

The Relation of Interpersonal Communication and Sibling Support on Social Interactions of Autistic Children

Ni Luh Putu Yuniarti Suntari^{1*}, I Dewa Ayu Ketut Surinati², Ni Nyoman Hartati³

^{1,2,3}Polytechnic of Health, Denpasar, Indonesia; yuni.suntari@yahoo.com (Corresponding Author)

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ABSTRACT

Autism is a form of growth and development disorder, in the form of a set of symptoms due to certain neurological disorders that cause brain function not to work normally so it affects communication skills and social interaction skills. This study aims to determine the relationship between interpersonal communication and sibling support for the social interaction of children with autism. This research is an inferential study with a correlation test to see the relationship between variables. With a normal distribution of data. Using a cross-sectional approach. The sample was taken by total sampling method, with 32 respondents. Our result found that interpersonal communication (X1) correlates to social interaction (Y) with an r-score of 0.764 which can be concluded that there was a positive correlation between interpersonal communication and social interaction. We also found that sibling support (X2) correlates to social interaction with an r-score of 0.284 which is lesser than the r-table of 0.349, meaning that there was no correlation between sibling support and children's social interaction with autism. A crucial problem for autistic children is their difficulty in social interaction. Interpersonal communication and sibling support do not always have an impact on the development of social skills in autistic children. Parent involvement is an important aspect of the development of social skills. Interpersonal communication in autistic children is a matter of concern because it can help children's intellectual development in the field of education. Support from family, especially siblings is also a concern in the development of autistic children.

Keywords: autism; interpersonal communication; sibling support; social interaction

INTRODUCTION

Every parent hope to have children who are born healthy and perfect, but in reality, not all parents have healthy and normal children. Some parents give birth to children who suffer from autism or can be said to be children with special needs (Wardani, 2009). Autism is a form of growth and development disorder, in the form of a set of symptoms due to certain neurological disorders that cause brain function not to work normally. Therefore, it affects growth and development, communication skills, and social interaction abilities (Sunu, 2012). Autism is a developmental disorder of the brain and pervasive disorder characterized by disturbances in play, language, behavior, feelings and emotions, sensory, and repetitive behavior, impaired social interaction, and delays in communication (Huzaemah, 2010). Autistic Children in general around 40-50% have problems in communicating, both verbally and non-verbally (Yuwono, 2012). Autistic children experience the development of language skills very slowly or not at all (Soetjningsih & Rauh, 2013). Developmental differences with children in general, autistic children still have difficulty in conveying and receiving messages from other people. Because they have trouble communicating with other people. Interpersonal communication is an activity carried out directly between two or more people that allows for direct feedback (Rochmah, 2011).

WHO in 2020 predicts 1 in 160 children in the world will suffer from autism spectrum disorders (Directorate General of P3 of Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2020). That means that 1 in 160 children that were born had autism. The Indonesian Autism Foundation, Melly Budhiman, stated that there was a tremendous improvement. In 2000 the number of people with autism in Indonesia was estimated at 1:5,000 children, in 2010 it increased to 1:500 children (Budhiman, 2020).

There are 67 students in Denpasar State Special School/A with 32 autistic children. The range of children's education at Denpasar State Special School/A is from the first grade of Special Education of Elementary school to third grade of Special Education of Junior High School and the age range is 8-19 years.

Interpersonal communication in autistic children is important to have, because interpersonal communication helps children's intellectual development in the field of education, can meet social needs in children and help shape identity, through communicating with other people (Johnson in Supraktiknya, 2003).

The development of children (including children with special needs) is influenced by the surrounding environment through socialization. Children are socialized and supported by their families, schools, and communities. Children's lives are also very much determined by the form of family support. This can be seen if family support is good, then the child's growth and development is relatively stable, but if the child's family support is not good, then the child experiences obstacles in himself that can inhibit the child's psychology (Alimul in Sidik, 2014).

Support will be felt if it is obtained from people who are trusted by autistic children. That way someone will understand that other people will appreciate and love him (Rustiani in Sidik, 2014). Sources of family support can be in the form of internal family support, such as support from husband/wife, support from siblings, or external family social support (Friedman, Bowden, & Jones, 2010).

In addition to parents, siblings of the child themselves are believed by autistic children in the family. Compared to the relationship with parents, the relationship between siblings will last longer because of the age factor. That's why most parents hope that their siblings will take care of and accompany their siblings who have problems after their parents die (Marijani, 2003).

Social interaction is a real difficulty for autistic children to make social transactions with their environment. The weakness of autistic children in the field of social interaction is characterized by optimal inability like other children or in other words a failure to establish social interaction with nonverbal behavior. It can be felt that when talking to autistic children, they do not make eye contact, and are unable to show facial expressions or movements that are in accordance with the theme being discussed.

Samino in Anggraeni (2015), the government in its efforts to provide optimal education for autistic children has launched several educational programs for autistic children including early education services (early intervention programs and supporting therapy) and further education services (integrated or inclusive education, special classes or schools, orphanages, and homeschooling). Several programs have also been developed by the government, one of which is organizing seminars and workshops in the context of developing education for autistic children and organizing socialization of autistic children's education to the public, government officials, and practitioners related to social interaction problems experienced by autistic children. This study aims to determine the relationship between interpersonal communication, sibling support, and social interaction in autistic children in Denpasar State Special School/A.

METHOD

This study applied a correlative inferential study with a cross-sectional approach. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling, namely total sampling. There are 67 students in SLB/A Denpasar with 32 children with autism and a sibling. All autistic children were respondents to this research. The number of respondents in this study is 32 respondents according to the inclusion criteria (autistic children, have siblings. Parents give permission to be respondents). Data collection includes information on interpersonal communication, sibling support, and social interaction. Validity and reliability tests have been carried out.

Review ethically appropriate by Health Research Ethics Committee Polytechnic of Health, Denpasar. LB.02.03/EA/KEPK/0283/2018. In addition, it has received ethical and approval ethics in research, specifically autonomy, beneficence, justice, and confidentiality

RESULT

Characteristics of research respondents based on the child's age, gender, and elementary education level can be explained as follows.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Based on Children's Age

No	Child's Age	f	%
1	5 – 11	13	40.63
2	12 –16	17	53.13
3	17 –25	2	6.25
	Total	32	100.00

The results from table 1 above show that out of 32 respondents, 17 (53.13%) of respondents have an age range of 12-16 years, 13 respondents are in the age range of 5-11 years, and only 2 (6.25%) respondents who have an age range of 17-25 years.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents based on Gender

No	Child's Sex	f	%
1	Male	25	78.13
2	Female	7	21.88
Total		32	100.00

The results from table 2 above show that out of 32 respondents, the highest frequency was male. They are 25 (78.13%) respondents and only 7 (21.88%) respondents were female.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Education Level

No	Education Level	f	%
1	1 – 2 Class of Elementary school	4	12.50
2	3 – 4 Class of Elementary school	12	37.50
3	5 – 6 Class of Elementary school	16	50.00
Total		32	100.00

The results from table 3 above show that of the 32 respondents, who were in grade 1 and 2 of Elementary School, there were only 4 (12.50%) respondents with autism. Grade 3 and 4 of Elementary School were accounting for 12.5%, and grade 5 and 6 of Elementary School were accounting for 16 (50.00%) respondents with autism who were in that class.

Observations of research respondents based on research variables include interpersonal communication in autistic children, while the results of the observations can be seen as follows: interpersonal communication.

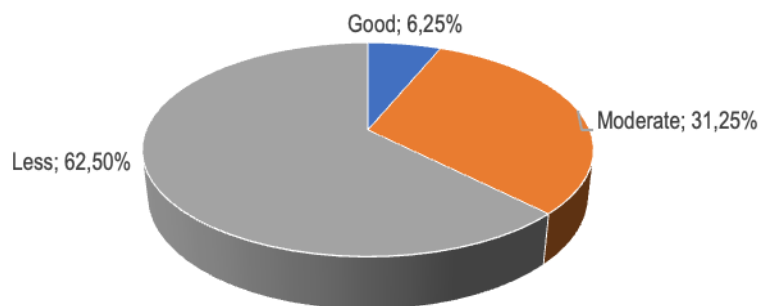


Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents based on Interpersonal Communication

The picture above shows that 62.5% of respondents are in the less group for interpersonal communication, 31.25% in the moderate range, and only 6.25% in the good range. The results of observations of research respondents based on research variables include a description of sibling support in autistic children, as follows.

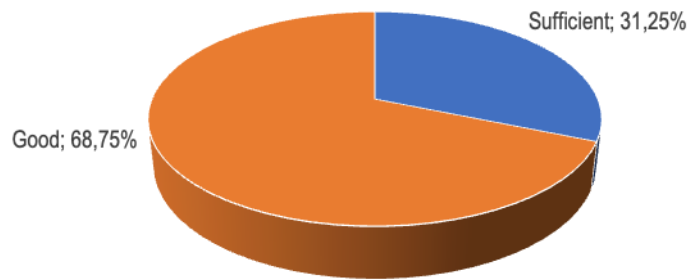


Figure 2. Distribution of Respondents based on Sibling Support

The picture above shows that 69% get good support from siblings. There are 31% that receive sufficient support.

The results of observations of research respondents based on research variables; social interaction in autistic children, as for the results of the observations can be seen as follows.

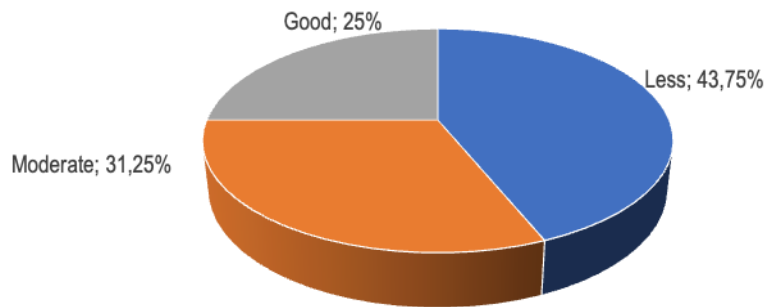


Figure 3. Distribution of Respondents based on Social Interaction

The picture above shows that 44% have less experience in social interaction, 31% are in the moderate category, and 25% are in the good category.

The results of the analysis of the relationship between the variables of interpersonal communication, sibling support, and social interaction of autistic children can be seen as follows.

Table 4. Interpersonal Communication Correlation, Sibling Support and Social Interaction in Autistic Children

		Social Interaction
Interpersonal Communication	Pearson Correlation	0.764**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	32
Sibling Support	Pearson Correlation	0.284
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.115
	N	32

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Value of Sig. (2-tailed) between interpersonal communication and social interaction is accounting for 0.000 > 0.05, which means there is a significant correlation between interpersonal communication variables and social interaction variables in autistic children. Furthermore, the relationship between sibling support and social interaction has Sig. (2-tailed) accounting for 0.115 > 0.05. It means that there is no significant correlation between the sibling support variable and the social interaction variable.

It is known that the calculated r value for interpersonal communication relationships (X1) with social interaction (Y) accounts for 0.764 > r table 0.349. It can be concluded that there is a relationship or correlation between interpersonal communication variables and social interaction variables. Furthermore, it is known that the calculated r value for the relationship between sibling support (X2) and social interaction (Y) accounts for 0.284 < r table 0.349.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no relationship or correlation between sibling support and social interaction. Because the calculated r-value or Pearson correlation in this analysis is positive, it means that the relationship between these variables is positive. In other words, the increase in interpersonal communication, and social interaction of autistic children will increase.

From the output above, it is known that the Pearson Correlation between interpersonal communication and social interaction variables, marked with **, has a correlation with a significance level of 1%.

DISCUSSION

The development of autistic children is very different from children in general. Autistic children tend to close themselves off and do not want to communicate with other people. Therefore, autistic children in interpersonal communication are different from normal children. The development of interpersonal communication is different from children in general. As children get older, it is increasingly visible how autistic children approach other people with unusual or different communication from normal children in general.

The results of this research data indicate that: based on gender, accounting for 25 (78%) respondents were male and only 7 (22%) respondents were female. According to the observations conducted by Soetjningsih, (2013), autism is more common in boys than girls with a ratio of 4:1. Faradz (2004) revealed that the chromosomal regions most frequently associated with autism are chromosomes 7,15, and X28. The genetic factor that causes autism is fragile X syndrome. Fragile X syndrome is a disease that is inherited in sequence, namely through the X chromosome. In this genetic disease, inheritance through the maternal route should only be female carriers, not showing symptoms of the disease and males who receive this inheritance will show clinical symptoms.

Based on the level of elementary school education, of the 32 respondents who were in grades 1 and 2 of elementary school, there were only 4 (13%) respondents with autistic children. Grades 3 and 4 of elementary school were accounting for 12.5%, and grades 5 and 6 of elementary school were 16 (50 %) of respondents with autistic children who were in that class. The importance of educational assistance is one of the effective ways in the growth and development of autistic children. From the explanation above, it is shown that the results of this study are mostly in 5th and 6th grades of autistic children. Therefore, special assistance is needed. Children are better in the educational process.

The data obtained from the research results, interpersonal communication in children with autism is normally distributed. This shows the condition of the population studied is relatively the same. This condition will be beneficial therefore the learning process and the provision of therapy can take place effectively considering that the condition of the population of autistic children is relatively the same. Observations of interpersonal communication on autistic children that have been carried out in Denpasar State Special School/A with 32 respondents found only 2 (6%) respondents had good interpersonal communication. Then 10 (31%) respondents had sufficient interpersonal communication and most of 20 (63%) respondents had poor interpersonal communication. Therefore, it indicates that the results of this study are most of the 63% of autistic children have poor interpersonal communication.

According to Durand & Barlow (2007), the characteristics of communication impairment in autistic children are characterized by delays in the development of spoken language, or maintaining conversations with other people, always using stereotyped, repetitive or idiosyncratic language, inability to role-play and imitate words.

The results of the research on the description of sibling support for autistic children that have been carried out at Denpasar State Special School/A with 32 respondents obtained good support results. They are 22 people (69%), having sufficient support accounting for 10 people (31%) and no respondents who have less support for autistic siblings.

The role of siblings cannot be separated from the role of parents. Children generally focus on their parents as their main source in the social learning process in the family. Fair treatment from parents for each child will reduce the possibility of sibling rivalry, so that mutual acceptance and care behavior will appear in every child (Ambarini, 2006). This gives children their own motivation to support their siblings.

Observations of social interaction in autistic children that have been carried out at Denpasar State Special School/A with 32 respondents showed that the social interaction ability of autistic children was included in the category of poor social interaction. They are accounting for 14 (44%). The category of social interaction was sufficient accounting for 10 (31%) respondents, and the good category is 8 (25%) respondents. This shows that most of the social interactions in autistic children in this study are included in the less category.

According to Yuwono (2012) social interaction is a real difficulty for autistic children to make social transactions with their environment. Autism is a condition of children who experience social interaction disorders that occur from birth or during development. Therefore, autistic children have difficulty in interaction. Autistic children have 3 characteristics of social interaction. Those are aloof where autistic children always withdraw or be alone, passive where autistic children

do not seem to care about others, and active but odd, in which children can approach other people but in an unusual way (Haryana, 2012).

This percentage difference in social interaction ability is caused by differences in characteristics and factors that influence social interaction. There are imitation, identification, sympathy, and suggestion. In addition, there are other factors that influence social interaction, namely internal and external factors. Factors from within the child include structural abnormalities of brain cells, poisoning during pregnancy, and gene or genetic disorders while factors from outside the child include the environment or society, therapists or teachers, and doctors (Kerti, Susilo, & Erwanto, 2013).

In this study, it was found a relationship between interpersonal communication variables with social interaction of autistic children with the value of Sig. (2-tailed) of $0.000 > 0.05$. It is known that the calculated r value for interpersonal communication relationships (X1) with social interaction (Y) is accounting for $0.764 > r$ table 0.349 . It can be concluded that there is a relationship or correlation between interpersonal communication and social interaction variables.

In line with the observations made by Taufiq (2016), fourth-grade elementary school students in Bambanglipuro Bantul District, found that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal communication and social interaction. Moreover, Farhan (2018) found a relationship between interpersonal communication and social interaction in class XI students of MAN 2 Tanah Datar.

Interpersonal communication is defined as the use of language or thoughts that occur within oneself, which are used as feedback to realize and understand others. This is a challenge in itself in social interaction in autistic children. The results of observations in this research show the relationship between interpersonal communication and social interaction.

In autistic children, this research shows intensive guidance and assistance from parents, teachers, and caregivers, in helping children overcome their limitations by being open, listening to others, and even meeting face-to-face. Interpersonal communication can help us communicate our internal needs and help us understand others better. Autistic children who receive guidance in interpersonal communication, learn to understand other people. Therefore, they can also interact better with other people.

The relationship between the sibling support variable and the social interaction of autistic children accounting for Sig. (2-tailed) of $0.115 > 0.05$, which means that there is no significant correlation between the sibling support variable and social interaction. The relationship between autistic children and their siblings does not run smoothly. Siblings need to be prepared by parents to understand autistic children. When parents do not carry out this role, siblings cannot provide optimal support for autistic children.

The results of this observation are not in line with several statements. Based on observations from Kharimah (2019) analysis of data from sibling support with social interaction abilities of children with special needs obtained a value (p -value= 0.001) = 0.05 . It means that there is a relationship between sibling support for children with special needs at Special School of Bintoro, Jember Regency. Likewise, a study conducted by Safitri & Solikhah (2020), found a significant increase in sibling support for the social interaction skills of children with special needs at Special School C in Yakut Purwokerto.

The role of siblings of autistic children will support the success of therapy for their autistic siblings if they play an active and continuous role in providing therapy for their autistic siblings. The role of siblings in helping autistic children master certain skills is not only when giving therapy at home, but is even greater if it is done in daily activities when they interact with each other (Ambarini, 2006). The most important thing is the quality of sibling support that autistic children get.

Parents with disabilities children prepare themselves with coping mechanisms, as a support for children. Observations by Ovina Intiyaskanti, Ikhtiarini Dewi, & Hadi Kurniyawan (2021); the description of a mother's coping mechanism in children with disabilities. Her study showed that the average maternal coping mechanism was 86.46. It is shown that the dominant indicators for respondents include religion (mothers believe there is wisdom in the problem), and behavioral disengagement (mothers fulfill their education rights and provide therapy or medication). In a family, support for children with disabilities must also be carried out by other family members, including siblings. Parents need to help sibling to understand this.

Cahya, Susumaningrum, & Muhammad Nur (2021) observes the importance of the involvement of family members in children with disabilities. Observed the involvement of fathers in caring for children with disabilities. The results obtained in this study were as many as 58 (86.6%) fathers admitted that they were involved in caring for their children, and as many as 47 children (70.1%) based on their father's recognition that they had a high degree of independence in carrying out daily activities ($r=-0.258$; $p=0.035$). This study recommends the importance of involving family members in children with disabilities, including autism.

According to a case study conducted by Ambarini (2006), in the first case of the four cases he studied, it was found that siblings here have a very large role in therapy for autistic children. Active involvement and asking questions

and asking for help to get items from autistic siblings will increase the autistic siblings' vocabulary and knowledge of these objects. In case II, siblings were also not actively involved but they always participated during the therapy. Sibling participation in therapy given to autistic siblings, made him master the materials given to autistic siblings such as counting, reading, and his knowledge of various colors. In case III, siblings were actively involved in providing therapeutic materials, but the involvement was mostly due to requests from parents. Siblings here don't seem interested or enthusiastic about teaching autistic siblings. He will be interested if it is a hobby. In case IV, the role of this sibling is more visible in daily activities. He and his autistic sibling spent a lot of time together, either playing or just watching television. The role of this sibling that seems clear is by his presence, helping autistic siblings understand the concept of roles and understanding certain rules. The higher the quality of support provided to autistic children; the more positive the child's development will be. A more in-depth observation of the quality of the role of autistic siblings in their daily activities is a limitation of this study. So, it needs to be considered in further research.

CONCLUSION

Interpersonal communication is something that needs to be considered in every individual, especially in autistic children. Interpersonal communication helps individuals understand themselves and how to behave when interacting with others. With its limitations, parents need to help autistic children do interpersonal communication. Another thing that autistic children need in social interaction is sibling support. They are siblings who accompany autistic children in daily life. What autistic children need is not only physically accompanied by siblings, but how the quality of the relationship. Parents with autistic children should also play a role in helping siblings improve the quality of their relationships with an autistic sibling.

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