

Parental communication, language and personal social development of preschool children

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ABSTRACT

The communication process between parents and children is essential, as children's language and social development are influenced by communication patterns and interactions within the family. To prevent delays in language and social development, it is important to optimize communication between parents and children. This study sought to identify patterns of parental communication, language development, and personal-social development in preschoolers as well as the relationship between parental communication and the language and personal-social development of preschoolers at PAUD Bunga Pelangi, Polehan, Malang City. The research design used correlational analytics with a *cross sectional* approach conducted on a sample of 39 children and their mothers. The data collection tools used were in the form of a parental communication questionnaire with 20 statement items, and a *Denver Development Screening Test (DDST) II* sheet. The data was analyzed using the *Spearman Rank Test*. The results of the study showed that most children with positive parental communication had normal language and social personality development. With a p value of less than 0.05, the findings demonstrated a significant and fairly robust correlation between preschoolers' linguistic and social personality development and parental communication. Based on the results of the study, parents should optimize communication with children so that children's development, especially language and social personality development of preschoolers, can run optimally according to their age.

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INTRODUCTION

Child development is very important and has a great influence on human life. Development is the enhancement of increasingly intricate bodily structures and abilities in speech and language, fine and gross motor skills, and social independence. (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2020). Throughout childhood, the body grows at a consistent rate of 5–6 cm annually. These rates

of growth are normal for youngsters who are healthy and fed a nutritious diet. Human postnatal brain growth is most fast during infancy and childhood (Bogin, 2015). Preschoolers experience significant physical and personality changes. As for the child's developmental process, it can happen naturally, but the process is highly dependent on adults or the baby's parent (Daud et al., 2021). According to Erikson's theory, during infancy, individuals experience the trust versus mistrust stage. At this phase, the baby's trust in their parents is formed thru the affection they receive. Meanwhile, according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, infants are currently in the sensory and motor development stage (Slavin, 2011).

Child development monitoring is necessary to detect potential problems early and provide appropriate treatment (Jeong et al., 2021). According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2018), the prevalence of stunted and developmentally delayed children under five years old is 28.7%, and Indonesia ranks third with the highest prevalence in Southeast Asia (Sukamto et al., 2021). Moreover, data from the 2018 ECDI analysis (integration of Riskesdas and Susenas), shows discrepancies among developmental dimensions: literacy-numeracy and social-emotional skills lag behind physical and learning domains (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, 2020). These national figures cast a spotlight on the widespread nature of developmental vulnerabilities that may be linked to communication environments at home.

Based on data Health Services Coverage for Children Aged 12-59 Months in Malang City from 2018 to 2023, the coverage was still at 89.1%. Meanwhile, the largest number of children age 12-59 months served by SDIDTK was the Puskesmas Kendalkerep, with 3,774 children (Dinas Kesehatan Kota Malang, 2024). The Puskesmas Kendalkerep has four working areas, including Jodipan Village, Kesatrian Village, Bunulrejo Village, and Polehan Village. Based on data from the coverage report for PAUD students served by SDIDTK by the Puskesmas Kendalkerep, the village with the highest developmental disorders among the Puskesmas Kendalkerep working areas is Polehan Village, with 9 children experiencing language development disorders and 6 children experiencing social development disorders.

The main cause is the lack of stimulation in the form of active communication from parents to children (Anggarwati et al., 2018). Effective communication has been proven to play an important role in children's character development and speaking abilities. A supportive environment, training, and guidance from parents/educators greatly influence a child's speaking ability. Parent-child relationships, especially communication, are very important for stimulating children to increase vocabulary. However, most parents do not realize that communication or dialogue between parents and children has a great influence on children's development, both language skills and children's social abilities (Mukhtahira et al., 2024).

According to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) in the Indonesian Child Profile (2019), it is stated that children whose parents are busy doing activities outside the home all day sometimes come home already feeling tired to accompany their children to play and so on, causing a lack of time with children. In fact, parental involvement significantly influences the development of early childhood social skills, including the ability to share, communicate, collaborate, and manage emotions. A supportive family environment plays a major role in shaping children's social skills (KPPPA, 2019).

According to research from Djamarah (2004), "Children's ability to pronounce words is the result of learning through imitation (imitation) of the sounds that children hear from others. (especially his parents)". Therefore, parents must be a good example because they will be imitated by children, both in speaking and communicating. In daily life, parents often unconsciously give children a bad example. Sometimes parents ask for help from children using loud and yelling tones, parents do not give children the opportunity to share everything and express their desires and opinions, speak rudely to children, restrain children too much and so on. The influence of parents' attitudes, behaviors, and habits in providing care to children will cause the child to have an improper attitude such as children will have a stubbornness, stubbornness, spoiled, liar, lazy,

and have low self-confidence (Fadhilah, 2018).

The efforts made by the government to overcome the problem of child growth and development disorders are contained in PMK number 25 of 2014 article 2 (b) which states that the Regulation of Child Health Efforts aims to ensure optimal growth and development of children in accordance with their potential. Articles 22, 23 and 24 also mention child growth and development monitoring. Early Detection of Growth and Development (DDTK) in toddlers and preschool children is a government effort to improve the quality of life of children in order to achieve optimal growth and development both physically, mentally, emotionally and socially and have multiple intelligence in accordance with their genetic potential (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2014). The implementation of SDIDTK for toddlers is the role of healthcare workers, in this case, midwives. Midwives are responsible for determining the success of SDIDTK coverage for toddlers. According to the Minister of Health Decree Number 28 of 2017 concerning the registration and practice of midwives, Article 20 states that one of the midwifery services that must be provided to children is monitoring child growth and development (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2017).

One of the efforts that can be made to overcome delays in children's language and social development is to optimize communication patterns between parents and children. According to Afkarina (2021), parents can use communication methods such as storytelling. Storytelling has a special influence including to develop children's abilities, educate, advise, and provide moral education to their children. Not only telling stories, parents should often spend time with their children by paying attention and giving more affection. In addition, the role of the father is very important in the social development of children, as explained in the research Aisyah et al. (2019) that the role of the father is very closely related to the social development of children. Students who are not close to their fathers have less social interaction with their friends. On the other hand, students whose fathers always take the time to interact with their children every night show social behavior, which is seen from good manners and interaction with their environment. From the description of the previous research above, it is stated that parental communication affects children's language and social development.

Building upon these studies, the present research contributes by strengthening the evidence that parental communication is significantly associated with both language and social development among preschool-aged children. While earlier studies (Anggarwati et al., 2018; Mukhtahira et al., 2024; Afkarina, 2021; Aisyah et al., 2019) have highlighted the role of communication in shaping language skills, vocabulary acquisition, and social interaction, most focused on single aspects or were limited to specific interventions such as storytelling.

This study expands prior findings by examining communication holistically, that is positive and negative parental communication patterns, and their relationship with both language and social outcomes simultaneously. In doing so, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of how communication quality within the home environment influences multiple dimensions of early development. Furthermore, this research adds value to existing literature by situating the findings in a community-based preschool context in Polehan Village, offering contextual insights relevant for health workers and educators in similar urban-rural transitional areas.

According to the aforementioned description, the researcher is eager to learn more about the connection between preschoolers' social and personal development and parental communication at the Bunga Pelangi PAUD Post in Polehan Village, Malang City.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design used was correlational analytics with a *cross sectional approach*. The population in this study is all preschool children aged 3-5 years at the PAUD Bunga Pelangi, Polehan Village, Malang City, a total 39 consist of children and their mothers. The sampling technique used is total sampling so that all members of the population are used as samples. The independent variable in

this study is parental communication while the dependent variable in this study is the language and social personality development of preschool children. The data collection tools used were a parent communication questionnaire with 20 statement items and the Denver Development Screening Test (DDST) II sheet. This study has received ethical approval from Ethics Committee of Poltekkes Kemenkes Malang number: DP.04.03/F.XXI.31/0766/2024. The data analysis used is the Spearman Rank test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

Table 1 shows that most of them were male (53.8%). Almost half of the respondent mothers are between the ages of 30-39 (46.2%) and almost half have a final education at the high school level (46.2%). Meanwhile, almost half of the respondents' fathers have a final education at the high school level (46.2%).

Table 1. The frequency distribution of respondents based on age, gender, mother's age, mother's education and father's education

Child's Age	Frequency	Percentage
3 years	12	30.8
4 years	9	48.7
5 years	8	20.5
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Boy	21	53.8
Girl	18	46.2
Mother's Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29 years	10	25.6
30-39 years	18	46.2
40-49 years	11	28.2
Mother's Education	Frequency	Percentage
Not in school	1	2.6
Elementary	8	20.5
Junior high	7	17.9
High School	18	46.2
Bachelor	5	12.8
Father's Education	Frequency	Percentage
Not in school	1	2.6
Elementary	7	17.9
Junior high	8	20.5
High School	18	46.2
Bachelor	5	12.8

Table 2 shows that most respondents have positive parental communication (53.8%). Almost all respondents had normal language development (79.5%) and almost all respondents also had normal social development (76.9%).

Table 2. Frequency distribution on Parental communication, language development, and social development

Parental Communication	Frequency	Percentage
Positif	21	53.8
Negatif	18	46.2
Language Development	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	31	79.5
Suspect	8	20.5
Personal Social Development	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	30	76.9
Suspect	9	23.1

The results of the Spearman Rank Test analysis on the variable of parental communication

with language development show a p-value of 0.008, where $p\text{-value} < 0.05$, indicating a significant relationship between parental communication and preschool children's language development. The strength of the relationship (correlation) between parental communication and language development is 0.421, which is considered moderately strong. Since the $p\text{-value} < 0.05$, H1 is accepted, meaning there is a moderately strong and significant relationship between parental communication and language development in preschool children aged 3-5 years.

Meanwhile, the results of the Spearman Rank Test analysis on the variable of parental communication with social development have a p-value of $0.003 < 0.05$, which means there is a significant relationship between parental communication and the social development of preschool children. The strength of the relationship (correlation) between parental communication and social development is 0.470, which is considered moderate. Since the p-value is < 0.05 , H1 is accepted, meaning there is a moderately strong and significant relationship between parental communication and the social development of preschool children aged 3-5 years.

Discussion

Communication between Parents and Preschoolers

One of the factors influencing preschoolers' better development is parent-child communication. A child's relationship with his parents or other caregivers at home, particularly his family, is where his growth starts. Children learn to interact with others outside of themselves, specifically those in their immediate vicinity, when they start talking to other family members without even realizing it. Following that, social connection is increased with neighbors, family members, and the next level, which is school or madrasah (Mukhlis, 2024).

In this study, researchers distributed questionnaires to parents of preschool children aged 3-5 years at the PAUD Bunga Pelangi, Malang City to identify parent-child communication. The results of the questionnaire showed that 53.8% with the parental communication category were positive and 46.2% with the negative category.

This communication pattern questionnaire consists of 3 indicators, namely indicators of assertiveness, openness, and consistency. From the results of data collection, it was found that the openness indicator had the highest score among other indicators. Openness is essential in fostering trust. It is claimed that communication between parents and children is effective if the two are close, like one another, and communicate in an enjoyable and open way that fosters a trusting attitude. In order for children to accept the message that parents are trying to impart, effective communication is predicated on transparency, trust, and positive support for them (Izzati & Lestari, 2018). In this study, the openness of communication between parents and children has increased trust and resulted in parents providing their children with positive assistance.

The mother's age is also a factor that affects mother's communication, where with the age of the adult mother, the family can look for information, weigh and try to provide a good parenting and communication pattern for children.

According to Mubarak et al. (2007), one of the factors that affect knowledge is education. The higher a person's level of education, the easier it will be to accept informatics so that the more knowledge they have. On the other hand, if a person has low education, it will hinder the development of one's attitude towards the newly introduced values (Notoatmodjo, 2003).

In addition, not only the level of education can affect parent-child communication, the intensity of parent-child communication also affects children's development. Intensity includes the frequency and duration of communication, attention given when communicating, orderliness, and the content of communication. Data obtained from the questionnaire showed that almost all children with working parents had negative parental communication. The results of the cross-tabulation between mother's education and parental communication showed that mothers who had completed the last S1 education all had negative parental communication because they worked and less time with the child. Children with both working parents have an average of only 8-10 hours of communication time. After work, parents will be busy with their own affairs so that their

time to communicate or invite children to play is also very little. This is in line with research conducted by Hatakeyama et al. (2022) that Children of longer-working mothers or children of non-working fathers spent more time sitting down. This might be related to the families' lack of time, money, and psychological resources for childcare. It may be required to adjust the current conditions of significant parental obligations for child care through societal reforms in regulations and practices, given the growing diversity in working styles.

Language Development of Preschoolers

The results showed that most of the preschoolers who had normal language development were girls (51.6%). The percentage of language development of preschoolers with the male gender has a *higher suspect* category compared to girls, namely 75% of children who have language development with the *suspect* category are male. Children of female gender generally have better language development (Azzahroh et al., 2021). One factor associated with differences in language ability is child gender. Across a wide range of metrics, girls have generally been found to have linguistic skills superior to age-matched boys (LANGE et al., 2016). Wang (2023) also found that recent research suggests women have better language abilities than men. Words, phrases, and even sentences are used more by girls than by boys.

One of the external factors influencing a child's language development is the parents' level of education. The higher the parents' level of education, the more knowledge they possess, which significantly impacts the child's language development. Parents' good knowledge of language stimulation will influence the child's language development. The better the parents' knowledge, the better the child's language development. This is as stated by Notoatmodjo (2003): The quality level of a nation's human resources is essentially determined by the quality of education received. Good and quality education will produce good and quality individuals. Conversely, if the education received is not good and not of high quality, this will impact the quality of the human resource being developed.

The presence of parents also affects a child's language development. Parents who work outside the home and have a poor understanding of child language development will find it difficult to provide stimulation to encourage their child's language development and will rarely interact with their child. Early childhood education is the initial foundation for shaping a child's character (Asniwati & Effendi, 2018).

Personal Social Development of Preschool Children

Personal Social development is behavioral development in children where children can adjust to the rules that apply in the community. In other words, social development is a learning process for children in adjusting to norms, morals, and traditions in the group (Fuadia, 2022).

The results showed that most of the preschoolers who had normal social development were boys (53.3%). Meanwhile, children with personal social development in the *suspect* category are mostly boys, namely 55.6%.

The personal social development of preschool-age children is influenced by family, socioeconomic status, health status, and peer groups. Children's personal social development is greatly influenced by the process of parental treatment or guidance to children in introducing various aspects of social life or norms in society. The role of parents through communication both verbally and nonverbally to create the home environment as the first social environment (Suherman, 2000).

This social development problem cannot be separated from the way children learn to interact with their parents at home. Explaining, understanding and applying rules that are consistent and excessively scolding children or showing their disappointment with children tend to hinder children's personal social development.

The Relationship of Parental Communication with Language and Social Personality Development of Preschoolers Aged 3-5 Years

The hypothesis test using *the spearman rank* test showed that the correlation coefficient between parental communication and language development was 0.421 and a *p-value* of 0.008 (<0.05), then H1 was accepted, which means that there is a relationship between parental communication and language development of preschoolers aged 3-5 years at the Bunga Pelangi Early Childhood Education Post, Polehan Village, Malang City.

Communication between parents and children can be better established if parents often invite their children to interact, for example just to chat and ask questions about their daily lives. Good communication aims to avoid misunderstandings in responding to something. This can also spur the development of the child's language. The more often parents invite their children to communicate or talk, the more vocabulary the child has. The way parents talk to children will also improve the vocabulary that children master (Oktaviani et al., 2021).

The hypothesis test using *the spearman rank* test showed that the correlation coefficient between parental communication and personal social development was 0.470 and *p-value* 0.003 (<0.05), then H1 was accepted, which means that there is a relationship between parental communication and personal social development of preschool children aged 3-5 years at the Bunga Pelangi Early Childhood Post, Polehan Village, Malang City.

The results of the study showed that there are several aspects of the parental communication questionnaire that affect the language and social development of preschoolers. Accustoming children to express opinions in the family, involving children before making decisions, and inviting children to discuss various things according to their age will train children to increase their vocabulary. Children will learn a lot of new vocabulary when communicating with their parents and they will also be better trained in composing sentences in communicating with their parents. It can be seen from the results of the study that children who have positive parental communication can almost all interpret more than 5 words, know more than 3 adjectives, speak understandably, understand more than 4 prepositions, mention more than 4 colors, know more than 4 activities, and can count objects well.

Children who are able to follow the rules set by their parents, are able to take care of themselves even when they are not with their parents, and children who are used to having different activities have good personal social development. Children will get used to doing things they do every day repeatedly so that they can do it independently. It can be seen from the results of the study that children who have good communication can eat on their own, brush their teeth without assistance, dress without assistance, wear t-shirts, and wash their hands before and after eating.

The role of the family is very important to the social development of children, the family has a very important role in efforts to develop children's personalities. Loving parental care and education about life values, both religious and socio-cultural, are conducive factors to prepare children to become healthy individuals and members of society (Yusuf, 2014).

The current trend is that children spend a lot of time watching television shows, watching *youtube*, and playing *games* in technological media. Parents do not communicate with children, but according to the perception of most parents as long as the child is comfortable and safe at home to sit and stay. Finally, children become strangers when they meet children their age when they leave the house or when they start school. Based on observations, many preschool-age children have not been able to interact with their environment or peers. Just like when children start school, there are still many who ask to be waited for by their parents or caregivers. Children are also reluctant and embarrassed to play with friends at school. With such a thing, children will become passive, afraid and lack the initiative to explore developing their ideas or ideas (Hadiningrum et al., 2015).

Izzati & Lestari (2018) cite Hurlock (2004) as saying that young children have a strong desire to learn to talk. This is due to the fact that the primary method of socializing is learning to

talk. Compared to kids with poor communication abilities, kids who are more likely to interact with their classmates will have an easier time establishing social connections and fitting in. Additionally, becoming independent can be achieved through learning to talk. Youngsters who are unable to communicate their needs and goals or who don't try to be understood by others are more likely to be treated like babies and never achieve the independence they seek. Good communication between parents and children will help them develop language intelligence, learn about the world around them, build social-emotional intelligence, build family relationships, boost their confidence and self-esteem, develop the ability to think critically enough to know what is right and wrong, develop concern for the environment and the environment, introduce God the Creator, and use the environment as a tool to solve problems (Izzati & Lestari, 2018).

CONCLUSION

This study found that more than half of parents (53.8%) demonstrated positive communication patterns, while 46.2% were categorized as negative. Most preschool children showed normal language development (79.5%), with 20.5% classified as suspect, and the majority also had normal social development (76.9%), with 23.1% in the suspect category. Importantly, there was a significant and strong relationship between parental communication and language as well as social development. Children with parents who had negative communication patterns were more likely to fall into the suspect category of language and social development compared to those whose parents had positive communication patterns. These findings underscore the critical role of parental communication in supporting early childhood development. Practically, they highlight the importance of health workers, particularly midwives, in providing education and counseling for parents regarding effective parent-child communication. Midwives, as front-line providers in growth and development monitoring (SDIDTK), can integrate communication education into routine child health services, emphasizing strategies such as active listening, responsive interaction, and positive reinforcement. By empowering parents with these skills, midwives can help reduce the risk of developmental delays, strengthen early detection and intervention efforts, and foster more supportive home environments for children's growth.

This research can also serve as a foundation for future studies by providing preliminary evidence that negative communication may contribute to delays in language and social growth. Future longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into causal pathways and guide the development of targeted interventions to promote optimal communication patterns and support healthy child development.

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