



Involvement of Teachers and Parents in Developing Social Interaction of Autistic Students in Schools

Diajeng Tyas Pinru Phytanza, Veroyunita Umar, Mumpuniarti, Rafika Rahmawati

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

E-mail: diajengtyas@uny.ac.id

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bentuk keterlibatan guru dan orang tua dalam mengembangkan interaksi sosial anak autis di sekolah. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini dikembangkan berdasarkan teori keterlibatan guru dan orang tua menurut Epstein (2010) yang mencakup enam tipologi: pengasuhan anak, komunikasi, kesukarelaan, belajar di rumah, pengambilan keputusan, dan berkolaborasi dengan masyarakat. Penelitian dilakukan dengan menyebarkan kuesioner online menggunakan google form. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kuantitatif dengan analisis tabel pivot. Data tersebut dikelompokkan ke dalam format excel berdasarkan permasalahan penelitian, dihitung menggunakan analisis tabel pivot dan hasilnya diinterpretasikan dalam bentuk diagram pivot. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar guru telah memberikan pelatihan kepada orang tua tentang cara meningkatkan keterampilan interaksi sosial anak, namun kerjasama dengan pihak luar masih minim. Kebanyakan orang tua juga sudah aktif mengajarkan anaknya bagaimana berinteraksi sosial dengan baik.

Kata Kunci: keterlibatan guru; keterlibatan orang tua; interaksi sosial; siswa autis

Abstract: This study aims to determine the form of involvement of teachers and parents in developing social interaction of autistic children at school. The instruments used in this study were developed based on the theory of teacher and parent involvement according to Epstein (2010), which includes six typologies: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. The research was carried out by disseminating an *online* questionnaire using a *google form*. The data analysis technique used is quantitative descriptive with *pivot table analysis*. The data is grouped into excel format based on the research problem, calculated using *pivot table analysis* and the results are interpreted in the form of a *pivot* chart. The results of the study show that the majority of teachers have provided training to parents on how to improve children's social interaction skills, but collaboration with outside parties is still minimal. Most parents have also actively taught their children how to interact socially well.

Keywords: teacher involvement; parent involvement; social interaction; autistic students

INTRODUCTION

The academic assessment process in schools generally focuses on student performance in academic subjects. However, academic assessment is not only about showing good performance in academic subjects but also related to students' social involvement with others, both peers and school residents, in other words, the assessment of social communication skills and social attraction is currently a trend in the assessment of learning and language mastery in schools. Social interaction is not only important for forming friendships and building social relationships, but it also plays a role in curriculum-based activities that rely on group work and communication between peers.

Among the many characteristics of student learning, student involvement in the classroom is recognized as an important predictor of the success of student academic performance. Social interaction between students and teachers in the school

environment can be a factor that raises the sense of comfort and security of students who are less involved in learning (Elleseff, 2015).

Social interaction includes how children and adults use language in a variety of social situations and with different people. The main aspects of social interaction include social interaction, social cognition, pragmatics, receptive and expressive abilities. In the context of Education, understanding aspects of social interaction is essential for designing effective interventions for individuals with special needs. (Mulrine & Kollia, 2020).

In the first year of children's development, most of them are not yet able to say the actual words, but they are able to coordinate people and objects, get involved in social situations, for example communicate with their parents, family or caregivers intentionally even if they use gestures but have the same meaning . Different conditions occur in the development of

autistic children. (Guevara & Rodríguez, 2023; Meriem et al., 2020) Social interaction is one of the main challenges faced by children with autism spectrum in the learning environment. These difficulties are reflected in various problems such as understanding the perspective of others, engaging in mutual interactions, and understanding concepts such as friendship relationships. Social interaction involves a variety of cognitive processes, including perception, attention, memory, motivation, and emotions. Verbal and non-verbal skills will have an impact, including failure to tailor the choice of conversation topics to the needs of the interlocutor and the social context (Mackay et al., 2007; Volkmar et al., 2014).

Parents' incomprehension of their role in the development of communication and social interaction of autistic children can cause obstacles to children's development, for example, social interaction of children who experience problems, emotional instability of children, and sometimes unpredictable behavior of children that hinder their learning activities (Hayes & Watson, 2013).

This study aims to obtain an overview of information about the form of involvement of teachers and parents in the development of social interaction of autistic children. The results of the study are expected to provide an overview of the importance of teacher and parent involvement in supporting the development of social interaction of autistic children and provide practical guidance for the implementation of effective collaboration strategies in schools.

METHOD

This research uses a survey research method that involves several major stages, namely problem analysis, instrument development, dissemination and data analysis. The subjects of the study used were teachers and parents who have autistic children in the Yogyakarta area. Data collection is carried out by disseminating validated instruments to respondents through google forms.

The instrument developed is based on Epstein's theory of teacher and parent involvement in learning which includes parenting skills, communication, volunteer assistance, home learning, decision-making, and collaboration. This matrix includes theories, dimensions, indicators, question grids and measurement scales. The data analysis technique used is quantitative descriptive with pivot table analysis. The data is grouped into excel format based on the research problem, calculated using pivot table analysis and the results are interpreted in the form of a pivot chart. The results of the data analysis are used as a basis for compiling research conclusions and recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This research was conducted using a questionnaire distributed using a *google form*. The total questionnaire filled out is 28 questionnaires and all questionnaires can be processed. This research was conducted to determine the form of involvement of teachers and parents in developing the social interaction skills of autistic children.

Characteristics Responden

The characteristics of the respondents in this study are teachers and parents who have children with autism disorders in the Yogyakarta Region. There were 28 respondents who participated in this study. The comparison of the percentage of respondents between teachers and parents can be seen in diagram 1.

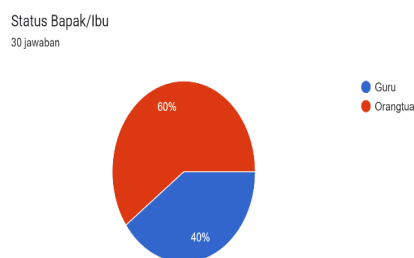


Diagram 1. Comparison of the number of respondents based on status

The results in diagram 1 above show that the comparison of respondents based on their status shows that there are more parents than teacher respondents. The diagram above shows that as many as 60% of the total 28 respondents are parents and the remaining 40% of respondents are teachers.

Teacher Involvement in the Development of Social Interaction of Autistic Children

Based on the data processed, there are various dimensions of involvement carried out by teachers, namely:

1) Parenting Dimensions

Based on the data obtained, it can be seen that the majority of teacher respondents said that they rarely provide mentoring and training directly to parents about positive parenting to improve children's social interaction skills both by teachers themselves and through experts. This data can be seen from the large percentage of teachers who choose infrequently, which is 58.3%. On the other hand, good conditions were seen when 33.3% of teachers almost always provided assistance and training and 8.3% of teachers

all the time provided assistance and training to parents about positive parenting. The data can be seen in the following diagram 2.

Guru memberikan pendampingan dan pelatihan secara langsung kepada orangtua tentang pengasuhan positif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan interaksi sosial anak
12 jawaban

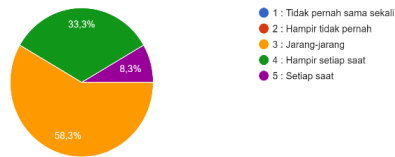


Diagram 2. Frequency of providing mentoring and parenting training for parents

2) Communication dimensions

Communication between teachers and parents is an important aspect of education, especially in the context of teaching students with special needs. Here are some key points regarding this communication based on the available data:

a) Communication Methods

Teachers use a variety of methods to communicate with parents, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls, *WhatsApp* messages, or even via email. The data records the existence of a phone number or *WhatsApp* used for contacts. The frequency of this communication varies, from “All the time” to “Infrequently”. Data shows that 42% of teachers rarely communicate with parents either directly or through experts, both verbally and with technology support. This result can be seen from the following diagram 3.

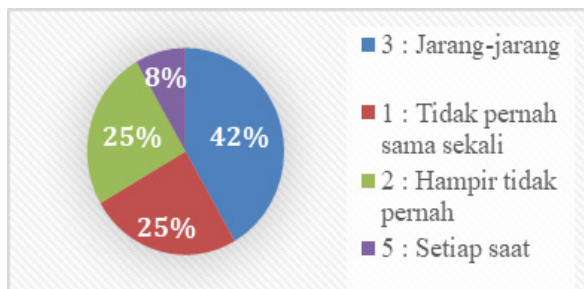


Diagram 3. The level of communication between teachers and parents

b) Communication Materials:

The content of communication is usually related to parenting techniques, strategies to support learning at home, and ways to improve children’s social interaction and independence. This material can include the use of objects around the house as learning aids.

3) Dimension of voluntary assistance

Parental involvement in school activities is essential to support students’ academic success and social-emotional development. One of the efforts

made by schools to involve parents is by recruiting and arranging parental assistance and support in every school activity, for example, inviting parents to be involved as volunteers in school activities such as sports events, *outing classes* and activities involving the community. This involvement helps build stronger school communities and strengthen relationships between parents, students, and school staff.

4) Decision-making dimensions

Efforts that have been made by teachers and schools in relation to their involvement in decision-making for children are by forming committees or school boards involving parent representatives. These committees can play a role in decision-making that affects school policies and programs. This action will give parents the opportunity to participate in the educational process of their children.

5) Collaboration dimension

Creating an inclusive learning environment is key to encouraging social interaction for students, such as classroom settings that support collaboration between students or students with teachers, the use of collaborative learning strategies, and encouraging students without disabilities to interact and cooperate with autistic students. The results of the study showed that 91.7% of respondents did not collaborate with outside parties and 8.3% of teachers collaborated with outside parties. The data is presented in the following diagram 4.

Sekolah tidak melakukan kolaborasi dengan pihak luar
12 jawaban

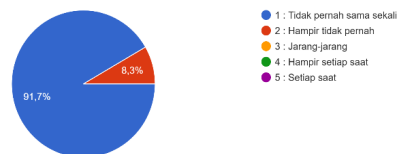


Diagram 4. The level of collaboration between teachers and external parties

The form of collaboration carried out with outside parties is collaboration with parents related to a joint reading program where parents and children read the same book and discuss the books read, or daily activities at home such as gardening, homework that involves the participation of parents and children while at home. The school also collaborates with the surrounding community to create opportunities for autistic students to interact with the community, namely by visiting public places such as stores, participation of autistic students in community events such as competitions, and entertainment events so that it can increase the participation of autistic students in a social context.

Forms of Parental Involvement in the Development of Social Interaction of Autistic Children

Based on the data analyzed, it can be seen

several aspects related to parental involvement in accompanying and directing social interaction for their children with autism as follows.

1) Parenting Dimensions

Based on the results of data analysis, the form of parenting carried out to train social interaction for their children is by doing several activities, namely:

Implementation of Rules and Feedback:

Most parents tend to apply rules and provide feedback on their children’s social interactions with a frequency of “Almost all the time” to “All the time”.

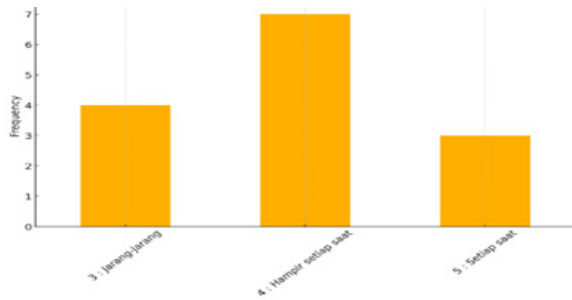


Diagram 5. Distribution of frequency of giving feedback

Teaching Social Interaction:

Many parents teach how to interact socially well with friends, siblings, and teachers consistently, with many respondents choosing “Almost all the time.”

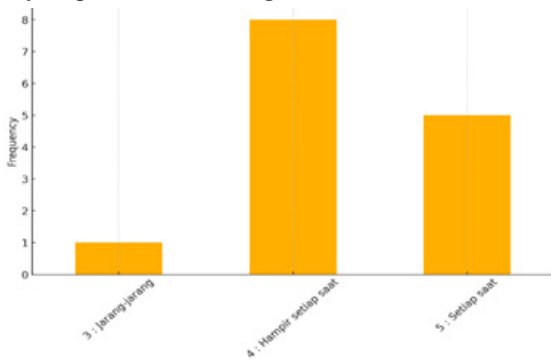


Diagram 6. Distribution of teaching frequency of social interaction

Freedom in Social Interaction:

There is variation in terms of the freedom given to children to interact socially without direction. Most respondents indicated less frequent freedom with the choice of “Infrequently” to “Almost all the time”.

2) Communication dimensions

Based on data analysis, the results were obtained in general, parental communication seemed quite active and positive based on the aspects seen from the data. Parents are often involved in the child’s daily activities and provide ongoing direction and assistance. Parents often ask for their children’s opinions about activities

carried out together, showing two-way communication and respect for children’s opinions. The distribution of answers shows that some parents ask for their child’s opinion “rarely”, while many also do so “all the time”.

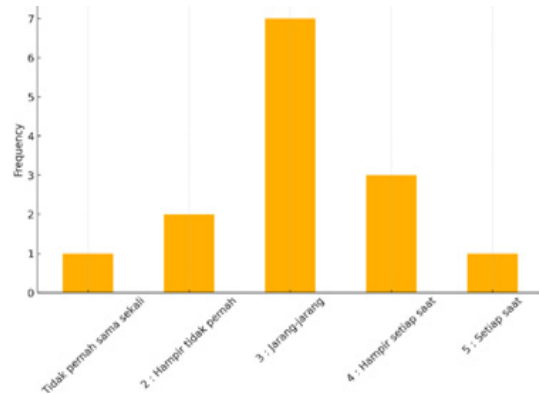


Diagram 7. Distribution of the frequency of granting freedom in Social Interaction

3) Dimension of voluntary assistance

Based on the results of the analysis, information was obtained that parents carried out several voluntary supports to support children’s social interaction, namely by being involved in outing class activities carried out by the school both as participants and committees, parents also gave their children the flexibility to play with their peers and the environment around their homes. The frequency of this involvement was dominated by infrequent answers with a percentage of 50%.

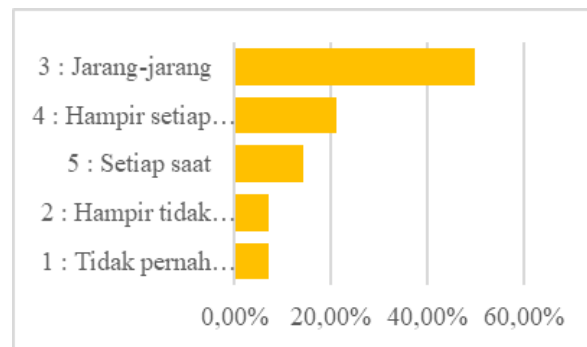


Diagram 8. Frequency distribution of volunteer aid involvement

4) Dimensions of learning at home

The form of parental involvement in children’s learning at home was concluded that overall, learning assistance by parents seemed quite active and positive. Parental involvement includes:

a) Most parents accompany their children’s learning by using objects in the surrounding environment. This shows that parents are striving to utilize the available resources creatively and practically to support the child’s learning process.

b) Parents often ask for their children’s opinions about activities they do together. This shows that

parents not only provide direction, but also listen and appreciate the child’s views. This can increase the active participation of children in the learning process.

c) Parents accompany their children to see their favorite videos/movies and then the children retell the content of the movie/video they watched to their parents in everyday language. This activity has been carried out by parents even though it is rare, as can be seen from the following diagram 9.

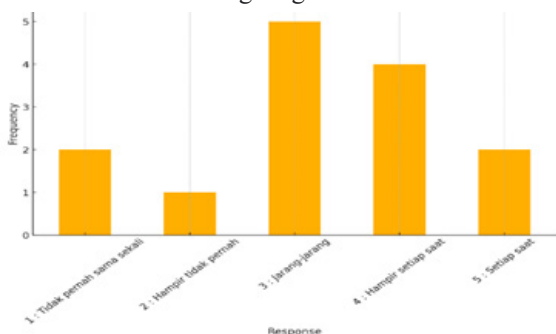


Diagram 9. Distribution of the frequency of storytelling activities

Active and positive learning mentoring can contribute significantly to children’s academic and personal development, helping them to become more confident and independent in the learning process.

5) Decision-making dimensions

Based on the distribution of the analyzed answers, information was obtained that the form of parental involvement in decision-making was shown by asking for children’s opinions about activities to be carried out together.

6) Collaboration dimension

Based on the analysis of the data, the dominant answer showed that many children under participated in social activities organized in their environment. Most parents rarely involve their children in social activities such as competitions held in the community. This may be due to a variety of reasons, such as lack of time, opportunity, or perhaps a lack of awareness of the importance of social engagement for children. The frequency distribution of children’s involvement in the community is presented in diagram 10.

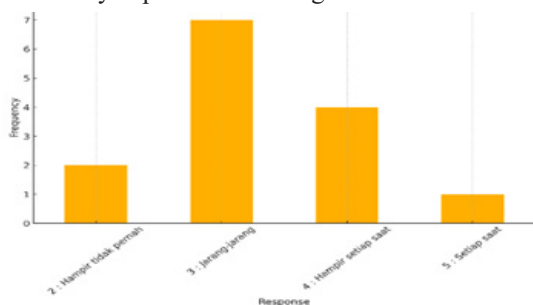


Diagram 10. Distribution of frequency of children’s involvement with the community

With increased involvement in community activities and support for social interaction, children can develop better social skills, build confidence, and feel more connected to their community.

Discussion

Based on the results obtained, it can be seen that the majority of teachers provide mentoring and training directly to parents, but the frequency varies. It is important to increase the frequency of this mentoring so that children’s social interaction skills can develop better.

Communication between teachers and parents is an ongoing and dynamic process that plays an important role in supporting children’s education, especially for those with special needs. Teachers should proactively provide relevant guidance and training, while parents should strive to be active and responsive in communicating and implementing the advice provided. Thus, it is hoped that a better learning environment will be created and support the overall development of children. Some of the challenges that may be faced in communication between teachers and parents include the busyness of parents, lack of understanding or awareness of the importance of involvement in children’s education, and limitations in technology or access to communication. (Triwardhani et al., 2020)

The involvement of schools in supporting the social interaction of students with special needs is essential for their development. Through training and mentoring, social programs, collaboration with the community, integrated approaches, inclusive learning environments, teacher training, and the use of technology, schools can create diverse and supportive opportunities for students to develop their social skills. This not only helps them in the context of school but also prepares them for life outside of school. (Kushwaha & Singh, 2023; Nadhiroh & Ahmadi, 2024)

Schools can take a variety of steps to involve parents in school activities, from regular communication to collaborative programs and the use of technology. Effective parent involvement not only supports students’ academic and social development but also creates a more integrated and supportive school community. (Hermanto & Pamungkas, 2023; Saefullah et al., 2023)

Decision-making that involves children in the process can provide many benefits for their development, including improved critical thinking skills, communication skills, and a sense of responsibility. In addition, it can also strengthen the bond between parents and children and create a harmonious and respectful family environment.

CONCLUSSION AND SUGGESTION

This study shows that the involvement of teachers and parents is very important in developing social interaction of autistic children. Although there have been significant efforts from teachers and parents, the frequency and quality of involvement still need to be improved, especially in terms of collaboration with external parties and children's participation in social activities. The implementation of effective collaborative strategies between schools, parents, and communities can provide better support for the development of social interaction in autistic children.

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