve a high level of learning, have a profession, depending almost exclusively on the personal conditions, the quality of the stimuli received in the family and social environment and also the pedagogical investments, quality education, and how much is believed to be capable. In this process, Special Education can be decisive in the process of initial stimulation and it is up to the teacher to work with his children, developing these abilities to practice daily activities, to participate in family activities, to develop their right to citizenship and even to develop a professional activity.

### **Category 3: Inclusion of the child with autism in the perception of the family.**

In this category, only one article was selected, in which its variables are described in Table 4. When considering the situation of the inclusion of students with disabilities, the role of family members becomes even more relevant, since the learner tends to require an even greater involvement of these in their care. Schmidt (2004) shows that mothers of children with autism can assume, almost exclusively, the direct care of the child as a central function in their lives. This demand occupies most of their time, necessarily implying the absence of other demands, such as schoolchildren. Vargas and Schmidt (2014) report that the identification of a fairly stable pattern in the relationship between parents and school when it comes to meeting the particular educational needs of these students. According to the author, the parents of students with autism tend to make incessant searches for information about possibilities and limitations of the child's condition, acquiring a broad knowledge on the subject. In this dynamic, they end up becoming experts in the subject and using this knowledge to confront the knowledge of the school and teachers in the search for solutions for the inclusion of the child. In this way, the greatest difficulty for families is often to isolate the child, taking an attitude of leaving it in the house and not take it to school, thus hindering their school development. This is because the family is ashamed of the child because it is autistic; the family instead of isolating should seek help to make this child develop cognitively and have a better future (SILVA, NUNES, SOBRAL, 2019).

### **Final considerations**

The objective of the present study was to carry out a systematic review of Brazilian articles that deal with autism in the context of school inclusion. From the analysis of the articles, it was possible to perceive that this theme is approached in three areas: student, teacher and family. Given this, it was possible to understand, to know and to understand a little about autism and throughout the study to have a theoretical basis for the results and discussion presented highlighting that the educator has to be patient, participative and active, and from his various inquiries, follow up and study, therefore, can change and bring what is best for the learner in the learning process. Through the analysis of the studies it was noticed how much it is necessary that there are some adjustments in the inclusive proposal, as well as one can observe how much the involved ones are presented, touched and enriched with this experience at least, gratifying. It is also important to carry out studies in this area, since they may serve as a basis for future research, in order to contribute to our inclusion strategies aimed at this audience.

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