


## Stakeholder involvement and the application of knowledge transfer tools in special educational needs learning: An empirical investigation using multiple regression



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### ABSTRACT

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Despite the global proliferation of special education systems and inclusive education policies, students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) still face challenges in obtaining quality educational experiences. An Occupational Therapist's (OT) role is to support SEN students and help them overcome their limitations. To do so, they require the support of other stakeholders and the use of Knowledge Transfer (KT) tools, which have been segmented into three main domains: devices, image-based, and play KT tools. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of stakeholder involvement and KT tools used by OTs on SEN students in Mauritius. The research questions addressed are as follows: (1) Does stakeholder involvement impact the effectiveness of KT tools? (2) Do devices and KT tools influence effectiveness? (3) Do image-based KT tools influence effectiveness? (4) Do play KT tools influence effectiveness? and (5) Which of these factors is the most influential predictor of KT tool effectiveness? Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire from 55 OTs and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and Microsoft Excel 2019. Correlation analysis revealed that all four independent constructs significantly correlated with the effectiveness of KT tools. Further analysis through multiple regression indicated that stakeholder involvement and image-based KT tools significantly and positively impacted the effectiveness of KT tools, with image-based KT tools being the more influential predictor in determining effectiveness.

**Contribution/ Originality:** This study contributes to the existing literature by exploring different KT tools and is one of the few studies that have investigated the impact of stakeholder involvement and KT tools used by OTs by analyzing the effectiveness of the KT tools currently being used in Mauritius. It provides the first logical analysis by correlating all four constructs and finally using multiple regression to identify the most influential factor, which is the usage of image-based KT tools.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are among the most disadvantaged and excluded minorities in society (Savarimuthu et al., 2021) as they face numerous barriers, including inaccessible facilities, insufficient resources, and the need for personalized support, which contribute to educational inequity that demands attention and action. Although several developing nations ratified the UNCPRD in 2006, strategies for education often overlook the specific needs of children with disabilities (Srivastava, De Boer, & Pijl, 2015). Despite consensus on the

importance of inclusive education as well as the rights of students with SEN internationally, finding ways to include all children in schools remains a major challenge for education worldwide (Ainscow, 2020).

As transformative solution providers, OTs are key members who understand children's needs in inclusive education from a different perspective (O'Donoghue, O'Leary, & Lynch, 2021; Wilcock, 2006). Nonetheless, one of the challenges for occupational therapy in the 21st century is the identification of evidence about what can and should be considered for decision-making in client care (Hinojosa, 2013). To this end, it has been found that combining different fields of knowledge in the form of collaboration among SEN stakeholders is an ideal method to enable children to participate successfully in education (Piškur et al., 2022). Additionally, the use of knowledge transfer tools is beneficial for improving the learning process of SEN students. Unfortunately, no studies are available that clarify the impact of SEN stakeholders and KT tools on SEN students. This is problematic because there is a growing need for practical, real-world solutions tailored to the needs of SEN students to enhance their learning.

Specifically, the aim of this study is to investigate the impact of stakeholder involvement and KT tools used by OTs on SEN students in Mauritius, which were based on the following research questions.

- (1) Does stakeholder involvement have an impact on the effectiveness of KT tools?
- (2) Do devices' knowledge transfer tools have an impact on the effectiveness of KT tools?
- (3) Do image-based knowledge transfer tools have an impact on the effectiveness of KT tools?
- (4) Do play knowledge transfer tools have an impact on the effectiveness of KT tools?
- (5) Which of the above can be identified as the most influential predictor in determining the effectiveness of KT tools?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Special Educational Need

As previously mentioned, SEN students encompass a diverse spectrum of learning difficulties, which can range from mild to severe, and are often manifested as challenges in acquiring academic skills such as reading, writing, comprehension, and mathematical abilities (Coates, 2011; Jylänki et al., 2022; Yilmaz & Soyer, 2018). Additionally, they might encounter obstacles in processing and retaining information, which can affect their learning pace and their depth of understanding across various subjects (Pérez-Ordás, Nuviala, Grao-Cruces, & Fernandez-Martinez, 2021). Despite progress, persistent educational challenges, particularly concerning teacher strategies, continue to affect developing countries (Chisom, Unachukwu, & Osawaru, 2023). The academic performance of learners with special needs refers to their achievements and progress in educational outcomes relative to their individualized learning goals and standards (Römhild & Holleder, 2024). Its significance lies in ensuring equitable access to quality education that supports the educational success and future opportunities of learners with special needs in all schools (Francisco, Hartman, & Wang, 2020), while inclusion has contributed to a great extent. The merits of inclusive education are no longer debated as they were previously (Artiles & Kozleski, 2016), but the theoretical and practical questions around its implementation persist (Amor et al., 2019; Reeves, Ng, Harris, & Phelan, 2022; Schuelka & Engsig, 2022).

### 2.2. Stakeholder Involvement

The success of inclusion has been fostered by the collaboration between professionals from both the school and health sectors in the school team (Hoppey, Black, & Mickelson, 2018; McIntosh, Dale, Kruzliakova, & Kandiah, 2021; Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016). Edick, O'Brien, and Hardman (2023) in their research stated that 74% of their participants agreed that collaboration had a "positive impact on student success," and they recommended an integral and collaborative approach to be embedded in the school (Van Der Bij, 2017). Since special education comprises a diverse range of students with varying ages, abilities, and learning styles, it is fundamental to engage with stakeholders to create a supportive and effective learning environment (Mulryan-Kyne, 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that several researchers have suggested that collaboration among key stakeholders can provide new and

valuable insights into the journey of these students (Goodall, Mjøen, Witsø, Høghagen, & Kvam, 2022; Moríña & Orozco, 2021; Nieminen, 2023). By actively engaging with stakeholders and involving them in the teaching process, teachers can create a collaborative learning environment where students can observe and learn from the behaviors and actions of others (Bandura, 1986). Similarly, collaboration between teachers and allied health personnel is associated with greater implementation of accommodations and improved access and participation for students, supporting their educational outcomes (Asher & Nichols, 2016; Selanikyo, Yalon-Chamovitz, & Weintraub, 2017; Villeneuve & Hutchinson, 2012; Vlcek, Somerton, & Rayner, 2020). It is a best practice approach for professionals to share their expertise, develop shared problem-solving, goals, and strategies (Friend & Cook, 2013), and provide development opportunities to build capacity in professionals (de Oliveira Borba, Pereira, de Souza, & Lopes, 2020; Vlcek et al., 2020). Additionally, SEN stakeholders, namely Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapist, and Educational Psychologist, known as related services, need to collaborate with the teacher for the effective learning of these students. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) defines “related services” as “supportive services as required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.” To this end, the stakeholders’ involvement mentioned in this study includes Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Educational Psychologists, Educational Technologists, Behavioral Psychologists, Special Educational Needs Teachers, Mainstream Teachers, Headmasters, and Parents. Hence, this study investigated the impact of Stakeholder Involvement with SEN in Mauritius as follows.

#### Hypothesis 1

*H<sub>0</sub>: Stakeholder involvement has no impact on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools.*

*H<sub>1</sub>: Stakeholder involvement has a significant positive impact on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools.*

### 2.3. Knowledge Transfer

The presence of stakeholders has no meaning if they cannot transfer the right knowledge at the right time to the SEN students according to their requirements and needs. This refers to practices of knowledge exchange (Tassabehji, Mishra, & Dominguez-Péry, 2019) from stakeholders to SEN students and is known as Knowledge Transfer (KT). Knowledge transfer involves the movement of knowledge through one or more channels from one individual or organization to another (Abou Hashish, 2017). It is the core activity of knowledge management (Pircher, 2014) and is of great interest because it contributes to sustainable industrial economic growth and societal development (Duval-Couetil, Ladisch, & Yi, 2021). It consists of three stages: knowledge identification, transfer from the carrier to a receiver, and application of the newly obtained knowledge by the receiver (Grum, Rapp, Gronau, & Albers, 2019).

### 2.4. Knowledge Transfer Tools

For successful knowledge transfer to take place, the use of KT tools is of utmost importance as they allow the sharing of knowledge (Mazorodze & Buckley, 2020). However, it has been observed that no single tool or implementation strategy is effective in all contexts or with all populations, thus making situational evaluations of KT processes necessary (Siron, Dagenais, & Ridde, 2015). Therefore, this study investigated 29 KT tools used by OTs with SEN, which have been segmented based on their characteristics. The three categories of KT tools were devices, image-based, and play.

#### 2.4.1. Devices

Mobile phones, smartphones, computers, and laptops are typically known as Information Communication Technologies (ICT) devices (Castells, 2010). Since digital technologies have become an integral part of modern societies (Wahl & Gerstorff, 2018), emphasis is placed more on the spread of ICT, which includes devices and applications that provide access to information and enable electronic communications. Regarding the demand for E-inclusion, the use of ICTs in compensatory uses helps overcome pupils’ limitations (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020) and

in participatory uses has been on an increasing trend, thus allowing pupils to participate in social learning contexts actively and collaboratively (Benigno, Ferlino, & Trentin, 2019; Ismaili & Ibrahim, 2017; Pellerin, 2013; Rice & Dykman, 2018). Similarly, a study by Mushtaq and Bruneau (2019) showed that ICT facilities provide tremendous capacity to promote lifelong learning for all student classes, including those with special educational needs, while Williams (2016) laid emphasis on the importance of digital literacy for SEN. The use of ICT devices can improve those students' motivation in learning (Baglama, Haksiz, & Uzunboyulu, 2018; Nordin et al., 2015), enhance the improvement of learning outcomes (Alotaibi & Almalki, 2016; Egaga & Aderibigbe, 2015), and develop students' literacy and communication skills (Alotaibi & Almalki, 2016; Baglama et al., 2018). Ultimately, this study focused on devices, namely smartphones, tablets/iPads, computers, and laptops from the group of ICTs, and the hypothesis tested was as follows:

Hypothesis 2a

$H_0$ : *Devices have no impact on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools.*

$H_1$ : *Devices have a significant positive impact on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools.*

#### 2.4.2. Image Base

As per Roberts (2021), it is now the most visual era of human history, where a complex idea can be conveyed with just one image. Moreover, Miller (2002) upholds this thought and defines image creation, which is a part of visualization, as “forming a mental image in one’s mind.” Readers form mental pictures that represent the ideas in the texts, which serve to enhance the interpretation of the written texts and may include our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Adding photos to a text can be helpful, especially to those with limited reading skills, because images can display more information that is hard to understand through text alone. Additionally, Eitel and Scheiter (2015) emphasized that pictures provide a backbone on which pupils will use them as a basis for creating mental representations. Similarly, visual-based interventions respond to stimulus over selectivity by assisting students in focusing and maintaining attention to relevant stimuli (Shipley-Benamou, Lutzker, & Taubman, 2002) and can enhance children’s abilities to independently complete unfamiliar or complex directions by condensing the content to only essential information (Williams, Goldstein, & Minshew, 2006). They allow students to review cues, decreasing reliance on teacher prompts and increasing independence (Hodgdon, 1995). Moreover, visually based interventions support students’ ability to shift attention (Quill, 1998), make abstract concepts more concrete (Peeters, 1997), and may be less socially stigmatizing than verbal reminders by adults or companions when in the presence of peers. Therefore, the image creation approach makes the story more fun, engaging, and understandable for visual learners and even for people with disabilities. Likewise, the study of Yusuf (2016) found that pupils engaged in Image Creation Intervention scored higher on tests after the intervention compared to the control group. The image-based tools surveyed for this research included pictures, drawings, paintings, graphs, photos, infographics, comics, cartoons, graphic novels, leaflets, traditionally printed books, manuals, guidelines, posters, presentations, videos, tutorials, and magazines. The hypothesis tested was as follows.

Hypothesis 2b

$H_0$ : *Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools have no impact on the Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools.*

$H_1$ : *Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools have a significant positive impact on the Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools.*

#### 2.4.3. Play

For children, play is commonly the medium for intervention delivery and an important therapeutic outcome in and of itself (Cordier, Bundy, Hocking, & Einfeld, 2010). Play-based interventions are part of several approaches that have been utilized by healthcare professionals to address deficits experienced by children with SEN (Serman et al., 2016). Through play, children easily learn survival skills and develop resilience to deal with life events, as well as all

skills that are essential for transitioning into adulthood (Lynch, Hayes, & Ryan, 2016), and it is an important resource for learning and developing critical motor, cognitive, and socioemotional skills (Cordier et al., 2010). Furthermore, play provides a natural context to explore behavioral and social difficulties, in addition to addressing interactional problems that affect children's skills (Cordier et al., 2010). It is the most important method for treating children's mental and emotional disorders and strengthens their social development (Kajbaf, Maksour, Ejei, & Dadsetan, 2000). Moreover, it enriches children's physical, social, cognitive, and emotional abilities, sense of well-being, promotes their skills and abilities to study and work, hones their relationships with peers and the community, helps them gain independence, confidence, self-esteem, interaction, resilience, curiosity, and coping with challenging situations (Fisch, 2013). In this regard, Koukava, Antonopoulou, Zioga, and Karali (2011) have demonstrated that games with group activities increase children's social skills and adaptation. Other studies have also shown that play therapy helps reduce fear and anxiety (Mosavi & Koolae, 2016) and enhances self-esteem and social skills (Bratton, Ray, Rhine, & Jones, 2005). It affects increasing adaptive behaviors (Landreth, 2013; Pedro-Carroll & Jones, 2005; Plummer, 2008). For the current study, the impact of play was investigated using the hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 2c

$H_0$ : Play has no impact on *the Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools*.

$H_1$ : Play has a significant positive impact on *the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools*.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 3.1. Methods

A quantitative descriptive approach was employed to investigate the impact of stakeholder involvement and knowledge transfer tools used by OTs with SEN students in Mauritius. The use of descriptive methods enabled the researchers to study the characteristics of the OT population in Mauritius through the collection of data, yielding insights from them regarding stakeholder involvement and the usage of KT tools for SEN students.

#### 3.2. Instrument

The study collected data using a closed-ended questionnaire, which was segmented into three sections: recording the demographics of the OTs, responses on the usage of KT tools, and data on their effectiveness. A Likert scale ranging from 1 (rarely) to 5 (always) for the usage of KT tools, and from 1 (not effective) to 5 (very effective), was used, which was further refined through pilot testing.

##### 3.2.1. Participants

The purposive sampling technique was utilized for the recruitment of participants, with an inclusion criterion of OTs having at least one year of experience with SEN students and registered by the Allied Health Professional Council of Mauritius. The population of OTs registered by the Allied Health Professional Council of Mauritius was 63, of whom 8 refused to participate in the survey. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 55 OTs.

##### 3.2.2. Data Collection

The participants ( $n = 55$ ) were contacted personally via phone and email, requesting their voluntary participation in the study. Participants were explicitly informed of the study's aims, confidentiality, and data protection. Upon their verbal consent, the questionnaire was sent to them along with the consent form. Data was collected based on the participants' availability. They were called individually via the WhatsApp platform, where the survey was conducted.

##### 3.2.3. Ethical Considerations

Following the approval of the Research and Ethics Committee (REC) from the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mauritius, and the approval of the 'No Objection' certificate, which served as

supportive proof for the researchers to proceed with the fieldwork, all ethical considerations were meticulously observed. The respondents were duly informed of their right to withdraw from the study and were also guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided.

### 3.2.4. Data Analysis

Statistical software named IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and Microsoft Excel 2019 were utilized for the data analysis phase. The responses were illustrated using descriptive and inferential statistics in the form of tables and weighted means. Since the sample size was relatively small ( $n = 55$ ), the internal consistency and the construct validity of the questionnaire were tested. A measure of reliability that is most often used when an instrument contains groups of Likert-type statements is Cronbach's Alpha (Laerd Statistics, 2018a). The Cronbach Alpha resulting from the reliability tests for Stakeholder Involvement (0.723), Tools of Knowledge Transfer [Devices (0.826), Image-based (0.947), Play (0.915)] and Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools [Devices (0.939), Image-based (0.890), Play (0.916)] were considered as an acceptable level of internal consistency since all the coefficients were between 0.7 and 1.0 (Bujang, Omar, & Baharum, 2018) and 0.95 (Dabbagh, Seens, Fraser, & MacDermid, 2023; Nawi, Tambi, Samat, & Mustapha, 2020).

Furthermore, since face and content validity were already tested during the piloting phase of the questionnaire, SPSS was used to measure the construct validity of the instrument. To evaluate the construct validity and sample adequacy, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic was used. The KMO statistic for Stakeholder Involvement was 0.507, while for Tools of Knowledge Transfer, the values were Devices (0.750), Image-based (0.692), and Play (0.843). For the Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools, the values were Devices (0.787), Image-based (0.847), and Play (0.754). It is observed that the p-values for Bartlett's test were all significant at the 1% level, indicating that the constructs passed construct validity testing, since these values were less than 0.01 (Field, 2016). Thus, the constructs were well-defined in relation to the items measuring them (Chan & Idris, 2017), and the sample was adequate as all the KMO statistics were above 0.5 (Field, 2016).

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Correlation Analysis

In this study, correlation analysis was a preliminary step to evaluate the correlations between the constructs in the conceptual model, ensuring whether a multiple regression model could be tested (Berezovsky, 2023). The regression analysis aimed to determine the significance of the impacts of *Stakeholder Involvement* and *Tools for Knowledge Transfer* (*Devices*, *Image-Based*, and *Play*) on the *Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools*.

With the value of each construct being computed as the overall mean of the mean scores of the Likert statements measuring it, Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to measure the relationships, as given in Table 1. The SPSS-generated results indicate that the four independent constructs were significantly correlated with *Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools*, the dependent variable, at the 5% level at least.

**Table 1.** Correlation matrix of constructs.

Constructs	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) <i>Stakeholder Involvement</i>	1				
(2) <i>Devices</i>	0.510**	1			
(3) <i>Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools</i>	0.171	0.472**	1		
(4) <i>Play</i>	0.179	0.421**	0.802**	1	
(5) <i>Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools</i>	0.378**	0.344*	0.712**	0.523**	1

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .



These significant correlations presumably laid a strong foundation for investigating a multiple regression model, though correlation does not imply causation (Gershman & Ullman, 2023). However, it is often observed that a predictor variable, which is moderately or not correlated with its dependent variable (and thus unflagged by SPSS), may still be a significant determinant of that dependent variable, or vice versa.

#### 4.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

Based on the results of correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis was conducted to establish the significance of the four aforementioned predictors. However, it is essential to verify the data assumptions before performing multiple regression analysis to ensure that the data can be appropriately analyzed using this method (Laerd Statistics, 2018b). According to Dart (2017), eight assumptions should be checked (Table 2), the results of which are given in the right-hand column of the table.

**Table 2.** Results of data assumptions.

Assumption	Observations
Dependent variable	<i>The effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools</i> was measured on a continuous scale.
Outliers	No outliers were found, as all standardized residuals were within the interval $\pm 3.29$ (Dart, 2017) eight i.e., between -2.169 and 2.103.
Multicollinearity	All Variance Inflation Factor values are $\leq 3.004$ , i.e., less than 10 (Shrestha, 2021), confirming that there was no collinearity among the predictors.
Independence of residuals	The Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.418, i.e., between 1.5 and 2.5 (Bobbitt, 2021), confirming that the residuals were independent.
Normality of residuals	The standardized residuals approximately followed the standard normal distribution ( $Z \sim N(0, 1)$ ) with a mean of $-2.22 \times 10^{-15}$ and a standard deviation of 0.962.
Homoscedasticity	The scatterplot of standardized residuals showed homogeneity of variance (the point cloud was generally of the same width throughout).
Linearity	The standardized residuals on the scatterplot could be fitted by the x-axis.
Non-zero variances of predictors	<i>Stakeholder Involvement</i> (.191) <i>Devices</i> (.856) <i>Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools</i> (.423) <i>Play</i> (.625)

**Table 3.** Output of multiple regression analysis of predictors of effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools.

Dependent variable	Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools				
Method	Least Squares				
Sample	55				
Included observations	55				
	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-statistic	p-value
(Constant)	-0.151	0.562		-0.268	0.790
<i>Stakeholder Involvement</i>	0.598	0.180	0.347	3.333	0.002**
<i>Devices</i>	-0.141	0.095	-0.173	-1.485	0.144
<i>Image-based knowledge transfer tools</i>	0.993	0.179	0.857	5.543	0.000**
<i>Play</i>	-0.146	0.143	-0.154	-1.024	0.311
<i>R-squared</i>	0.602				
<i>Adjusted R-squared</i>	0.570				
<i>Durbin-Watson statistic</i>	2.418				
<i>F-statistic</i>	18.899				
<i>Sig.</i>	0.000**				

Note: \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table 3 is a summary of the analysis conducted in SPSS. The regression model was found to be significant at the 1% level ( $p < .01$ ,  $F = 18.899$ ), implying the significance of at least one predictor in the model. Additionally, the value of  $R^2$ , the coefficient of determination, indicated that the four predictors explained 60.2% of the variability in the *Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools*. This relatively high figure suggests that the model was a very good fit for the sample data.

The table of coefficients indicated that two predictors, namely *Stakeholder Involvement* ( $\beta = 0.347$ ,  $t = 3.333$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) and *Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools* ( $\beta = 0.857$ ,  $t = 5.543$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), significantly and positively impacted the *Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools* at the 1% level. With a  $\beta$ -coefficient of much higher magnitude (0.857), *Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools* was considerably more influential in determining the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools. *Devices* ( $\beta = -0.173$ ,  $t = -1.485$ ,  $p = 0.144$ ) and *Play* ( $\beta = -0.154$ ,  $t = -1.024$ ,  $p = 0.311$ ) did not have any significant impact on the *Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools* at the 5% level, with both their p-values being much higher than 0.05.

Based on the above results, the multiple regression model is given by.

$$\text{Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools} = -0.151 + 0.598 (\text{Stakeholder Involvement}) - 0.141 (\text{Devices}) + 0.993 (\text{Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools}) - 0.146 (\text{Play})$$

## 5. DISCUSSIONS

Despite the global consensus on the importance of inclusive education and the rights of students with SEN, implementing inclusive approaches in schools remains a significant challenge worldwide (Ainscow, 2020). A Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between various Knowledge Transfer (KT) tools and their effectiveness. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between image-based KT tools and effectiveness, with  $r = 0.712$ . Additionally, play was positively correlated with effectiveness, with  $r = 0.523$ . Stakeholder involvement showed a moderate positive correlation, with  $r = 0.378$ , and devices also demonstrated a moderate positive correlation, with  $r = 0.344$ . These results indicate that all the independent variables play a significant role in enhancing the academic pathways of students with SEN. The strongest correlation was observed with image-based KT tools, which aligns with Miller (2002), who states that the use of image-based KT tools creates mental images that facilitate the formation of ideas and texts. Students with SEN often face difficulties in processing and retaining information, which can impact their learning pace and depth of understanding across various subjects (Pérez-Ordás et al., 2021). Depending on the severity of their learning difficulties, acquiring academic skills such as reading, writing, comprehension, and mathematical abilities (Coates, 2011; Jylänki et al., 2022; Yılmaz & Soyer, 2018) can become a challenge. Therefore, visual representations and mental models are essential tools to support learning and comprehension in individuals facing such difficulties (Eitel & Scheiter, 2015) from Image-based KT tools might be an aid in the processing of complex ideas into simpler understanding. Consequently, it might be a reason why image-based KT tools have the strongest relationship among all the others, and hypothesis 2b, H<sub>1</sub>: Image-based KT tools have a significant positive relationship impact on the effectiveness of KT tools is accepted, and the null hypothesis, H<sub>0</sub>, is rejected.

The second strongest correlation is with Play KT tools. Prior literature suggests that play is commonly the medium for intervention delivery and an important therapeutic outcome in itself (Cordier et al., 2010) with children. Pedagogically, it has proved to be very beneficial for SEN, as through play, children learn survival skills and develop resilience to deal with life events and all skills that are essential for transitioning into adulthood (Lynch et al., 2016) and is an important resource for learning and developing critical motor, cognitive, and socioemotional skills (Cordier et al., 2010). Moreover, it enriches children's physical, social, cognitive, and emotional abilities, sense of well-being, promotes their skills and abilities to study and work, hones their relationships with peers and the community, helps them gain independence, confidence, self-esteem, interaction, resilience, curiosity, and coping with challenging situations (Fisch, 2013). Therefore, play is among those KT tools that touch all the spheres of a child with special



educational needs (SEN), starting from gaining independence to building skills for adulthood. This might serve as a background for accepting hypothesis 2c,  $H_1$ : Play has a significant positive relationship impact on the effectiveness of KT tools, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis,  $H_0$ .

Furthermore, a moderate correlation is detected from devices, which aligns with prior literature showing that ICT devices provide tremendous capacity to promote lifelong learning for all student classes, including those with special educational needs (Mushtaq & Bruneau, 2019) improve those students' motivation in learning (Baglama et al., 2018; Nordin et al., 2015) and enhanced the improvement of learning outcomes (Alotaibi & Almalki, 2016; Egaga & Aderibigbe, 2015) thus providing more justifications for accepting hypothesis 2a,  $H_1$ . Devices has a significant positive relationship impact on Effectiveness of KT tools and rejecting the null hypothesis,  $H_0$ .

Following devices, stakeholder involvement is found to have a moderate correlation. This joins a study made by Edick et al. (2023) that 74% of their participants agreed that collaboration with different stakeholders had a “positive impact on student success.” Since special education comprises a diverse range of students with varying ages, abilities, and learning styles, it requires teachers to engage with stakeholders to create a supportive and effective learning environment (Mulryan-Kyne, 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that several researchers have suggested that collaboration among key stakeholders can provide new and valuable insights into the learning journey of these students (Goodall et al., 2022; Moriña & Orozco, 2021; Nieminen, 2023), which provides grounds to accept hypothesis 1,  $H_1$ : Stakeholder involvement has a significant positive relationship impact on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis,  $H_0$ .

To complement the correlation analysis, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, revealing that two predictors, namely Stakeholder *Involvement* ( $\beta = 0.347$ ,  $t = 3.333$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) and *Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools* ( $\beta = 0.857$ ,  $t = 5.543$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), significantly and positively impacted the *Effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer Tools* at the 1% significance level. With a  $\beta$ -coefficient of much higher magnitude (0.857), *Image-Based Knowledge Transfer Tools* was considerably more influential in determining the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools. Research highlights that visual-based interventions respond to stimuli over selectivity by assisting students in focusing and maintaining attention to relevant stimuli (Shipley-Benamou et al., 2002) and can enhance children's abilities to independently complete unfamiliar or complex directions by condensing the content to only essential information (Williams et al., 2006). Additionally, they allow students to review cues, decreasing reliance on teacher prompts and increasing independence (Hodgdon, 1995). Moreover, visually based interventions support students' ability to shift attention (Quill, 1998), make abstract concepts more concrete (Peeters, 1997), and may be less socially stigmatizing than verbal reminders by adults or companions when in the presence of peers.

Furthermore, to enhance the learning process of SEN students, it is important to actively engage with stakeholders and involve them in the teaching process, creating a collaborative learning environment where students can observe and learn from the behaviors and actions of others (Bandura, 1986). Collaboration between teachers and allied health personnel is associated with greater implementation of accommodations and improved access and participation for students, supporting their educational outcomes (Asher & Nichols, 2016; Selanikyo et al., 2017; Villeneuve & Hutchinson, 2012; Vlcek et al., 2020). It is a best practice for professionals to share their expertise, develop shared problem-solving, and establish shared goals and strategies (Friend & Cook, 2013) and to provide development opportunities to build capacity in professionals (de Oliveira Borba et al., 2020; Vlcek et al., 2020). Hence, this aligns with the results of this study, which identified stakeholder involvement as the second predictor that significantly and positively impacted the effectiveness of KT tools.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The outcomes yielded from this research confirmed that stakeholder involvement and KT tools, namely devices, image-based, and play, had a significant correlation with the effectiveness of KT tools. Moreover, image-based knowledge transfer tools were much more influential in determining the effectiveness of knowledge transfer tools.

Undoubtedly, further studies in the fields of SEN and OT are needed to develop strategies using the outcomes obtained from the survey. Additionally, more research is necessary to explore the different KT tools used and their effects on specific disabilities falling under SEN. Nonetheless, one of the limitations of this study is that the research focused only on OT, thus requiring more input from other professionals working with SEN.

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**Transparency:** The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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