International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)
E-ISSN: 2582-2160 ● Website: www.ijfmr.com ● Email: editor@ijfmr.com

Adapting Trust–Based Relational Intervention with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Exploring General Education Teachers' Experiences

Hilaria Miguel Manuguid[1], Bryan V. Catama[2]

[1,2]Saint Louis University

Abstract

The increasing prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in general education settings poses challenges for teachers addressing complex behavioral needs. Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) has shown promise in creating supportive classroom environments, yet its practical implementation by general education teachers remains under-researched. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of general education teachers in adapting and implementing TBRI strategies to mitigate the behavior of students with ASD in their classrooms. This further employed a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of eight general education teachers. Using an Aide-Memoire during interviews, the research gained an in-depth understanding of the teachers' perspectives. Data were analyzed using a phenomenological method. Results indicated that the lived experiences of general education teachers in adapting Trust-Based Relational Intervention to students with ASD highlighted the teachers' relational support empowerment, relational behavior shaping, adaptive, resilient efforts, and inclusive adaptive support. The findings of this study demonstrate that the adaptation of TBRI principles in the classroom not only empowered teachers but also enabled them to become transformative educators, significantly enhancing their ability to support and engage students with ASD through enhanced responsiveness, a strengthened role as behavioral shapers, fostered adaptive resiliency and increased inclusive supportiveness. Future research could examine the long-term effects of TBRI principles on teachers' growth and its impact on the academic and social outcomes of students with ASD, focusing on how enhanced teacher qualities influence both teacher effectiveness and student development.

Keywords: Trust-Based Relational Intervention, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Inclusive Education, Behavioral Interventions, Emotional Development, Social Development, Adaptation Strategies, Transformative Education

Teaching students with ASD in a general education classroom can be a challenging and often stressful process. However, it is the responsibility of the teacher to help every student reach their greatest potential (Broderick, 2017). According to recent studies, researchers have documented an increasing worldwide trend in the rate of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnoses over the past few decades (Li et al., 2022; Lord et al., 2018; Pensado-López et al., 2020). ASD is characterized as a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition typically manifesting as challenges with social communication and interaction alongside restrictive or repetitive behaviors and interests (World Health Organization, 2023). As the population of students with ASD being served in general education classrooms continues to grow substantially,

mainstream teachers face the mounting responsibility of meeting these learners' diverse array of academic and social-emotional needs (Al Jaffal, 2022; Hunt, 2011).

As defined by the World Health Organization (2023), autism, also known as autism spectrum disorder, is characterized by a degree of challenges with social interaction and communication, including difficulty transitioning from one activity to another and atypical reactions to senses. Approximately 40% of children with autism were put in general education classrooms for at least 80% of the day in 2015 when approximately 91% of students with autism in the United States were in this setting (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Furthermore, 1 in 36 children in the age group of 8 years old had autism in 2020 (CDC, 2023).

Since the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act outlined the rights and services available to children with disabilities, which contributed to schools being more inclusive, individuals with autism spectrum disorders are now able to engage in traditional educational settings (Hunt, 2011). Due to this, educational interventions usually make use of social cues, which comprise nonverbal signs, including body language and facial emotions (Yandell, 2021). Research has shown that people with autism spectrum disorder struggle to relate to other people, particularly when their absence of social cues is the main cause of their lack of trust (Yang et al., 2016). Although it was once proven that supportive relationships in the lives of people with autism spectrum disorder have been built on trust, data still show that the quality of relationships between people with autism and their support providers can be an important element in effective support, which necessitates that there is much to learn about the social worlds of individuals with autism (Robledo & Donnellan, 2016).

According to O'Nions et al. (2017), behavioral issues are common in the social environments of people with autism, especially with traits like self-harm, aggression, running away, and property damage. Additionally, inappropriate behavior in public spaces, such as extreme irritability, frustration, distress, meltdowns, and persistent insubordination, poses challenges for parents, caregivers, and educators. Nonetheless, social and communication difficulties, as well as repetitive and restricted behaviors that vary in intensity between individuals, are the hallmarks of autism, which makes it challenging to address in a general education classroom setting (Lord et al., 2018). Although interventions are critical to supporting students with ASD, there is limited evidence exploring classroom applications. Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) has emerged as one approach showing promise in fostering the social, emotional, and academic development of vulnerable youth, including those with ASD (Purvis et al., 2013; Razuri et al., 2015).

Children with autism may struggle to establish meaningful social connections because of a wide range of social interaction issues, which include issues with social communication, a lack of awareness of social cues, a lack of empathy, repetitive behaviors, routine adherence, and intense interests (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2020). Inclusion practices will permeate general education teachers to foster social learning, acceptance, and social standing for students with autism and are made possible by safeguarding children's access to education through practices that frequently focus on better social acceptance and social communication—where peers play a crucial role in the outcome (Campbell, 2023). Through IDEA, the Special Education Act was created as direction for educators on how to offer early intervention and related services to qualified students with learning disabilities to guarantee disabled students' families that their children or wards are evaluated, watched after, and helped in all areas of school (Ellis, 2013).

It has been known that autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong condition where the individual benefits from interventions that can reduce symptoms and increase skills and abilities (Wang & Krata, 2017). Peer-mediated techniques, group-based social skills training, and adult-led, customized skill training are common intervention strategies used in education to support social outcomes for children and youth with autism (Odom et al., 2021). Also, developmental interventions are examined as they involve focusing on abilities that children on the autism spectrum either lack or exhibit slowly but are thought to be essential to learning. Examples of these abilities include taking turns during play sequences and observing and mimicking the actions of others (Piaget, 2013).

According to Purvis (2013), autism spectrum disorder is based on social and communication deficits and repetitive behaviors, so TBRI is used to help these individuals build trusting relationships, empowering them by providing basic needs, security, and predictability, correct their maladaptive behavior, and achieve better outcomes moving forward. However, there is still a hunger for understanding how TBRI is implemented by general education teachers and perceived to impact students' behavior on students with ASD (Stipp, 2021). To address this, the present study aims to qualitatively investigate the experiences of general education teachers applying TBRI strategies in inclusive school environments, focusing on adapting methods and perceiving influence on student behavior outcomes. Consequently, educators must adjust to meet the needs of these students while adhering to the laws and regulations that mandate that qualified teachers teach students with autism in the least restrictive environment possible (Al Jaffal, 2022). Teachers now have greater responsibilities to understand how traits linked to ASD can affect student performance, academic profiles of individuals across content areas, and interventions proven to be effective in improving academic outcomes in order to address the social, behavioral, and academic needs of these students (Hammel & Hourigan, 2020).

Individuals with autism spectrum experience all programs and procedures implemented in regular schools, which include the Trust-Based Relational Intervention that aims to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children since interventions are applied and used with youth of all ages and at all risk levels (Crawley et al., 2020; Purvis et al., 2013). In line with these, the teachers' and caregivers' understanding of how to adapt TBRI to the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder is critical to creating a predictable, trusting environment for a child in desperate need of stability (Naigles & Fein, 2017). The Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is a model that trains caregivers to provide efficient support and intervention for vulnerable individuals (Razuri et al., 2015; Purvis et al., 2013). A variety of behavioral issues in children can be treated using the Trust-Based Relational Intervention (Ní Chobhthaigh & Duffy, 2018; Purvis et al., 2013).

Purvis and Cross (2013) assert that TBRI has a solid foundation in the humanitarian principles of neuropsychological theory and research and is created for children who, in one way or another, have relationships in their homes, foster placements, or institutions that are frequently linked to maltreatment and neglect. In addition, the principles are applied in many schools and other contexts, and children and adolescents of all ages and at-risk levels respond favorably to them (Purvis et al., 2013).

TBRI contains three sets of guiding principles: connecting, empowering, and correcting. Connecting is the creation of engaging approaches to make bonds with the students (Purvis et al., 2015). Since the TBRI focuses on developing relationships, teachers must be able to target four skills, which include the ability to give, the ability to seek care, the ability to negotiate, and the ability to feel at ease in one's own skin (Cassidy, 2001). As it unites the relationship between teacher and student, the idea of connection also plays a significant part in at-risk behavior handlings (Dombo & Sabatino, 2019). Students' emotional,

social, and intellectual development may increase after teachers learn to connect with them (Purvis et al., 2015). Empowering is stated as focusing on meeting the child's bodily needs in order to make the kid feel safe, making it a core tenet of TBRI (Fleming, 2017; O'Byrne, 2018). It has two strategies: the first is physiological, which addresses the child's physical needs by addressing things like sensory needs, blood sugar, and hydration; the second is ecological, which includes daily rituals and routines like transitions, scaffolding, and other guided support and facilitation of learning that are appropriate to the child's level and address the child's external environment (Broom, 2015; Fleming, 2017; Purvis et al., 2013). Correcting is a positive strategy to mold the child's beliefs while defusing anxiety because the foundational idea of TBRI is that it is effective when the process is focused on teaching and strengthening the relationship rather than the opposite and that this can be done while correcting and addressing a child's behavioral issues (Fleming, 2017; Purvis et al., 2013). Although this method of correcting is structured and simple to understand, the process may be difficult because the first objective of correcting should be to keep the teacher or parent connected to the child and not disrupt the relationship, the second objective is to ensure the child's contentment by ending the episode of behavior without being discouraged or shamed, and the third objective is to change the behavior to a positive change (Fleming, 2017; Oliver et al., 2011; Purvis et al., 2013).

When experienced teachers report higher levels of emotional distress for themselves and their students, Stipp (2021), in his study, has proven that TBRI is socially acceptable and valuable. Further, Stephenson and Yost (2023) noted in their study that the participants listed a number of benefits of TBRI, such as improved child outcomes and self-development. Also, a strong correlation was found between the student's attachment level and the caregiver's TBRI expertise, indicating that higher levels of TBRI principles' expertise were positively linked to higher self-reported attachment levels between caregivers and their children (Nielsen, 2014). Finally, teaching and applying trust-based relational intervention (TBRI) has proven successful in 50 states and 40 countries, including adoptive families, biological families, courts, schools, care communities for survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation, juvenile justice systems, residential treatment centers, institutional care (orphanages), law enforcement, child welfare organizations, foster care agencies, and foster families (Skellenger, 2014).

This research was guided by several theoretical foundations. The constructivist theory and epistemology are significant philosophical presuppositions that are pertinent to this investigation. Piaget (2013) and Vygotsky (1974) are two theories in this area of research. Constructivist theories emphasize how information and skills are acquired by children gradually and as a part of normal developmental stages (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Also, social constructivist theories contend that children learn most of their information and abilities via self-discovery and are the main sources of inspiration for developmental procedures (Vygotskiĭ et al., 1978).

In order to call for a whole-school approach that is inclusive of all, including the vulnerable, and enable them to adopt a highly structured classroom that eradicates fear, trauma, and discrimination, the TBRI was primarily introduced to benefit children's safety and good relationships to school (Lackey, 2021). With these, TBRI has been implemented in the school of the target respondents for more than three years, where results showed that teachers understood TBRI and provided specific tools to help students feel safe in the school environment, thereby improving academic performance (Lackey, 2021) and case studies have been completed (Kinney et al., 2017; Purvis et al., 2015; Walsh & Bernstein, 2022). The school of the target respondents' practices inclusion that permeates general education teachers to foster social learning, acceptance, and social standing for students with autism and is made possible by safeguarding children's

access to education through practices that frequently focus on better social acceptance and social communication—where peers play a crucial role in the outcome (Campbell, 2023). Teachers receive training on the use of TBRI every school year during pre-service, according to the former principal of the target school respondent, as documented in the school's development plan which included the pre-service, in-service, and post-service training. She added that in order to strengthen the technique throughout implementation, this training is extended every month through in-services that center on classroom monitoring. Lastly, she reaffirmed that post-service trainings are held with the faculty, staff, and administrators at the end of every school year to evaluate the highs and lows of implementation (A. Scott, personal communication, October 3, 2023).

The efforts made in schools to be TBRI-informed in order to counteract student behaviors have been analyzed by a number of academic domains using a range of study techniques; however, the contributions made by general education teachers with students of ASD have gotten less attention (Thomas et al., 2019). Further, McNally (2021) recommended conducting research to examine what teachers or therapists for people with intellectual disabilities would look like and what effect it would have as an intervention in their scope research review on the experiences of people with disability and their behavioral implications. In addition, the majority of the studies on TBRI (Belsky, 2019; Nelson et al., 2020) were conducted using a mixed method of research, and case studies have been completed in terms of academic growth (Kinney et al., 2017; Purvis et al., 2015; Walsh & Bernstein, 2022), but a full analysis of the reactions and practical experiences of educators managing the behavior of kids with autism spectrum disorder has not yet been conducted.

There is limited research on how general education teachers adapt and implement TBRI strategies to mitigate the behaviors of students with ASD in the classroom. The experiences and perspectives of these teachers have not been thoroughly examined. Thus, this research aimed to explore the experiences of general education teachers in adapting and implementing TBRI strategies to mitigate the behavior of students with autism spectrum disorder in their classrooms. Specifically, this study sought an answer to the question:

What shared experiences do general education teachers have when utilizing trust-based relational intervention (TBRI) to address the behaviors of students with autism spectrum disorders?

It is imperative that more thought be given to how intervention strategies complement neurodiversity, which encompasses people with autism spectrum disorder (Leadbitter, 2021) and assistance for ASD children in conventional classroom settings (Hastings et al., 2021). With these, the use of TBRI was implored to reduce behavioral problems effectively, so future researchers were encouraged to examine behavioral improvements, particularly among individuals with risky behaviors (Razuri et al., 2015). Also, this study will encourage educators to conduct their own research on trust-based practices, which would increase the quantity of TBRI literature. Research in this area will contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon by examining the methods teachers use and the first-hand knowledge they share with children with ASD. The importance of mitigating challenges from shared experiences gathered in the research will be beneficial to reinforce the importance of making connections across relational interventions (Parsons, 2018) especially for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. Findings from this study could also improve general education teachers' understanding of how special education teachers interact with students when using TBRI in the classroom. Since TBRI is being used for the social and academic development of students with ASD, the findings of this study will be helpful to general and special education teachers. Teachers in special education and general education can increase their

understanding of how to deal with and affect the learning of children with ASD by examining the shared experiences of the teachers. The findings of this study will highlight the need for support services to meet the needs of individuals with ASD in schools (Casseus, 2022). Finally, this research can be an agent to transform a school's policy in developing an intervention of their own practice to improve the quality of education (Hofmann & Ilie, 2022).

Method

Study Design

This study utilized a phenomenological approach, with an Aide-Memoire that was used during interviews to explore teachers' perspectives on their experiences implementing Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) for behaviors of students with autism. An Aide-Memoire is a concise summary of key elements that improve the logical flow and comprehensiveness of a work (Abbas, 2009). A priori coding was completed in designing the interview question set, referring to pre-existing concepts that guide the study (Saldana, 2021). Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) pointed out that providing an understanding of the situation in which the story is told is a qualitative study. Furthermore, Patton (1990) stated that in order to avoid errors associated with a particular method, researchers must use multiple methods by providing cross-data validity checks because strengthening the information that has been collected is always desirable.

Further, this study utilized a descriptive phenomenological method to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences in implementing Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) for behaviors of students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Unlike relying solely on existing literature, a qualitative approach using the descriptive method allows participants to freely share their personal narratives without being restricted by pre-set objectives (Creswell, 2007). Aligned with phenomenological research, this study aimed to advance current knowledge by attaining a deeper grasp of the phenomenon of implementing TBRI for autism spectrum disorder students from the teacher's perspective (Merleau-Ponty & Smith, 2018). Specifically, it examined teachers' first-hand experiences in applying TBRI principles to autism spectrum disorder students. As Creswell (2013) highlights, it is important to first document participants' experiences before analyzing the underlying mechanisms of a phenomenon.

This research gathered rich, descriptive data on implementing TBRI for autism spectrum disorder students by taking a "fresh" perspective of teachers' lived experiences. Bracketing one's initial thoughts, emotions, and perceptions can enhance openness to an event (King & Valle, 1977). Accordingly, this study documented participants' experiences in the intervention, particularly for students with autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, it analyzed the pedagogical approaches and encounters of teachers in general education classrooms during the implementation as an integral part of the research process. The goal of phenomenological research is to elucidate specific lived experiences (Clandinin, 2007).

Participants

To accomplish this goal, the researcher collected data from general education teachers in one of the elementary schools on the west side of Jacksonville, Florida, who used Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) with students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, drawing on their real-world experiences for three (3) school years. The overall group of students with ASD that general education teachers work with in the general education classroom has high-functioning autism (Broderick, 2017) or comorbid with other neurological disorders (Broderick, 2017). The participants in the research were the school's general education teachers who have received specialized training and coaching on how to use

TBRI with ASD children in inclusive classrooms. Studying TBRI teaching strategies is worthwhile, as demonstrated by the responses from general education teachers. Thus, the chosen teacher respondent satisfied the requirements of handling children with ASD particularly and can produce a wealth of data for the current phenomenological investigation.

Procedure

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a researcher can gain a better understanding of the phenomena and information by devoting enough time to capture the full range of the participants' voices. In line with this, the researcher sustained a prolonged engagement with the participants to substantiate the data gathered and then summarize the content of each question to analyze all the data-driven insights by supporting it with vast concepts and statements from experts at the same time ensuring that all of the participants' experiences and perspectives are truthfully archived, recorded, and represented.

Interviews were conducted with general education teachers who qualified for the criteria and were continued until the data reached a satisfactory saturation threshold. Dukes (1984) suggests that phenomenological research should include 3 to 10 participants. Criteria sampling was used because all participants must have experience implementing TBRI with students with ASD. The study requires the identification and selection of educators knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2009). The participants' understanding, commitment, appraisal of significance, and depth of involvement, along with their capacity to express their experiences in an engaging, relevant, and insightful way, were considered (Bernard, 2013; Spradley, 2016). Since the research made use of inclusion, the criteria were focused on general education teachers who have taught at least one student with ASD, have been practicing TBRI for three years or more, can communicate effectively, understand the study's goal, and have given their voluntary consent to participate. Teachers in general education who have students with ASD but have been using TBRI for less than three years were excluded.

In-depth, face-to-face interviews with general education teachers were conducted in order to get insight into their experiences using TBRI to support students with autism spectrum disorder in the classroom. The proficiency and understanding of the general education teachers in the application of TBRI were described using qualitative measurements. After the approval from the Dean of Saint Louis University's School of Advance Studies, the participants who met the criteria were asked for their willingness to participate in the study. The school administrators' consent was also acquired before any data was collected. The consent of the participants was then acquired after the research locality had given its approval.

Each participant was interviewed lasting 30-60 minutes on average (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Through the interviews, the researcher can ascertain the various experiences and challenges encountered in implementing the TBRI approach. Subsequently, a comprehensive analysis of the findings was presented with a detailed discussion. Prior to interviews, participants received consent forms ensuring the confidentiality of their information. The researcher established a comfortable environment for participants to share their lived experiences naturally. The primary method of data collection for this phenomenological descriptive research was a semi-structured, in-depth interview that begins with open-ended inquiries and moves into a casual, flexible approach. During the interview, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to use as a guide for evaluating and classifying their answers. When the participant unintentionally mentioned the names of students or individuals involved who were at risk, the researcher hid that information in the transcription and removed it from the tape after the data had been collected and examined.

Further, the research included semi-structured and informal interview questions directly related to teachers' real-world experiences implementing the intervention for autism spectrum disorder students that included documentation. Interviews adhered to established ethical research guidelines and protocols.

Ethics

Within the parameters established by the school district of Florida, the present principal of the school gave her approval for this study. Participants who were general education teachers got information about the study's objectives, findings, and interview transcripts. Prior to the collection of data, each participant was given written informed consent that personal information would be kept confidential and was assured that the data gathered would be used solely for research purposes only. Participants were informed that the data gathered during the interview would not be shared with anybody outside research, and nothing would be attributed to their names. They were also assured that the knowledge that will be gathered from this research will be shared with them and the community before it is made widely available to the public. The researcher also clarified that participants are free to leave the study at any time without facing any consequences, even after providing their consent. A token of appreciation was sent to each participant as a thank you for their participation in the study.

Information and data obtained during the study were kept confidential. Participants were assured that all their personal information, including the data collected, would be kept secure and used solely for research purposes. This is to ensure that participants will be protected. Furthermore, the researcher also provided an approved researcher-participant agreement for the collection and protection of research data, as well as participant protection against harm caused by breaches of confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were categorized, archived, and analyzed using Colaizzi's methods in descriptive phenomenology. Important statements related to the topic being studied were taken from each transcript. These statements were recorded, with the pages, lines, and numbers noted; from these important statements, meanings were developed; these meanings were then grouped into themes and categories; the study's conclusions were combined to provide a thorough explanation of the phenomenon being studied, followed by a description of the phenomenon's basic structure. Furthermore, the researcher exchanged the experiences and findings with other researchers throughout the process of gathering and interpreting data, creating trust in the findings by eliminating reflections on biases, assumptions, and prejudices.

The data and documents collected from the interviews were collated; therefore, multiple sources of data collection were used, i.e., different data sources were used to verify and cross-check the findings (Patton, 1990). Data were analyzed to answer research questions and were cross-referenced with similarities and differences among participants. In addition, documentation refers to any information that exists in written or printed form for public or private consumption and is available for researchers to analyze (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Thus, the participants' interview results, messages, and printed versions of the class layout were collected as data sources. The researcher attempted to examine closely what the participants were saying in the interview to the typical class layout where a student with ASD is placed in the classroom. Finally, validation of the findings was sought from research participants to compare the researcher's results with their lived experiences.

Results

The interview produced rich and varied lived experiences of general education teachers in adapting Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) for students with ASD. A phenomenological approach using Colaizzi's method was employed to analyze how teachers' perceptions and practices evolved through their interactions with students. The shared experiences were organized into four themes: (1) Relational Support Empowerment; (2) Relational Behavior Shaping; (3) Adaptive Resilient Efforts; and (4) Inclusive Adaptive Support.

Relational Support Empowerment

It was evident that the participants are attuned and creative teachers who adapt to the unique learning needs of students with ASD by offering tailored support to promote academic and personal growth. In addition, most of the statements of participants convey the idea of teachers who are sensitive and proactive in addressing the needs of their students with ASD. Meador (2019) described that a structured classroom tends to be safe, allowing learners to have fun while concentrating on their studies and learners are most likely to flourish and make academic and personal progress in an organized learning environment. Most of the participants had a strong structure in their classroom when they adapted and applied TBRI techniques to connect, empower, and correct concepts for their students with ASD. The participants shared the idea that the adaptation of TBRI allowed them to use their creativity to create a classroom structure based on rituals and routines. They shared that they have created an environment-friendly classroom and arranged the placement and locations of students with ASD to make each student with ASD feel like he or she belongs. Participant 8 noted that they have a strong structure in the classroom to set the setting, and they have to make sure to have rituals and routines practiced and observed daily to aid the needs of students with ASD. Consequently, adaptation of TBRI allowed them to follow a structure without disregarding the set standard by the school district. They adapted it to support the district's expectation and to have each student with ASD reach his or her full potential as stated in their Individualized Education Program. In Florida, general education teachers are required to attend to the needs of students with special needs with reports on supports and strategies for behavior management especially if behavior interferes with the student's learning or the learning of other students in the classroom (Solodev, 2022). TBRI contains three sets of guiding principles: connecting, empowering, and correcting.

Connecting is the creation of engaging approaches to make bonds with the students (Purvis et al., 2015). The connecting principle of TBRI with their consistent adaptation aids them in giving maximum supervision and full support to a student with ASD, as exemplified by the following responses.

P4: I tell and show my student with ASD that I care for him a lot. Asks questions during class meetings about how he's doing. Most of the time, the student with ASD responds in a weird way, but I have to let the classmates listen and be respectful to whatever he mentions in order for us to gain his trust; we try to connect by understanding his statements and actions in context.

P5: I provide a constant response to her emotional needs. It is draining me but it is better than having a power struggle with her because it is my way to continuously gain trust from her so that the structure in my classroom will not be disrupted.

P1: I developed a personal attachment style because she also is so attached to me. Like, I have instincts on how to get her attention, and I have to let her feel that I will always be available for her but strategize ways in order not to take the important time of the rest of her classmates too.

P2: Because ASD is such a huge spectrum, I learned and can attest that it is about seeing what need they have that needs to be filled. Every year, a kid that has ASD, when I reflect on how they were at the beginning with a lot of challenges, there were significant improvements at the end of the year. Examples are seeing them sitting with a buddy, I see them at least doing their work! And that is fulfilling to me as a teacher I also learned that I can automatically empathize with a person on the spectrum.
P3: I bond with the students but have to make sure that we are not co-dependent on each other. We conversed about their interests like dinosaurs and the like.
P8: I usually dig into her wants and preferences to know her more, and I let her feel that I know her by asking her how she is every day with mindful listening and responding.
P3: It is transformative in the sense that, at least in my proactiveness, I have made a difference in the life of my student with ASD. Meeting the personal relationship with the students with ASD and their understanding that I care about them is already making a difference.
Empowering is stated as focusing on meeting the child's bodily needs in order to make the kid feel safe, making it a core tenet of TBRI (Fleming, 2017; O'Byrne, 2018). The Empowering Principle of TBRI, with their consistent adaptation, aids the participants in meeting the physiological and ecological needs of a student with ASD, as exemplified by the following responses.
P2: I make sure she's hydrated; I provide a water bottle for her and for the whole class and plenty of sensory toys.
P5: I maintain the daily routine, keep him hydrated, and make sure to give him a heads-up before transitions or unexpected changes and movements to prevent meltdowns.
P1: I read her a book on a routine schedule and developed transitioning actions like clapping or even rhymes. I ask what she learns from the book read and acknowledge her answers with celebration, no matter how simple it is.
P3: I have a sensory bin for him to have venues to express and play because sometimes, these sensory toys can aid in their way of expressing themselves.
P4: The significant experience I would say is the achievement of my student with ASD when he scored above and beyond the expected score from him during the end-of-the-year assessment. I am sure the strategies and the adaption of TBRI practices have aided me and my ASD student to get through the year with high colors. Finally, seeing him interact with other classmates towards the end of the year is an awesome fulfillment for me. Those significant growth academically and socially are evident to me and are definitely fulfilling.
P5: The fact that I was able to draw recommendations about my student with ASD, that she would be better off in a setting where there is less aggravation, is a significant experience for me. While one of my students with ASD has to be referred to another setting, I take it as an advantage for her. I was positive and implemented all the needed TBRI principles with her, and it has helped her survive each day in school. Every student I had with ASD was unique from each situation, but I always thought of those experiences as my foundation to deal with the next student with ASD that I will be handling. If a student with ASD trusts you, they will soon follow.
Correcting is a positive strategy to mold the child's beliefs while defusing anxiety because the foundational idea of TBRI is that it is effective when the process is focused on teaching and strengthening the relationship rather than the opposite and that this can be done while correcting and addressing a child's behavioral issues (Fleming, 2017; Purvis et al., 2013). The Correcting Principle of TBRI, with its

consistent adaptation, aids the participants in diffusing anxiety while correcting and addressing the behavior of the student with ASD, as exemplified by the following responses.

P7: I usually give incentives to reward but I may take away some incentives to make her feel the degree of her mistake and then talk to her calmly about it. Tantrums or meltdowns are expected but better than ignored.

P8: I correct her mistake instantaneously and consistently with calmness.

P6: I talk to him calmly and explain things in a sweet voice so that he will not be aggravated. Sometimes, diversion to a different task would work to instantaneously stop the inappropriate behavior.

P4: I always encourage him to behave and do what is right by modeling and rehearsing it with him in a kind and respectful voice. Also, I have to know him more for him to accept the corrections. The behavior chart also works for him because he at least knows the set expectations, and he knows if he did not do it because there is no check mark on it.

P3: I talk to him gently without yelling, I make sure he listens to me when I'm correcting his behavior, so I must be near him. Proximity is important for him because he doesn't acknowledge a general reminder.

P7: Seeing my student with ASD finish the whole school year despite all the challenges is, to me, the most significant experience because, without TBRI, my student with ASD might have been in the worst situations or me as a teacher into burnout condition.

P8: My way of having my student with ASD identify his emotions for us to help him regulate it is a significant experience with the aid of TBRI.

Relational Behavior Shaping

It emerged from the participants' lived experiences that they have strategic methods for assessing the behavior of students with ASD, coupled with a strong dedication to shaping these behaviors to enhance the classroom environment. Furthermore, the participants' experiences convey that the teachers actively influence and guide the behavior of their students with ASD. In addition, the participants mostly observed a gradual impact of TBRI on the change of behavior of students with ASD, thus affecting a manageable classroom culture. Examples are when Participants observed that implementing TBRI principles contributed to reduced behavioral issues and fostered a more inclusive, manageable classroom environment. The impact of TBRI on students' behavior with their consistent adaptation helps the participants create a manageable environment and a positive classroom culture as exemplified by the following responses.

P6: I noticed a lesser power struggle. My students with ASD have been understood by most of my regular class so that they don't need to compare my treatment of him over my treatment of them as regular students.

P7: Over the years, the tendency of regular kids is to bully a student with ASD. The bullying aggravates the student with ASD, and then chaos arises because the student with ASD begins to throw tantrums, be angry, or have a meltdown. The worst is when he tries to hit his classmates. With TBRI, most of the time, there is a give-and-take relationship, and much understanding and accepting behavior is observed.

P2: Well, it was always chaos at first, but having TBRI implemented religiously slowly tamed everyone – not completely, but at least there is not much chaos. I do give my students needs in terms of physical and environmental. I do fit it when I can to teach her to regulate her emotions. But I make constant adjustments, and it depends on what triggers her.

P3: It was on a generally acceptable classroom culture, at least. Well, it will never be perfect, but at least there is direction. It was built from the relationship that I have established with him, so when I looked at

them with the proper eye contact, he would understand that the behavior was either appropriate or inappropriate.
P6: It is with great joy to witness my student with ASD collaborating with classmates without altercation; that, to me, is the significant contribution of using TBRI in my classroom.

Adaptive Resilient Efforts

In their journey of adapting interventions, it was evident from the teachers' shared experiences that they have become resilient, persistently navigating challenges in their ASD students' behavior. They not only adapt interventions effectively but also modify them as needed to meet the student's needs. As proof of being perseverant, the participants consistently adapted TBRI strategies and incorporated individualized modifications to address instances of aggression such as personalized behavior charts and tailored incentives. The consistency of implementation made a radical change in behavioral issues like aggravation in the classroom. The participants went above and beyond by using interviews with parents and creating inventories of the student's likes and dislikes. Also, the participants maximized their resources by using the general population of the classroom to model appropriate behavior to the students with ASD. For instance, classmates were encouraged to demonstrate behaviors such as raising their hand to speak, using polite greetings like 'please' and 'thank you,' and appropriately responding to social cues, such as making eye contact or waiting for their turn in group activities. These peer modeling strategies helped the student with ASD observe and replicate social interactions and classroom expectations, providing concrete examples of acceptable behaviors in various contexts. The use of their personal instincts was also boosted in building trust and further relationships with the students with ASD. Since the participants observed a challenge in the progress of students with ASD in terms of their academics and social growth, they empowered them by giving immediate rewards for simple achievements. They gradually train the students with ASD on the value of patience and self-sufficiency, especially in regulating their meltdowns. The intensification and modification of TBRI in dealing with the student's behavior, accompanied by the participants' consistent implementation, empowered the students with ASD in regulating their behavior, as exemplified by the following responses.

P7: I empower my student with ASD by providing her with a calendar, a schedule, and a behavior chart to let her know what is expected and teach her to be accepting when changes occur.
P1: I did a behavior management plan with social skills to check if she at least did one or two tasks for at least 5 minutes. I reward her for small success in the classroom, like when she was seated for 5 mins in the reading corner without disrupting me as the teacher and the classmates.
P2: I usually set conditions for him by having access to the calm corner with all the sensory stuff. He may take time in there because I understand it's hard to pinpoint what triggers the meltdown but after calming down, I need to be firm to direct him to listen to me to be able to proceed to his academic lessons. I had to adjust at any point at any time.
P3: It depends on the need of the child with ASD, so most of the time, finding the interest that builds the bond is to be used like an inventory check for the reward and incentive. But if I am doing my reflection, it is the building of a relationship with them that I use my instincts not necessarily to let them like me but also me like what they want.
P4: I push him to do more than what is expected of him. I usually include him in a group during small group activities to enhance his social skills. I also prepare a goal chart for him that has simple tasks and

gives him to choose what he wants to work for the day, and he will choose the type of reward that he will be getting if he gets the task done.

P5: Most of the time, I use my personal ways and expenses to make compromises. Bargaining agreement is mostly of reward for example, when she stops disturbing the class, I'll give her time to play with her favorite doll. Since the type of autism that my student has needs a lot of movement, and she's Level 2 non-verbal, I have to find ways to interpret her actions. I have been asking for a buddy that she wants to be with and I at least give venues for her to interact socially. It worked at some point in the days. I also spent lunch with her to continuously gain her trust.

Inclusive Adaptive Support

The teacher participants have developed flexibility in adapting to the needs of students with ASD, as evidenced by their lived experiences. Their adaptable and responsive qualities effectively support the needs of students with ASD, capturing the essence of the teachers' agility in addressing these needs. Participant 1 specifically mentioned that resiliency as a teacher is important from the beginning to the end of the school year. For example: "Teachers observed frequent meltdowns early in the school year and increasing aggression toward the middle and end of the year, prompting adaptations in teaching methods and classroom management." Meltdowns can be worse as they pose a lot of challenges in academic teaching, but as teaching goes along, accompanied by the adaptations of varied teaching methods, a better classroom environment comes along. Participants kept reinventing themselves as they continually used TBRI principles in making adjustments towards the end of the school year with their undivided attention by making a lot of compromises, doing team building, developing further personal relationships with the student and his/her family, by managing and organizing their schedules, and the like. The adaptation of teaching methods in creating a classroom environment enhanced the participants' resiliency, predictability, and consistency by allowing the release of emotions or meltdown, by giving time to process and regulate emotions, by having predictability of schedules to accommodate the needs of students with ASD as exemplified by the following responses.

P3: First, I start with building a relationship with the parent, too, because I wanted to make sure we go hand and hand with the parent to let the child with autism see the consistency

P4: A goal chart is important for my student with ASD to have every day. Each task has at least 5 minutes to be marked accomplished like sitting on a designated chair, following the rest of the classmates in line, etc.

P6: I nurture relationships with students and between students so that my student with ASD feels that he belongs. I encourage them to be a friend to him by creating team-building activities that inspire the student with ASD, considering his aggravation with noise. We use Lego to form bonds and to create conversation.

P1: It is fulfilling to see the progress of the child with ASD, grand or small. Knowing things about her makes me more involved in her life on a positive note, I empowered her through my TBRI strategies, so she makes me feel more connected to her life, too. I may have given her a lot of tough love, but I don't push her.

P8: I make sure that the physical environment in my classroom is organized and not overwhelming with sensory tools, colors, and other materials. I posted the classroom schedule and gave a warning if there was going to be a change, and I gave undivided attention to every student, including my student with ASD, making eye contact and performing handshakes or high-fives.

Finally, the participants' shared experiences revealed transformative and fulfilling journeys, bringing a sense of purpose and growth. Their accounts highlighted themes of strength, autonomy, confidence, and the ability to influence change. Furthermore, their experiences convey that they have undergone personal growth and now feel a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment in their work. These have been evident in the participants' descriptions of experiences in TBRI as transformative, emphasizing the sense of fulfillment gained from observing students' behavior and academic progress. To the participants, being a part of the life of the student with ASD means a lot in regulating their behavior. Participants saw consistent care and sustenance as a critical factor in fostering students' academic progress.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of general education teachers in adapting TBRI to students with ASD. The holistic insight revealed that adapting TBRI directed the participants to be empowered transformative teachers by managing the behavior of students with ASD into a controllable scenario to minimize distraction in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. These findings extend previous problematic behaviors of students with ASD because each student varies in characteristics and needs. Moreover, this study confirms theoretical proposals that TBRI principles are promising to promote social and emotional teaching practices, offering strategies to unite the relationship of general education teachers and students with ASD. However, it all lies in the consistency of practice, partnership with parents, and nurturing perseverance of the teacher. As Purvis and Cross (2013) asserted, TBRI is grounded in the humanitarian principle of neuropsychological theory. This assertion is further supported in the following discussions, which examine the extent to which the findings reinforce the capacity of general education teachers to effectively manage students with ASD versus the displacement of students with ASD because of the lack of the teacher's capacity to handle their behavior as well as potential implications for future research.

Relational Support Empowerment

The intervention encouraged participants to become more responsive, fostering an environment where they were attuned to the needs of students with ASD. It also prompted creativity in adapting interventions, ensuring that students received the support necessary for both academic and social growth. On top of that, the general education teachers connect by creating a bond, giving and receiving care, negotiating, and developing personal attachment without being co-dependent on each other. This study builds on Cassidy (2001) by illustrating how TBRI not only establishes connections but also promotes self-reliance within relationships, differing from Attachment Theory by emphasizing balanced independence alongside connection. Further, his study extends qualitative evidence by Cassidy (2001) when it was highlighted that TBRI focuses on developing relationships, where teachers must be able to target four skills, which include the ability to give, the ability to seek care, the ability to negotiate, and the ability to feel at ease in one's own skin. Consequently, it further encompasses the qualitative evidence of Dombo and Sabatino (2019) that TBRI unites the relationship between teacher and student, and the idea of connection also plays a significant part in at-risk behavior handling. Then, TBRI directed the participants into celebrating small successes, providing physical and environmental needs like hydration, creative play, physical exercises and the like. This extends the qualitative evidence by Broom (2015), Fleming (2017), and Purvis et al. (2013), where physiological needs tackle the child's physical needs by addressing things like sensory needs, blood sugar, and hydration and ecological needs, tackle the child's external environment, which

includes daily rituals and routines like transitions, scaffolding, and other guided support and facilitation of learning. Finally, TBRI sustained the participants in correcting the student with ASD without yelling while maintaining proximity and observing immediate behavior rectification. This further embraces the qualitative evidence of Fleming (2017), Oliver et al.(2011), and Purvis et al.(2013) that this method of correcting is structured and simple to understand, but the process can be difficult because the first objective of correcting should be to keep the teacher connected to the child and will not disrupt the relationship, while also ensuring the child's contentment by ending the episode of behavior without being discouraged or shamed. The third objective is to change the behavior to a positive change.

Relational Behavior Shaping

The participants' lived experiences highlight that effective teachers possess strategic approaches for assessing and responding to the behaviors of students with ASD. These strategies demonstrate the teachers' commitment to fostering a positive classroom environment by shaping student behavior. Additionally, the participants' experiences reflect that teachers play a crucial role in actively guiding and influencing the behavior of students with ASD. This proactive involvement is central to creating an environment that supports both the academic and social development of these students. Also, TBRI directed the participants to regulate the emotions of students with ASD by creating activities and venues for students to learn and relearn how to act appropriately, build relationships, and to trust each other. With these, the classroom is calmer because ASD students have less aggression, lesser power struggles, and lesser physical aggravation where there is less hitting of classmates and teachers. This study builds on Robledo and Donnelan's (2016) work by demonstrating how structured TBRI interventions not only improve relationships but also reduce behavioral issues, a shift from traditional support methods. The findings further support the statement of Naigles and Fein (2017) that caregivers' understanding of how to adapt TBRI to the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder is critical to creating a predictable, trusting environment for a child in desperate need of stability.

Adaptive Resilient Efforts

The teachers' shared experiences reveal a notable resilience in their journey of Adapting interventions for students with ASD. They demonstrated persistence in navigating the challenges posed by students' behaviors, particularly in instances of aggression. The participants not only adapted interventions effectively but also modified them as needed to meet each student's specific needs. A clear example of their perseverance was their consistent use of TBRI strategies, which they tailored to address individual behavioral challenges. This included the use of personalized behavior charts and incentives designed to manage aggression. The consistent application of these strategies resulted in significant improvements, leading to a noticeable reduction in behavioral issues such as classroom aggravation. Further, it was evident that the behavioral issues are extremely happening in a classroom where a student with ASD is around. Building on Lord et al. (2018), this study reveals how TBRI's proactive strategies provide a structured approach for teachers to manage ASD's varied behavioral impacts within general classrooms, which contrasts with more generalized ASD support frameworks. O'Nions et al. (2017) also highlighted that those behavioral issues are common in the social environments of people with autism, especially with traits like self-harm, aggression, running away, and property damage, so the participants' way of mitigating this boosted their instincts of building a personal relationship and gaining trust to be able to at least prevent these behaviors from happening.

Additionally, inappropriate behavior, such as extreme irritability, frustration, distress, meltdowns, and persistent insubordination, poses challenges to general education teachers. Empowering as the tenet of TBRI was then proactively used by the participants in regulating the behaviors of the students with ASD as their doorway to academic teaching. As Purvis et al. (2015) qualitatively stated, students' emotional, social, and intellectual development may increase after teachers learn to connect with them. This is also an affirmation to Fleming (2017), Oliver et al. (2011), and Purvis et al. (2013) where it was found in this study that the general education teachers' goal is to change the inappropriate behavior of students with ASD into a manageable behavior that could pave their path to learning socially and academically.

Inclusive Adaptive Support

In realizing the teachers' lived experiences, it is evident that they have developed significant flexibility in adapting to the needs of students with ASD. Their lived experiences highlight how their adaptability and responsiveness are central to providing effective support. This flexibility not only reflects the teachers' ability to adjust their approaches but also captures the essence of their agility in addressing the evolving needs of students with ASD. Through these qualities, the teachers are able to create a supportive learning environment that promotes the students' growth and success. Additionally, the participants have proven in their lived experiences that TBRI Principles support students in the classroom. However, they should be accompanied by teaching methods, a desirable classroom environment, and a mindful approach to accommodate the needs of students with ASD. Also, the participants noted the importance of parental involvement to sustain the use of TBRI so that the principle will have consistency in its application even when the child with ASD is at home. Similarly, participant 4 reiterated having her language concrete and explicit to make her student with ASD comprehend instructions and directions. Building on Stipp (2021), this study illustrates how TBRI's structured support mitigates emotional distress in teachers and students, particularly through concrete, empathetic communication and consistent behavioral strategies. The result of this study is in solidarity with the quantitative statement of Stephenson and Yost (2023) that TBRI has a number of benefits, such as improved child outcomes and self-development. The lived experiences of the participants have proven the TBRI proactiveness and initiative of general education teachers in providing the physiological and environmental needs of students with ASD.

In the general sense, the participants' shared experiences revealed that their journeys were both transformative and fulfilling, providing them with a profound sense of purpose and growth. Their accounts highlighted key themes of strength, autonomy, confidence, and the ability to influence change in their students with ASD. This personal transformation was further reinforced by the participant's experiences with TBRI, which they described as deeply impactful. They emphasized the fulfillment they gained from witnessing the positive behavioral and academic progress of their students, underscoring the significant role these experiences played in shaping their sense of purpose in their teaching world. While Wang and Krata (2017) highlight ASD as a lifelong condition, this study adds to their work by demonstrating that TBRI can foster selective social connections and meaningful skills development over a school year, enhancing the practical application of their findings. The wide range of social interaction issues, which include issues with social communication, a lack of awareness of social cues, a lack of empathy, repetitive behaviors, routine adherence, and intense interests, have always been issues in the lived experiences of the general education teachers but the inclusion practices with the aid of TBRI permeate general education teachers to foster social learning, acceptance, and social standing. Results of this study coincide with Campbell (2023) when he quantitatively stated that success in social and academic upbringings is made

possible by safeguarding children's access to education through practices that frequently focus on better social acceptance and social communication—where general education teachers and peers play a crucial role in the outcome.

In line with these, the constructivist theory and epistemology, as foundational principles in Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories, as proven by Purvis, Cross, and Pennings (2009), are crucial to the application of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). Both Piaget and Vygotsky emphasize that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction, with Piaget focusing on cognitive development through stages and Vygotsky highlighting the role of social interaction and culture (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). TBRI, which supports students with ASD, aligns with these theories by emphasizing the importance of relationships and the environment in learning with the teachers' lived experiences. TBRI mirrors Piaget's idea of active learning and Vygotsky's focus on teacher-student interactions, using trust and relational security to foster cognitive and emotional growth (Purvis & Cross, 2013). The theory supports the intervention shared as individualized learning, reinforcing the constructivist belief that knowledge is context-dependent and shaped by social and developmental needs (Vygotsky, 1978).

Finally, the invaluable reward for general education teachers in proactively applying TBRI principles with their students with ASD is the sense of fulfillment they derive from the joys and transformations they witness, as evident in their lived experiences despite the challenges they have overcome. It is, therefore, timely to affirm that Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is one of many strategies teachers can use to manage students with ASD. While it does not offer a miraculous solution or magical changes, it holds significant promise, as demonstrated by the lived experiences of teachers. These educators have shared how TBRI has enabled them to facilitate daily academic learning in the classroom better. If this intervention proves transformative for students with ASD, it follows that it can also profoundly impact their typically developing peers, fostering a more inclusive environment and helping all students reach their full potential.

Limitations

This study has provided in-depth insight into the impact of the adaptation of TBRI on students with ASD, holistically accounting lived experiences of general education teachers, perceived as influential. A key limitation is the small, qualitative nature of this study, in addition to the source study sample. The qualitative nature of the study means that the results may not be generalizable to other populations, particularly general education teachers who may have students with varied types of ASD. It is worth reflecting on the nature of the present sample being drawn from a general education and inclusive setting. The participants were trained, and their students with ASD are mostly level 1. It is further important to take note that the least severe kind of autism is level 1, which can nevertheless significantly impact a child's quality of life and is less disruptive than level 2 and 3 autism. This follows the direction of the field, as TBRI principles are consequential to the social and emotional development of students, often in conjunction with reflection on social and academic growth. Therefore, the results of the present study may not fully represent the effectiveness of general education teachers with or without TBRI training, as the cultural background of each school may also play a role. A broader context or longer timeline may be needed to capture TBRI's full impact. Thus, the researcher strongly recommends that future research explore the impact of adapting TBRI to students with other learning settings and other learning needs such as intellectual disability and the like.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the adaptation of TBRI principles in the classroom not only empowered teachers but also enabled them to become transformative educators, significantly enhancing their ability to support and engage students with ASD through enhanced responsiveness, a strengthened role as behavioral shapers, fostered adaptive resiliency and increased inclusive supportiveness. The study derived the findings from the following conclusions: 1) The intervention effectively allowed the participants to enhance their responsiveness and creativity by ultimately supporting the academic and social development of students with ASD; 2) The teachers' lived experiences emphasize the critical role of effective teachers in strategically assessing and shaping the behavior of students with ASD, actively guiding them to foster a positive classroom environment that promotes both academic and social growth; 3) The teachers' shared experiences demonstrate resilience and persistence in adapting and personalizing interventions to address challenging behaviors and reduce issues like classroom aggression; and, 4) The teachers' lived experiences demonstrate their noteworthy flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness in addressing the evolving needs of students with ASD, enabling them to create a supportive learning environment that fosters student growth and success. The teachers' transformative experiences, particularly through TBRI, fostered a profound sense of purpose and growth as they gained fulfillment from witnessing the positive behavioral and academic progress of their students with ASD, reinforcing their autonomy, confidence, and ability to influence change. The findings of this study suggest that adapting TBRI principles in the classroom can significantly transform general education teachers' practices by enhancing their flexibility and enabling them to understand better and meet the individual needs of students with ASD, as demonstrated by the lived experiences shared. Also, these findings revealed the potential of TBRI to enrich general education teachers in developing a highly structured classroom to have a sense of handling the behaviors of students with ASD.

Future research could focus on examining the long-term effects of using TBRI principles on teachers' professional growth and the continued success of these strategies in managing the behaviors of students with ASD. It would also be valuable to investigate how the improved qualities of teachers – such as increased responsiveness, stronger skills in shaping behavior, greater perseverance, enhanced supportiveness, and heightened empowerment impact the academic and social outcomes of students with ASD over time. This could provide deeper insights into how TBRI influences both teacher effectiveness and student development in the classroom.

Conflict of Interest Statement

To ensure transparency and uphold the highest ethical standards, I declare that I have no conflict of interest in relation to the research presented in this manuscript. I have not received any funding, grants, or other financial support from any organization or entity that should be perceived as influencing the results or interpretation of this study. Furthermore, I have no personal relationships, professional affiliations, or competing financial interests that could compromise the objectivity of this work. All authors have reviewed and approved this statement.

References

1. Abbas, N. (2009). Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or Article (Chicago guides to writing, Editing & Publishing). *Sociological Research Online*, *14*(1), 90–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/136078040901400101

2. Al Jaffal, M. (2022). Barriers general education teachers face regarding the inclusion of students with autism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.873248
3. Belsky, M. (2019). The deepest well: Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity. *The Permanente Journal*, *23*(2). https://doi.org/10.7812/tpp/18-075
4. Bernard, H. R. (2013). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage.
5. Bell, E., Bryman, A., Harley, B., & Bryman, A. (2019). *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press.
6. Broderick, T. (2017, March 30). Teaching students with autism spectrum disorders in the general education classroom. *Teach.com.* https://teach.com/resources/teaching-students-with-autism-spectrum-disorders-in-the-general-education-classroom/
7. Broom, C. (2015). Empowering students: Pedagogy that benefits educators and learners. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, *14*(2), 79–86. https://doi.org/10.1177/2047173415597142
8. Campbell, J. (2016, September 1). The importance of peers in inclusive education for individuals with ASD: OAR. *Organization for Autism Research*. https://researchautism.org/oaracle-newsletter/the-importance-of-peers-in-inclusive-education-for-individuals-with-asd/
9. Casseus, M. (2022). Prevalence of co-occurring autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder among children in the United States. *Autism*, *26*(6), 1591–1597. https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613221083279
10. Cassidy, J. (2001). Truth, lies, and intimacy: An attachment perspective. *Attachment & Human Development*, *3*(2), 121–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730110058999
11. Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2006). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Sage publications.
12. Crawley, R. D., Rázuri, E. B., Lee, C., & Mercado, S. (2020). Lessons from the field: Implementing a trust-based Relational Intervention (TBRI) pilot program in a child welfare system. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, *15*(3), 275–298. https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2020.1717714
13. Creswell, J. W., & L., P. C. V. (2009). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage.
14. Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage.
15. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications, Inc.
16. DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, *40*(4), 314–321. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x
17. Dombo, E. A., & Sabatino, C. A. (2019a). *Creating trauma-informed schools: A guide for school social workers and educators*. Oxford University Press.
18. Dukes, S. (1984). Phenomenological methodology in the Human Sciences. *Journal of Religion & Health*, *23*(3), 197–203. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00990785
19. Ellis, J. W. (2013). The law's understanding of intellectual disability as a disability. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, *51*(2), 102–107. https://doi.org/10.1352/1934-9556-51.2.102
20. Fleming, J. (2017, March 27). TBRI® empowering principles. *Child & Family Counseling*. https://jennaflemingcounseling.com/blog-post/tbri-empowering-principles/#:~:text=Empowering%20principles%20is%20a%20term,important%20skills%20like%20self%2Dregulation.

21. Hammel, A. M., & Hourigan, R. M. (2020). Understanding cognition and students with autism spectrum disorder. *Teaching Music to Students with Autism*, 67–86. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190063177.003.0004
22. Hastings, S. E., Hastings, R. P., Swales, M. A., & Hughes, J. C. (2021). Emotional and behavioural problems of children with autism spectrum disorder attending mainstream schools. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, *68*(5), 633–640. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2020.1869414
23. Hofmann, R., & Ilie, S. (2022). A theory-led evaluation of a scalable intervention to promote evidence-based, research-informed practice in schools to address attainment gaps. *Education Sciences*, *12*(5), 353. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12050353
24. Hunt, P. F. (2011). Salamanca statement and IDEA 2004: Possibilities of practice for Inclusive Education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *15*(4), 461–476. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110903131713
25. King, M., & Valle, R. S. (1977). *Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology*. Oxford University Press.
26. Booth, C. (2017). *Keeping families together: The Homebuilders model*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203787786
27. Lackey, C. (2021, May). Building a trauma-informed public school: A case study from the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. *ERIC*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED616042.pdf
28. Leadbitter, K. (2021). Autism family experience questionnaire (AFEQ). *Encyclopedia of Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 485–488. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91280-6_102304
29. Li, Y.-A., Chen, Z.-J., Li, X.-D., Gu, M.-H., Xia, N., Gong, C., Zhou, Z.-W., Yasin, G., Xie, H.-Y., Wei, X.-P., Liu, Y.-L., Han, X.-H., Lu, M., Xu, J., & Huang, X.-L. (2022). Epidemiology of autism spectrum disorders: Global burden of disease 2019 and bibliometric analysis of risk factors. *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fped.2022.972809
30. Lord, C., Elsabbagh, M., Baird, G., & Veenstra-Vanderweele, J. (2018). Autism spectrum disorder. *The Lancet*, *392*(10146), 508–520. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(18)31129-2
31. Meador, D. (2019). *Derrick Meador*. ThoughtCo. https://www.thoughtco.com/derrick-meador-3194224
32. McNally, P., Taggart, L., & Shevlin, M. (2021). Trauma experiences of people with an intellectual disability and their implications: A scoping review. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, *34*(4), 927–949. https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12872
33. Merleau-Ponty, M., & Smith, C. (2018). *Phenomenology of perception*. Franklin Classics.
34. Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
35. Naigles, L. R., & Fein, D. (2017). Looking through their eyes: Tracking early language comprehension in ASD. *Innovative Investigations of Language in Autism Spectrum Disorder*., 49–69. https://doi.org/10.1037/15964-004
36. National Institute on Deafness and other communication disorders. (2020). Definitions. https://doi.org/10.32388/cfh844
37. Nelson, C. A., Bhutta, Z. A., Burke Harris, N., Danese, A., & Samara, M. (2020). Adversity in childhood is linked to mental and physical health throughout life. *BMJ*, m3048. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3048

38. Ní Chobhthaigh, S., & Duffy, F. (2018). The effectiveness of psychological interventions with adoptive parents on adopted children and adolescents' outcomes: A systematic review. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *24*(1), 69–94. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104518786339
39. Nielsen, L. E. (2014). Honors Projects. *Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) for Adopted Children Receiving Therapy in an Outpatient Setting*. https://doi.org/ 165. https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/psych_honproj/165
40. Odom, S. L., Hall, L. J., Morin, K. L., Kraemer, B. R., Hume, K. A., McIntyre, N. S., Nowell, S. W., Steinbrenner, J. R., Tomaszewski, B., Sam, A. M., & DaWalt, L. (2021). Educational interventions for children and youth with autism: A 40-Year perspective. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *51*(12), 4354–4369. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-04990-1
41. Oliver, R. M., Wehby, J. H., & Reschly, D. J. (2011). Teacher classroom management practices: Effects on disruptive or aggressive student behavior. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, *7*(1), 1–55. https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2011.4
42. O'Nions, E., Happé, F., Evers, K., Boonen, H., & Noens, I. (2017). How do parents manage irritability, challenging behaviour, non-compliance and anxiety in children with autism spectrum disorders? A meta-synthesis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *48*(4), 1272–1286. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3361-4
43. Parris, S. R., Dozier, M., Purvis, K. B., Whitney, C., Grisham, A., & Cross, D. R. (2016). Erratum to: Implementing Trust-based Relational Intervention® in a charter school at a residential facility for at-risk youth. *Contemporary School Psychology*, *20*(4), 417–417. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-016-0106-x
44. Parsons, B. M. (2018). The effects of risk, beliefs, and trust in education policy networks: The case of autism and special education. *Policy Studies Journal*, *48*(1), 38–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12246
45. Pensado-López, A., Veiga-Rúa, S., Carracedo, Á., Allegue, C., & Sánchez, L. (2020). Experimental models to study autism spectrum disorders: HiPSCs, rodents and zebrafish. *Genes*, *11*(11), 1376. https://doi.org/10.3390/genes11111376
46. Piaget, J. (1970). *Science of education and the psychology of the child*. Viking Press.
47. Piaget, J. (2013). *The construction of reality in the child*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
48. Piaget, J. (2013). *Play, dreams, and imitation in childhood*. Routledge.
49. Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The psychology of the child*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
50. Purvis, K. B., Cross, D. R., & Pennings, J. S. (2009). Trust-Based Relational Intervention™: Interactive principles for adopted children with special social-emotional needs. *The Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, *48*(1), 3-22. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1939.2009.tb00064.x
51. Purvis, K., & Cross, D. (2013). Trust-Based Relational Intervention: The development of an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention for children in foster care. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *30*(5), 411-422.
52. Purvis, K. B., Cross, D. R., Dansereau, D. F., & Parris, S. R. (2013). Trust-based Relational Intervention (TBRI): A systemic approach to complex developmental trauma. *Child & Youth Services*, *34*(4), 360–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/0145935x.2013.859906
53. Purvis, K. B., Razuri, E. B., Howard, A. R., Call, C. D., DeLuna, J. H., Hall, J. S., & Cross, D. R. (2015). Decrease in behavioral problems and trauma symptoms among at-risk adopted children

following trauma-informed parent training intervention. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, *8*(3), 201–210. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-015-0055-y

54. Razuri, E. B., Hiles Howard, A. R., Parris, S. R., Call, C. D., DeLuna, J. H., Hall, J. S., Purvis, K. B., & Cross, D. R. (2015). Decrease in behavioral problems and trauma symptoms among at-risk adopted children following web-based trauma-informed parent training intervention. *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*, *13*(2), 165–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/23761407.2015.1014123
55. Robledo, J., & Donnellan, A. (2016). Supportive relationships in autism spectrum disorder: Perspectives of individuals with ASD and supporters. *Behavioral Sciences*, *6*(4), 23. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs6040023
56. Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
57. Skellenger, N. (2014, January 28). IDEAL response: Correcting difficult behaviors the TBRI® way. *Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®).* https://myols.net/kpicd/page-content/350
58. Solodev. (2022). *Exceptional student education*. exceptional-student-edu. https://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/#:~:text=Statewide%20Assessments-,EXCEPTIONAL%20STUDENT%20EDUCATION,-The%20Bureau%20of
59. Spradley, J. P. (2016). *The ethnographic interview*. Waveland Press, Inc.
60. Stephenson, E., & Yost, H. (2023). Exploring the effectiveness and sustainability of trust based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) as a trauma-informed approach in two Tasmanian child and family learning centres. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-023-00574-6
61. Stipp, B. (2021, April). *Trust-based relational intervention as a trauma-informed teaching approach*. JOUR. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1299434.pdf
62. Thomas, M. S., Crosby, S., & Vanderhaar, J. (2019). Trauma-informed practices in schools across two decades: An Interdisciplinary Review of Research. *Review of Research in Education*, *43*(1), 422–452. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x18821123
63. *National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) home page, part of the U.S. Department of Education*. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, a part of the U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). https://nces.ed.gov/
64. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
65. Vygotskiĭ, L. S., Cole, M., Stein, S., & Sekula, A. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.
66. Vygotsky, L. S., Cole, M., Stein, S., & Sekula, A. (1978a). *Mind in society: The development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.
67. Walsh, C. R., & Bernstein, M. (2022). Trauma-informed system change in child welfare. *From Trauma to Resiliency*, 225–238. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003046295-15
68. Wang, P., & Krata, J. (2017). Theories of educating students with autism spectrum disorder. *Curricula for Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, 21–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69983-7_2
69. Wiobyrne, I. (2018, April 11). *What is "empowerment" in education?: Dr. O'Byrne*. Dr. Ian O'Byrne | Literacy, technology, and education. https://wiobyrne.com/empowerment/
70. World Health Organization. (2023). *Autism*. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/initiatives/sdg3-global-action-plan/progress-and-impact/progress-reports/2023

71. Yandell, K. (2021). Marmosets that miss social cues may mimic autism. *Spectrum*. https://doi.org/10.53053/pdno5384
72. Yang, Y., Tian, Y., Fang, J., Lu, H., Wei, K., & Yi, L. (2016). Trust and deception in children with autism spectrum disorders: A social learning perspective. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *47*(3), 615–625. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-2983-2