

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND THE SOCIAL INTERACTION OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN IN SLB N SURAKARTA

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine the correlations between parental social support for children with autism and the social interaction of children with autism at SLB N Surakarta. This research is a correlational quantitative study. The subjects of the research were 31 parents who have children aged 7-20 years. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. Data collection technique using Likert scale instruments, consisting of a social support instrument and a social interaction instrument. The social support questionnaire used was based on the theory of Wangi & Budisetyani (2020), which has 4 aspects and was developed into 40 statement items. The reliability test of the instrument used Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.837. The social interaction questionnaire based on the theory of Syahril Syarbaini and Rudiyantha (as cited in Setyawan, 2016), which has 2 aspects and was developed into 40 statement items. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test on the social interaction instrument yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.905. The research results were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation test, yielding a calculated r-value of 0.618, with a significance level of  $p(0.000) < p(0.05)$ , which means  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong correlation between parental social support for children with autism and the social interaction of children with autism.

**Keywords:** Autism, social support, social interaction

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara dukungan sosial orang tua anak autis dengan interaksi sosial anak autis di SLB N Surakarta. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif korelasional. Subjek penelitian adalah 31 orang tua yang memiliki anak berusia 7-20 tahun. Teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan adalah *non-probability sampling* dengan *purposive sampling*. Teknik pengumpulan data penelitian menggunakan dua instrumen skala likert yang terdiri dari instrumen dukungan sosial dan instrumen interaksi sosial. Kuisioner dukungan sosial yang digunakan merupakan kuisioner ujicoba terpakai yang berdasar kepada teori Wangi & Budisetyani (2020) yang memiliki 4 aspek dan dikembangkan menjadi 40 butir pernyataan. Uji reliabilitas instrumen menggunakan *Cornbach's Alpha* dengan koefisien korelasi 0,837. Kemudian, kuisioner interaksi sosial yang digunakan adalah kuisioner uji coba terpakai yang berdasarkan pada teori Syahril Syarbaini dan Rudiyantha (dalam Setyawan, 2016) yang memiliki 2 aspek dan dikembangkan menjadi 40 butir pernyataan. Uji reliabilitas Cornbach's Alpha pada instrumen interaksi sosial memperoleh hasil koefisien korelasi 0,905. Hasil penelitian dianalisis menggunakan uji korelasi *pearson product moment* memperoleh nilai r hitung 0,618, dengan taraf signifikansi  $p(0,000) < p(0,05)$  maka  $H_0$  ditolak dan  $H_a$  diterima. Sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa hubungan antara dukungan sosial orang tua anak autis dengan interaksi sosial anak autis memiliki korelasi kuat.

**Kata kunci:** Autis, dukungan sosial, interaksi sosial

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## INTRODUCTION

Autism is a disorder that is predominantly caused by hereditary factors, resulting in abnormal development of an individual's nervous system (Yahya et al., 2023). According to Yuwono (2015), autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that persists throughout life, affecting aspects such as communication, language, behavior, and social interaction. Autism symptoms can be observed in children under the age of 3 (Soendari, 2016). According to BPS data (2022), Indonesia's population growth reached approximately 1.17%, with a total population of 275.8 million, including around 3.3 million individuals with autism, and an increase of approximately 500 cases each year. Data from the Kemendikbud (2021) indicates that there are 530 children with autism in Central Java.

Children with autism have characteristics such as difficulties in communication, social interaction, sensory processing, overly active play patterns, a tendency to isolate themselves, and emotional disturbances (Powers in Iswari & Nurhastuti, 2018). Additionally, (Iswari & Nurhastuti, 2018) state that the impacts of autism include challenges in social interaction, communication, play, as well as in activities and interests.

Social interaction is a crucial aspect of human life, including for children with autism Mulyadi & Liauw (2020) state that social interaction is a reciprocal relationship that mutually influences the participants, involving actions and reactions between more than one individual, such as individual to individual, individual to group, or group to group. Factors that influence social interaction, according to Batinah et al. (2022), include parenting styles, environment, peer relationships, and the use of gadgets.

Syahrial Syarbaini and Rudiyanita (in Setyawan, 2016) state that there are two conditions for social interaction to occur: social contact and communication. Social contact can happen when there is physical interaction or emotional engagement, which can be either direct or indirect. Communication occurs when there is an effort to convey information from one individual to another.

One of the efforts to support the success of children with autism in social interaction is the support from the family, especially parents. The family is the first place for a child's growth and development (Handayani, 2016). One source of social support can come from the family, as both the father and mother are always the first and most important figures in the life of an adolescent (Amseke, 2018). According to Sarafino (in Amseke, 2018), social support is a form of care, comfort, appreciation, and assistance provided by an individual or group to another individual.

Social support can be categorized into four types: emotional support, esteem support, direct support, and informational support. One source of social support can come from the family, as both the father and mother are always the first and most important figures in an adolescent's life (Amseke, 2018). According to Kusriani & Prihartanti (2013), social support from parents is essential because it provides a sense of comfort, both physically and psychologically, for the child.

Based on research by Yulisetyaningrum et al (2018), it was found that some children with autism still receive insufficient social support from their parents. This study involved 41 respondents and found

that 65.9% of children with autism had good socialization skills, and 63.4% had good social support. Respondents with poor social support, accounting for 0.97%, had families that were closed off or rarely visited their children.

Based on interviews conducted with a teacher at SLB N Surakarta, there are several children with autism who still struggle with social interaction, such as difficulty controlling emotions, exhibiting aggressive behavior, avoiding eye contact when speaking, and having trouble expressing their feelings. Some parents of children with autism at SLB N Surakarta have not yet provided optimal social support to their children, such as material support with adequate facilities, for example, by not introducing them to their surroundings. As a result, children with autism at SLB N Surakarta still seem to struggle with social interaction.

There is a possibility that one of the factors contributing to the optimal social interaction of children with autism is parental social support. Based on this background, the researcher is interested in conducting a study on "The Relationship Between Parental Social Support and the Social Interaction of Children with Autism in Surakarta"

## METHOD

This research was conducted using correlational quantitative research to determine the relationship between one or more variables. Arikunto (2014) stated that correlational research is a type of research aimed at determining whether there is a relationship between two or more variables, the degree of correlation, and the significance of that relationship. The sample in this study consisted of 31 parents with autistic children aged 7 to 20 years at SLB N Surakarta.

The data collection technique used was a questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale instrument. The validity tests employed were content validity and construct validity. Content validity was measured using Aiken's V formula and validated by experts. Meanwhile, construct validity was tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation.

For the social support instrument, the Aiken's V formula test on the items resulted in the lowest value of 0.758333 and the highest value of 0.975. In the Pearson product-moment construct validity test, out of 40 items, 18 were valid based on the criteria of  $r_{table} > 0.355$  and  $Sig. < 0.05$ . For the social interaction instrument, the Aiken's V formula test on each item resulted in the lowest value of 0.775 and the highest value of 0.975. The construct validity test using the Pearson method resulted in 30 valid items and 10 invalid items out of 40. 30 items were valid based on the criteria of  $r_{table} > 0.355$  and  $Sig. < 0.05$ .

The reliability test in this study used Cronbach's Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha for the social support instrument was 0.837, while for the social interaction instrument, it was 0.905. Nunnally, as cited in Ghazali (2016), stated that an instrument can be considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is greater than 0.60. Therefore, it can be concluded that both instruments are reliable because Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.60$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted on June 21, 2024, at SLB N Surakarta. A total of 31 respondents met the criteria for the study. The characteristics of the respondents, including age, last education, and occupation, are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Age of respondents

No	Age	Subjects	Percentage
1.	28 – 30 years old	2	6%
2.	31 – 40 years old	14	45%
3.	41 – 50 years old	11	35%
4.	51 – 58 years old	4	13%

Table 2. Highest level education

No	Last education	Subjects	Percentage
1.	Junior High School	7	23%
2.	High School	14	45%
3.	Bachelor	9	29%
4.	Master's Degree	1	3%

Table 3. Occupation of respondent

No	Occupation	Subjects	Percentage
1.	House Wife	18	58%
2.	Civil Servant/Militaru/Police	6	19%
3.	Employee	4	13%
4.	Entrepreneur	2	6%
5.	Laborer	1	3%

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the subjects are aged between 28 and 58 years. The largest group of subjects falls within the age range of 31 to 40 years. Table 2 shows that the subjects have the highest level of education ranging from Junior High School to Master's degree. The highest percentage of education level is at the Senior High School level, and the lowest is at the Master's degree level. Additionally, Table 3 shows that the subjects' occupations range from housewives, workers, entrepreneurs, private employees, to civil servants/military/police. The most common occupation among the subjects is being a housewife, while the least common is being a worker. The social support provided by the parents of autistic children at SLB N Surakarta has the following frequency distribution:

Tabel 4. Social Support Data Frequency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderate	2	6.5	6.5	6.5
	High	13	41.9	41.9	48.4
	Very High	16	51.6	51.6	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

The social support provided by the parents of autistic children at SLB N Surakarta is divided into three categories: moderate at 6.5%, high at 48.4%, and very high at 51.6%. Based on this data, the

highest category of social support is 'very high,' at 51.6%. Therefore, the social support provided by the parents of autistic children falls into the 'very high' category. Additionally, the social interaction instrument has data descriptions as shown in Table 5.

Tabel 5. Social Interaction Data Frequency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderate	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
	Hight	6	19.4	19.4	22.6
	Very High	24	77.4	77.4	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Based on the table, the social interaction of autistic children at SLB N Surakarta is divided into three categories: moderate at 3.2%, high at 22.6%, and very high at 77.4%. Therefore, the category with the highest frequency is 'very high'.

Pearson product-moment correlation test can be used if it meets the prerequisites of normality and linearity tests (Hulu & Sinaga, 2019). Data is considered normal if Asymp. Sig > 0.05. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test for social support yielded a significance of 0.200 for both research instruments. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test resulted in a significance of 0.658 for social support and 0.472 for social interaction. These results indicate that the data for both instruments is normally distributed. Data can be considered linear and significant if deviation from linearity sig. < 0.05 and F count < F table. The calculated F value is 1.403 and deviation from linearity is 0.287. Variables X and Y are said to have a linear relationship if F count < F table and deviation from linearity > 0.05. The table indicates that the df value (18;11) is 2.65, so the result shows that F count (1.403) < F table (2.65) with a significance level of deviation from linearity (0.287) > 0.05. It can be concluded that the social support variable and the social interaction variable have a linear relationship.

The results of the normality and linearity tests have met the prerequisites. The data was then analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation. The analysis of the research data yielded an r value of 0.618 with a significance level  $p(0.00) < p(0.05)$ , thus the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted. The correlation coefficient is determined by the r value, indicating a strong correlation. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is a significant relationship between parental social support and the social interaction of autistic children.

Syaputri & Afriza (2022) state that for a child to grow and develop optimally, parental support and involvement are necessary to help stabilize the child. Parental social support will assist the child in daily life. The family is the primary environment for a child's growth and development (Handayani, 2016). Social support can include emotional support, esteem support, tangible support, and informational support (Wangi & Budisetyani, 2020). Emotional support helps children feel loved, esteem support helps them feel valued, tangible support involves assisting the child in daily social interactions, and informational support increases the child's knowledge.

Social interaction can be influenced by parenting patterns, environment, friends, and gadget use (Batinah et al., 2022). Parental guidance can affect a child's development in learning all aspects of social life or rules within the community. Thus, a child's social interaction can improve when supported by parental social support.

## CONCLUSION

This research used Pearson's product-moment correlation statistics to test the hypothesis. Based on the data analyzed using SPSS 25, the results showed a calculated  $r$  value of 0.618 with a significance level of  $p(0.000) < p(0.05)$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between parental social support for autistic children and the social interaction of autistic children.

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