

# A systematic review of cultural differences in the implementation of applied behavior analysis (ABA) interventions for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) regarding social-emotional development.

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## Introduction

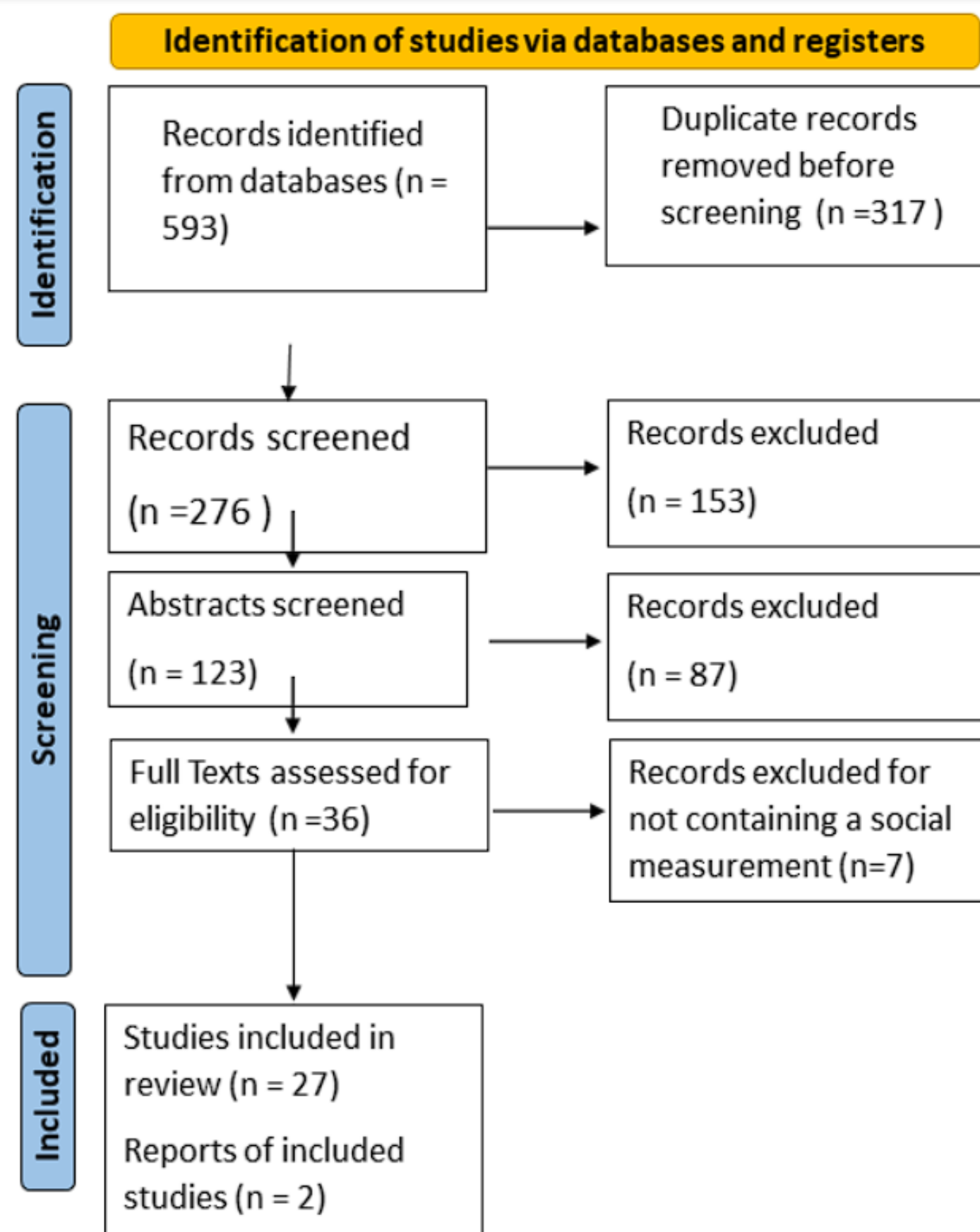
- Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have difficulties with social, emotional, and behavioral skills which may negatively impact their learning and relationships.
- The effectiveness of social skills interventions may be influenced by the degree to which they are culturally appropriate (Davenport et al, 2018).
- Interventions based on applied behavioral analysis (ABA) have expanded across cultures.
- Implementation of ABA requires individualization considering cultural competency (Dalphonse, nd.).
- This research aims to synthesize research literature on cultural adaptation in ABA intervention for social-emotional development.

## Research Questions

- How extensive is the research literature for cultural adaptations to ABA-based social interventions for ASD?
- What cultural adaptations have been developed?
- Were cultural adaptations associated with improved intervention outcomes?

## Methods

- Systematic literature review conducted in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines (Moher, 2009).
- Search terms and databases: autism, ABA, and social grouping keywords.
- Inclusion criteria: (1) Up to 20 years of age, (2) individuals who had a diagnosis of ASD, PDD, or Aspergers, (3) outcome measure relating to social skills or social development, (4) ABA-based interventions utilized.



## Results

- Original Search: 593 studies met inclusion criteria
- Most studies covered picture exchange communication system (PECS) and pivotal response therapy (PRT).
- Few studies (<10%) implemented cultural or ethnic adaptations to their treatment.
  - Those that did typically related to converting interventions to different languages.

## Discussion

- There is little published research on adapting ABA based intervention across cultures.
- This calls into question whether a determination of “evidence-based” should be applied to such interventions globally.
- A start point can be considering race, ethnicity and language in the sociodemographic information collected from the sample.

## Future Research/Next Steps

- Evaluate how manualized interventions could be effectively adapted to other cultures.
- Assess the effectiveness of ABA interventions that have been implemented cultural adaptations.