

VOCATIONAL TRAINING MODELS FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: GLOBAL INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM

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Abstract: Evidence indicates that numerous adolescents with autism encounter challenges when transitioning from education to the workforce, often leading to unemployment or precarious job situations. This article consolidates global experiences in vocational training associated with employment for adolescents with autism, extracts valuable insights, and suggests an appropriate model framework for Vietnam. Through a review of literature and a comparative analysis of models from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and Hong Kong, the article introduces an effective model that should be structured with a clear pathway encompassing assessment, planning, foundational and vocational skill training, workplace internships, job placement, and post-employment support. The article underscores the necessity for training that is customized to the learner's requirements; learners should engage in real work experiences, receive guidance from on-site mentors, collaborate across various disciplines, and have their progress monitored over a period of 6 to 12 months.

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1. Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is classified as a developmental brain disorder, typically characterized by challenges in communication, social integration, and interpersonal interactions, along with inflexible repetitive behaviors or interests; the degree of support required can vary greatly among individuals (World Health Organization - WHO, 2025). According to WHO, it was estimated that in 2021, approximately 1 in 127 individuals were identified as being on the autism spectrum (WHO, 2025).

Moreover, besides early intervention, the transition from adolescence to early adulthood represents a crucial period for individuals with autism as they shift from the educational environment to vocational training and engagement in the labor market, which necessitates high levels of communication, adaptability, and practical skills. Utilizing data from the United States, studies consistently indicate that young individuals with ASD often face unfavorable employment outcomes. Even when they manage to obtain jobs, these roles are frequently part-time

and lack stability (Drexel University, 2015; Whittenburg et al., 2019). Consequently, the creation of vocational training models that are closely aligned with employment support for adolescents and youth with ASD is widely considered a practical and essential intervention.

In Vietnam, the Law on Persons with Disabilities recognizes the right to access education, vocational training, and employment (National Assembly, 2010). However, in practice, vocational training services and specialized employment support for adolescents and youth with ASD remain disjointed. There is still limited coordination among mainstream schools, vocational education institutions, employers, and social services; additionally, trained employment support personnel and standardized pathways to employment for young individuals on the autism spectrum are not yet broadly accessible. In light of this situation, the current article synthesizes international evidence and experiences in developing vocational training models for adolescents and youth with ASD, extracts lessons pertinent to the Vietnamese context, and proposes a viable model framework adapted to Vietnam's existing conditions.

2. Literature review and legal foundations for developing vocational training models for adolescents and youth with autism spectrum disorder

2.1. International research on vocational training models for adolescents and youth with autism spectrum disorder

In the last ten years, global studies on vocational training models for adolescents and youth with ASD have primarily concentrated on the transition from educational settings to the workforce. Taylor et al. (2012) discovered that while the quantity of research investigating career guidance, vocational training, and employment support initiatives for individuals with ASD aged 13-30 is still relatively scarce, programs that yield favorable results typically exhibit several common characteristics. These features include opportunities for practical work experience, direct on-the-job training, and personalized assistance. Elements such as pre-employment preparation, connections to job opportunities, workplace-based support, and initiatives aimed at enhancing employers' awareness of autism have been demonstrated to significantly contribute to improved employment participation outcomes. In a similar vein, Fong et al. (2021) highlight that the primary objective of vocational interventions should go beyond merely "securing a job" to fostering stable and sustainable employment. Consequently, successful programs frequently prioritize job-related skills training and continuous workplace support to improve long-term employment outcomes.

In addition to vocational skills, social and communication abilities in the workplace are deemed crucial for individuals with ASD to maintain long-term

employment. Whittenburg and associates contend that social skills training proves to be more effective when it incorporates modeling, practice through situational exercises or role-playing, and timely feedback, as well as when it is paired with the use of pictures, videos, or assistive technologies (Whittenburg et al., 2019). On the other hand, challenges in communication, adherence to social norms, and processing feedback heighten the risk of employment disruption if sufficient support is not provided. Schall et al. (2020) demonstrate that supported employment models possess significant evidence of effectiveness, especially when they offer opportunities for work experience before graduation, facilitate community integration, and provide direct, on-site workplace assistance to improve access to competitive employment. The significance of long-term support is also highlighted. Brooke and associates (2018) illustrate that job retention correlates with continuous intervention and support over time, along with the involvement of employment support personnel in overseeing and modifying workplace assistance.

At the organizational level, when employees with autism receive appropriate adjustments and support, their capacity to integrate and perform effectively tends to improve (Lindsay et al., 2021). However, revealing a disability may entail the risk of stigma or prejudice (Romualdez et al., 2021; Lindsay et al., 2021). Consequently, it is essential to establish clear management policies and foster a welcoming organizational culture that respects diversity, enabling employees to seek support without fear (Romualdez et al., 2021; Morris et al., 2025). From a business perspective, numerous studies indicate that to enhance recruitment opportunities and promote sustainable employment, it is crucial to 'influence employers.' This can be achieved through training for managers and colleagues, modifying recruitment and integration processes, and providing suitable support (Derbyshire, D. W., et al., 2024; Phillips, B. N., & colleagues, 2016).

The synthesis of current evidence suggests that vocational training models for adolescents and young adults with autism should be structured as an integrated continuum of services, where vocational skills training is merely one aspect. Key components such as the enhancement of social and communication skills, task-oriented on-site coaching, behavioral support, collaboration with employers, and workplace accommodations are crucial for achieving positive employment outcomes and ensuring job retention (Taylor et al., 2012; Fong et al., 2021; Schall et al., 2020). Among the models that exhibit relatively strong results, Project SEARCH is notable as a business-linked vocational training model; Wehman and colleagues (2017) demonstrate that it significantly increases the rates of competitive employment for autistic youth in

comparison to standard services (Wehman et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the supported employment approach advocates for a “place first, then train and support” strategy, which involves introducing participants to appropriate work environments early on and providing continuous support to maintain employment (The Scottish Government, 2022). The five-stage framework is designed to organize the continuum of transition services and minimize disruptions in support following graduation (SUSE, n.d.). Nevertheless, reviews also point out ongoing deficiencies in the evidence base, such as the scarcity of randomized controlled trials, inconsistent outcome measures, and insufficient long-term follow-up (Taylor et al., 2012; Fong et al., 2021). These deficiencies underscore the need for further examination of national experiences and the development of a model framework that is suitable for the Vietnamese context.

2.2. Legal basis and the Vietnamese context in developing vocational training models for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders

The Law on Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 51/2010/QH12) serves as a crucial legal framework that promotes a “rights and inclusion” perspective for individuals with disabilities. This legislation not only outlines the rights and responsibilities of persons with disabilities but also delineates the duties of the State, families, and society in facilitating equal access and participation for people with disabilities in various aspects of life. In terms of support policies, the Law encompasses a wide array of assistance measures, which include healthcare, education, vocational training, and employment, among other social sectors, while underscoring the importance of integrating disability policies into socio-economic development (Government, 2008). Furthermore, the Law elucidates the vital role of families in safeguarding, caring for, and enabling individuals with disabilities to exercise their rights (Government, 2008).

Conversely, Decree No. 43/2008/ND-CP outlines comprehensive regulations regarding policies for vocational educators and groups of vocational educators catering to individuals with disabilities. It also establishes criteria for distinguishing between “specialized” and “inclusive” classes or institutions based on the percentage of learners with disabilities (for instance: specialized classes with 70% or more; inclusive classes ranging from 5% to less than 70%) (Government, 2008). Furthermore, the Decree highlights the importance of State funding in the training and development of teachers, the creation of curricula, and the provision of necessary conditions to effectively carry out vocational training for individuals with disabilities (Government, 2008).

In the realm of developing models for individuals with autism, a significant challenge often arises from the fact that support requirements extend beyond vocational skills to include workplace social communication, environmental

and sensory adaptation, behavior management, and long-term job retention.

International evidence reviews suggest that successful employment interventions generally necessitate a blend of support at both the individual level (which includes behavioral support, social skills enhancement, and on-the-job assistance) and at the organizational or workplace level (such as fostering co-worker relationships, improving environmental conditions, and ensuring person-organization alignment) (Fong et al., 2021). Therefore, when implementing the legal framework in Vietnam, a significant consideration is the necessity to create a continuous service pathway (comprising recruitment, training, internships, hiring, and ongoing job-retention support) backed by interdisciplinary teams, to guarantee that autistic learners experience a smooth transition into employment.

3. Research methods

This article utilizes an evidence synthesis approach in conjunction with comparative case analysis to outline and differentiate vocational training models associated with employment support for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, thereby extracting design insights pertinent to the Vietnamese context.

The primary data sources consist of: (1) studies and reviews pertaining to career guidance, vocational training, and employment interventions aimed at individuals with ASD; and (2) documents that outline specific models or programs, along with implementation reports from selected countries or territories. Furthermore, pertinent guidelines or quality frameworks that are directly linked to each model (when available) are utilized as reference materials to elucidate implementation requirements and measurement methodologies. The scope of the literature is concentrated on the timeframe from 2012 to 2025 to encompass publications and models documented over the last decade while ensuring the relevance of the discussion.

The literature synthesis process was carried out through a series of steps designed to improve transparency and replicability: conducting keyword-based searches of authoritative sources; eliminating duplicates; screening titles and abstracts; and performing a full-text review for inclusion in the synthesis. Subsequently, data were extracted using a standardized matrix that addressed the following dimensions: target population, intended outcomes, service components, roles and involvement of employers, forms of workplace support, duration of support, outcome indicators, and quality assurance mechanisms.

The criteria for selecting the literature encompassed: (i) direct relevance to Autism Spectrum Disorder or to populations that require substantial support during the transition to employment; (ii) adequately detailed descriptions of models or processes that facilitate meaningful comparison; (iii) the presence of information

regarding outcome indicators (e.g., paid employment, job retention) or quality standardization mechanisms (such as standards, evaluation frameworks, or accreditation); and (iv) a preference for credible sources, which include peer-reviewed journal articles, official guidelines or frameworks, and technical reports produced by professional organizations.

The selection of national or territorial cases was intentional and based on three criteria: representation of various approaches (enterprise-based internships; pathway-oriented supported employment services; community-based services; and State-coordinated commissioning mechanisms); the availability of sufficiently clear documentation regarding service components and processes; and the existence of comparable evidence on outcomes or quality standards.

The comparative analysis is based on a set of criteria derived from the second group of materials, with a focus on: (i) service pathways and support components (outreach-assessment-training-jobplacement-retention); (ii) the level of employer engagement; and (iii) mechanisms for outcome measurement and quality assurance (output indicators, self-assessment, and independent evaluation). On the basis of these comparisons, the article derives design implications for vocational training models that are appropriate to the Vietnamese context.

The chosen cases have been deliberately selected to exemplify the various approaches: the United States (enterprise-based internship models), the United Kingdom (five-stage supported employment and quality frameworks), Australia (disability employment services with an evidence-informed practice orientation), Canada (community-based supported employment), and Hong Kong (state coordination and the involvement of non-governmental organizations-NGOs).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. International experience in vocational training and employment support for adolescents and youth with autism spectrum disorder

4.1.1. The U.S. enterprise-based internship model (Project SEARCH + ASD Supports)

Project SEARCH represents a school-to-work transition framework that is executed directly within businesses or employing organizations. Participants engage in an intervention program that spans approximately nine months, aiming for the ultimate goal of securing competitive employment (paid work in the open labor market).

The essence of this model lies in rotational internships across various job roles within the business setting, coupled with daily, scheduled preparation for “going to work.” Research studies suggest that the program’s schedule generally encompasses about 1.5 hours per session dedicated to work-readiness skills training, alongside roughly four hours each day of internships in

different roles within the host organization.

A variation of the “Project SEARCH with support for individuals with autism” framework enhances focused assistance to tackle prevalent workplace difficulties. The initiative incorporates Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) techniques and supportive strategies to promote positive behaviors, including: step-by-step task analysis, structured repetitive practice, role-playing, modeling (both direct and video), positive reinforcement, visual aids, self-regulation of behavior, functional communication interventions, and training in social-communication skills within the work environment.

At the same time, the model prioritizes on-the-job training and “business development” initiatives (collaborating with departments and personnel, increasing disability awareness, establishing internship roles, and creating appropriate job opportunities), perceiving businesses as collaborative partners in implementation rather than merely locations that “host interns”.

A significant piece of evidence is the randomized controlled trial conducted by Wehman and colleagues (2017), which compared a group involved in Project SEARCH, receiving support for individuals with autism, to a group that received standard special education services. The results indicated that 90% of the intervention group secured part-time competitive employment within three months post-graduation (in contrast to 6% of the control group), and 87% maintained their employment after 12 months (compared to 12% in the control group). This strengthens the argument that business-linked internships, provided they are of adequate duration and accompanied by specialized support, can greatly enhance both access to and retention of competitive employment for young individuals with autism.

From this model, design directions can be suggested for its application in the Vietnamese context: (1) Initiate close collaboration with businesses from the beginning to co-create internship positions, tasks, competency standards, and recruitment pathways; (2) A sufficiently extended internship duration and rotation of roles to facilitate “learning on the job”, as well as adapting to workplace culture and procedures; (3) Ensure the availability of on-site personnel support and long-term assistance mechanisms when necessary; (4) Incorporate behavioral and social skills support as an essential element, as it significantly influences the inclusion and job retention of individuals with autism.

4.1.2. The UK model of supported employment based on the 5-stage model and quality assurance

In the UK, supported employment is executed through a 5-stage service process designed to assist individuals with disabilities and those requiring high levels of support in securing paid employment within the open labor market and sustaining that employment over time. The Scottish

Union of Supported Employment (SUSE) underscores that this model has been formally embraced by Scotland as a framework for implementation, reinforcing the principle that “anyone can work if they desire to and receive appropriate support”.

Firstly, the 5-stage model of supported employment, as outlined by the Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE), encompasses the following components:

- Accessing and engaging job seekers: assisting job seekers in comprehending the model, making an informed choice to participate, and establishing a trusting relationship.

- Creating a vocational profile: “explore - plan” based on individual goals, interests, strengths, and support requirements; developing a profile that serves as a foundation for job searching and matching.

- Job search: employment support personnel collaborate with job seekers to identify appropriate opportunities; they may engage directly with employers to mitigate excessively formal hiring obstacles.

- Engaging employers: conducting job analysis, reaching agreements on support plans during the recruitment process and within the workplace; fostering sustainable partnerships with employers.

- Assistance in the workplace and beyond: support for on-the-job learning, training, and workplace mentoring; may extend assistance beyond working hours (such as commuting and financial management...) if it impacts job retention. SUSE highlights that one-on-one support can be gradually diminished as employees achieve proficiency in their roles and transition to receiving “natural support” from their colleagues and managers.

Secondly, ensure quality through the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) advocated by the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE). To prevent fragmented implementation, BASE formulates the quality framework in a manner that is “standardized by criteria and measurement”, establishing a fundamental set of quality and value standards that service providers are required to uphold; it also underscores the objective of “supporting job seekers to find - retain - develop suitable employment” and considers businesses as a significant “customer”.

The effectiveness of SEQF is evaluated through output indicators and independent assessments. For instance, this includes the percentage of individuals who initiate a professional profile and subsequently attain paid employment, the average duration from the commencement of the service to the initiation of work, and the retention rate of paid employment for a minimum of 6 months (26 weeks). Additionally, SEQF incorporates an external evaluation system to assess adherence to quality standards (certification levels determined by scores), which is supplemented by regular self-assessments and ongoing improvement strategies. During the workplace

support phase, BASE prioritizes the approach of “placing the individual in a job - providing on-the-job training - and then gradually decreasing support”. This approach considers the quality to be high when the level of assistance is diminished or when the supporter is deemed ‘no longer necessary’ as the employee has successfully integrated.

Insights gained from the implementation in the UK indicate that there are two crucial aspects to consider when developing this model in Vietnam: first, the need to standardize service processes following a well-defined “journey” (engagement-registration-job search/matching-employer linkage-support in/out of work) to guarantee uniform execution; second, the importance of establishing quality standards and measuring effectiveness through key output indicators (employment with pay rate; time to job transition; job retention), along with self-assessment and independent evaluation to prevent fragmented implementation and challenges in demonstrating impact.

4.1.3. The Australian model of employment services for individuals with disabilities and evidence-based reform orientations.

In Australia, the employment service system for individuals with disabilities is undergoing reforms aimed at enhancing effectiveness for groups with significant support needs, particularly those with autism. An analysis of the system by Hayward and Flower reveals that evidence regarding effective employment support initiatives for individuals with autism in Australia remains relatively scarce. However, consistent findings highlight that the quality of services is largely contingent upon service providers’ comprehensive understanding of autism and the specific needs of autistic adults. Additionally, there is a pressing need to elevate the level of individualization and appropriateness of support (Hayward & Flower, 2025). In light of this, the authors propose essential enhancements to the system, which include improving professional training on autism for service staff and bolstering the ability to deliver support that is customized to the sensory, communication, and behavioral characteristics of individuals with autism within the employment setting (Hayward & Flower, 2025). From the perspective of employer engagement, compilations of evidence provided by Australian government agencies highlight the “organizational advantages” of hiring individuals with disabilities, including enhanced human resources, increased engagement, and improved diversity and inclusion within corporate culture. This also addresses several prevalent misconceptions regarding adjustment costs or work performance (Australian Government, JobAccess, 2025a, 2025b). The design implication suggests that, in addition to selecting the suitable intervention model for learners/workers, Vietnam must implement a service quality monitoring system (competency standards, procedures,

output indicators) and develop a strategy to persuade businesses through a “benefit–value” argument backed by evidence, to improve employers’ ability to engage and to maintain support in a significant and impactful way (Australian Government, JobAccess, 2025a, 2025b; Hayward & Flower, 2025).

4.1.4. *Canada’s model of community-based supported employment*

In Canada, community-based supported employment is frequently executed by local service organizations, such as social organizations, disability support centers, and employment service providers. These entities serve as a “bridge” connecting job seekers with businesses, while also offering ongoing support post-employment. Martin and Lanovaz (2021) conducted an evaluation of a supported employment initiative managed by a community organization in Canada, specifically for individuals with autism who do not have intellectual disabilities. The research team monitored participant characteristics, the total number of service hours delivered, and various employment-related outcome indicators. They also compared levels of job-related anxiety and confidence in job-seeking and retention before and after the participants engaged in the program (Martin & Lanovaz, 2021).

The results show that even though participants had a high prevalence of comorbid mental health issues, 62.1% still obtained paid employment within 12 months; those with post-secondary education also tended to find jobs related to their field of study or requiring specialized skills (Martin & Lanovaz, 2021). At the same time, after the intervention, participants experienced reduced anxiety and increased confidence in approaching employment, indicating that community services can provide significant support during the job search and entry phase (Martin & Lanovaz, 2021). However, the study also emphasizes that job retention remains a major challenge; mental health issues and difficult life circumstances can hinder both the job search and employment stability, so prolonged and cross-sector support (particularly involving mental health services) is needed rather than just short-term pre-employment assistance (Martin & Lanovaz, 2021).

Taking a broader perspective, the “ecosystem” model for employment of individuals with autism in Canada indicates that employment results are intertwined with community resources, family assistance, workplace capabilities (including managers and colleagues), and policy frameworks. Consequently, successful programs must be structured through networks and coordinated efforts among multiple stakeholders (Nicholas et al., 2018). This underscores the importance of community organizations as an ongoing “service layer”, which not only offers professional assistance (such as career assessments, job matching, and workplace coaching) but also ensures follow-up support to mitigate the risk of disruption during the critical transition period following employment.

Therefore, Vietnam ought to establish a network of community service units (including social organizations, disability support centers, and local employment service centers) to function as an “extension” post-graduation, thereby guaranteeing a comprehensive support system that encompasses: (i) assessment and career profiling; (ii) job search and matching; (iii) providing mentorship in the workplace; (iv) overseeing and assisting with long-term maintenance, particularly in instances of mental health challenges or adjustment crises (Martin & Lanovaz, 2021; Nicholas et al., 2018). This approach aids in minimizing service interruptions among schools, vocational training institutions, and businesses, thereby enhancing the chances of sustainable employment for individuals with autism.

4.1.5. *The model of Government-coordinated supported employment services in Hong Kong and the involvement of non-profit organizations*

In Hong Kong, the Social Welfare Department has established a system through which the Government coordinates and allocates funding to social organizations for the provision of supported employment training services aimed at individuals with disabilities. These services encompass skills training, trial internships, vocational training, and counseling for groups that are not yet prepared to engage in the general labor market, while also facilitating job placement and offering post-employment support (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2025). Furthermore, Hong Kong incentivizes businesses by offering wage subsidies during the ‘trial work’ phase and mandates a minimum of 12 months of support following placement (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2025).

In addition to the general services provided, social organizations also create specialized programs tailored for individuals with autism. Heep Hong Society has indicated that it has been offering vocational training for adolescents with autism since 2008. Currently, it operates a comprehensive support chain that includes assessment and vocational training, development of practical skills, internships, individual follow-up, emotional support, parent support, business training, and a mentoring program aimed at enhancing inclusion (Heep Hong Society, n.d.). This model illustrates that support must extend beyond training to encompass internships, job placement, and post-placement follow-up.

The experience in Hong Kong indicates an effective operational model when the Government coordinates and commissions services, while social organizations provide flexible, individualized services and collaborate directly with businesses. Additionally, incentive mechanisms are necessary to motivate businesses to accept and sustain support (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2025; Heep Hong Society, n.d.).

4.2. Proposed framework for a vocational training model for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in Vietnam

The proposed model framework is designed to improve the transition from education to employment for adolescents and young adults with autism spectrum disorder in Vietnam. The targeted age range is 14-24, which can be adjusted flexibly based on local context and the characteristics of the learners. The primary objective of the model is to enhance the percentage of learners who achieve occupational competencies and secure appropriate, sustainable employment within an inclusive work environment. This, in turn, aims to elevate quality of life, foster independence, and encourage social participation. Specific objectives encompass: ensuring that learners fulfill competency standards for occupational tasks; completing structured internships at various enterprises; securing paid employment; and sustaining employment at critical milestones (6 months and 12 months). Additionally, there is a focus on enhancing foundational skills that are directly linked to employability and job retention, including workplace safety, effective workplace communication, adherence to procedures, and self-management.

The model operates according to several fundamental principles. First, personalization serves as a guiding principle: every decision related to career, learning pathways, assessment methods, and the level of support must be informed by the functional evaluation and career profile of each learner. Second, learning through practice is regarded as the primary method, where professional skills are cultivated through practical tasks and task-based assessments. Third, the model necessitates interdisciplinary coordination and case management to amalgamate support from social work, psychology, special education, vocational training, and businesses into a cohesive plan. Fourth, businesses are recognized as co-design partners, engaging from the inception of internship/job positions, guidance methods, and workplace feedback to post-placement monitoring mechanisms. Fifth, data-driven quality assurance is an essential requirement aimed at standardizing processes, tracking progress, and evaluating outcomes. Ultimately, the model emphasizes the importance of upholding the rights and dignity of learners, ensuring that participation is voluntary, maintaining the confidentiality of information, and preventing any form of discrimination, violence, or harassment within training and work settings.

In terms of organizational structure, the proposed model distinctly differentiates between the coordination level and the implementation level. At the provincial or city level, it is essential to create an inter-sectoral coordination committee, which will be led by the Department of Home Affairs, in partnership with education and training agencies, health organizations, business representatives

or associations, social organizations that provide community services, and family representatives. The coordination committee is tasked with standardizing minimum procedures, establishing a mechanism for service commissioning, developing a network of partner businesses, and overseeing quality assurance. At the implementation level, the model suggests the formation of an 'implementation cluster' that includes vocational education institutions (which offer modular vocational training and practical workshops), centers that support individuals with disabilities or rehabilitation, community service units (which assist with foundational skills and post-placement follow-up), general education schools or continuing education centers (which cater to the 14-18 age group), and partner businesses (which provide structured internships and job placements). Based on this framework, each learner receives support from a shift management team that includes a social work coordinator, vocational educators, specialists in psychology and special education, staff providing workplace employment assistance, and representatives from both business and family sectors. This team collaborates to formulate plans, allocate responsibilities, and convenes regular shift meetings to implement timely modifications.

The implementation process is structured into six continuous phases. The initial phase involves intake, screening, and functional assessment to evaluate eligibility for participation and to categorize support requirements. The essential components of the assessment encompass independence levels, functional communication abilities, foundational social skills, behavioral and self-regulation capabilities, vocational interests, task-related strengths, co-existing mental health issues, as well as factors related to family, transportation, and participation time. The second phase entails the creation of a vocational profile and the formulation of an individual transition plan, which delineates priority career objectives, module-based competency standards, necessary adjustments in learning and internships, the responsibilities of all involved parties, and a timeline for regular reviews. The third phase focuses on pre-vocational foundational skills training, emphasizing life skills and self-management, occupational safety, workplace communication, basic social skills, and essential digital skills; assessments are designed to prioritize simulated scenarios over traditional paper-based evaluations. Step four involves competency-based vocational training that consists of small modules, clearly defined tasks, progressively increasing levels of independence, and assessments grounded in observable criteria (correct procedures, quality, time, safety). This training allows for the utilization of support tools such as checklists and visual aids. Step five encompasses structured internships within businesses, with flexible durations ranging from approximately 8 to 24 weeks, contingent upon the level of support required. During

this phase, workplace support personnel perform job analyses in a step-by-step manner, provide task-based training, assist in modifying the work environment (including lighting, noise levels, and workstation layout), coordinate brief training sessions for company mentors on task assignment and effective feedback provision, and monitor weekly progress through regular shift meetings to make necessary adjustments to the plan. Step six focuses on job placement and ongoing support for maintaining employment for a period of 6 to 12 months. This includes on-the-job support (task management, situation handling, communication support - feedback) as well as off-the-job support when external life factors impact job retention (such as transportation issues, daily routine management, stress management, and connecting to support services as needed). The support framework is designed to gradually diminish as the employee becomes more stable, transitioning towards natural support from the company and enhancing the individual's self-management capabilities.

To maintain a high-quality operational model, it is essential to explicitly outline the input conditions and evaluation metrics. In terms of human resources, the minimum requirement for a deployment unit consists of one social work coordinator overseeing the shift, one vocational teacher, one psychologist or special education specialist, and one staff member assisting with workplace employment for approximately 15 to 20 learners during the internship phase; the enterprise must designate a direct supervisor for the internship or work position. On the financial side, resources should integrate local service order budgets, contributions from enterprises fulfilling social responsibility, and legitimate project funds; concurrently, expenses related to shift management and workplace employment support should be "identified", reasonably adjusted, and quality monitored to prevent mere formal implementation. Regarding data management, each learner must have a digital record for each shift and be monitored for a minimum of 12 months following job placement, incorporating an early risk warning system and stringent confidentiality regulations.

The minimum output indicators of the model encompass: the completion rate of vocational modules and adherence to task standards; the rate of internship

completion; the percentage of paid employment; the job retention rates at 6 and 12 months; income and working hours; the satisfaction levels of learners, families, and businesses; the gradual reduction in support over time; and the count of safety-related or serious conflict incidents along with the measures taken to address them. Utilizing these indicators, local authorities are able to assess effectiveness, modify policies, and appropriately expand the model in a manner that is validated for the specific conditions of each region.

5. Conclusion

The article highlights that a significant obstacle in assisting adolescents with autism spectrum disorder during their transition to employment is the disjointed nature of services: vocational training frequently lacks a close connection with workplace practice, job placement, and ongoing support. Simultaneously, the support requirements of this demographic extend beyond professional skills to include workplace social skills, environmental adaptation, and self-regulation, indicating that solely vocational training is unlikely to yield sustainable outcomes.

Drawing on international experiences, the article establishes a general principle: an effective model must be crafted as a transition chain, tailored to the vocational profile, with businesses engaged as co-design partners, supported by multidisciplinary teams and on-site personnel, alongside mechanisms for quality assurance and outcome measurement. In light of this, the article suggests a model framework for Vietnam comprising six sequential steps: intake-assessment; career profiling and transition planning; foundational skills training; modular vocational training; structured internships at enterprises; and job placement with support for 6-12 months.

In order for the model to function efficiently and be scalable, it is essential to enhance intersectoral coordination at the local level, cultivate specialized personnel (such as shift managers, vocational educators, special education and psychology staff, and workplace support personnel), and establish a financial mechanism that links service commissioning to outcomes, alongside a data system to monitor results post-placement. The subsequent phase involves piloting in various localities and conducting evaluations at 6-12 months intervals to improve the model prior to broader implementation.

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