



Communication and Social Skills of Preschool Children as Affected by their Mother's Employment Status

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v9i10.4051>

Abstract

Preschool children have several developmental characteristics, including language development and social development. We can judge their communication and social skills based on both developments. These sorts of children's skills are strongly influenced by their mother as the closest person in the children's lives. However, nowadays many mothers have a dual role, that is having a job/career outside the home besides taking care of the household. It is undeniable then that mothers have very limited free time compared to mothers who do not work to stay with their children. This study aims to determine the differences in communication skills and social skills of preschool children's socialization as reviewed based on the mother's employment status. The number of these samples was determined by employing the census technique. Data was collected by structured observation method with a checklist tool. Analysis of research data using the Mann Whitney Non Parametric technique resulted in the Mann Whitney coefficient for communication skills and social skills with p values of 0.000. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a difference between their communication skills and social skills.

Keywords: *Communication Skills; Social Skills; Children*

Introduction

Children are the next generation of the nation. Therefore, they must be provided with education from an early age. Children receive education for the first time from their families. Before children enter school, they are in a phase known as preschool, which is a place or institution where children learn to prepare themselves to enter school. Preschool is also seen as a transition from the family to formal schooling. Although preschool education is now considered important, we must remember that before children are handled by educators or teachers at school, the role and function of parents, especially the mother, have a major influence in shaping the personality and character development of children (Thabita & Astarani, 2012). It can be explained then that the role of the family, especially mothers, is very important in the education of children, both regarding the values of their lives and ways of communicating which will affect their social life later.

It seems that mothers now have increasingly complex roles and functions. Many of them have a dual role, that they have jobs/careers outside the home and also take care of the household.

From one perspective, working mothers and non-working mothers are indeed different. Working mothers have more busy schedules so the quality of mother-child interaction is expected to be an alternative solution to the loss of time a mother has with her child when she has to leave her child to work. In line with Sofian's (2014) research, non-working mothers have more free time to communicate when compared to working mothers. However, the effectiveness of the communication is not determined by the amount of time but is determined by the situation or when the communication takes place. A problem then arises, whether there will be a difference in the children's abilities, especially regarding their communication and social skills.

According to Fitriyani (2015) children who receive caring and warm care in their own homes, even though they are not physically well cared for when compared to children raised in foundations, have higher emotional intelligence than other children. Dewi & Basti (2015) revealed that women's activities outside the home to work do not have a bad effect on children's education, because basically, children with working mothers can understand that their mothers work to meet family needs. Thus it can be stated several factors that may arise and affect children's communication and social skills. One of the most considered things here is the quality of family interaction, especially the interaction between a mother and her child.

Based on the description above, researchers are interested in knowing whether there is a difference between communication skills and social skills in preschool-age children as examined based on the employment status of their mothers.

Literature Review

1. Communication Skills of Preschool Children

a. Definition of Communication

The word 'communication' comes from the Latin "comunis" which means "same". According to Kurniati (2017) communication contains two things, namely, speech and language. Language is a symbol for communicating, in the form of speech, sound, writing, hand signals, pictures, waving flags, Morse and others. While speech is part of a language that must be done with the help of the muscles of the lips, tongue, cheeks, jaw and nose, to produce sounds or sounds for conversation to communicate. Meanwhile, Muhammad (in Aufirandra, Adelya & Ulyah, 2017) suggests that communication is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between the sender and the recipient of the message to change behaviour.

Wati (2019) defines communication as a process that includes the careful conveying and copying of ideas aimed at generating actions that will effectively achieve goals. Thus, communication is a process to convey messages and receive messages to be understood and produce responses or feedback, both verbally and non-verbally.

b. Communication Skills of Preschool Children

Communication skill is a person's success in sending messages clearly, humanely and efficiently and being able to receive messages from others accurately (Curtis in Soedarsono, 2012). Yusuf (2014) defines communication skills as an individual's ability to form understanding, formulate opinions and draw conclusions. According to Piaget and Vygotsky (in Santrock, 2012), communication or language skills are a child's ability to imagine an object or object without the presence of the said object or object, or it can be said that the symbolic function is very instrumental in this phase. Based on the theory above,

it can be seen that communication skills are the extent to which individuals (children) can send messages or receive messages and can provide feedback.

c. Factors Affecting Preschool Children's Communication Skills

Yusuf (2014) suggests factors that affect children's communication skills, namely: 1) Health factor. Children must get adequate nutrition from an early age. The sickly children in their first two years will experience delays or difficulties in their language development. 2) Intelligence. Children with rapid language development are generally those who have normal or above normal intelligence. 3) Socio-economic status of the family. According to several studies, children who come from poor families experience delays in language development. This may be due to differences in intelligence or learning opportunities. 4) Gender. From the age of two, girls show faster development than boys. 5) Family relationships, unhealthy relationships between parents and children will result in delays in language development in children, maybe even abnormalities or stagnation. What is meant by an unhealthy relationship here is that parents are always rude/hard on their children, lacking love/lack of attention.

2. Preschool Children's Social Skills

a. Definition of Social Skills

Socialization is a process in which individuals accept and adapt to the prevailing customs in their society. Gradually he will become part of that community group. Singgih (in Sutrisno & Hutabarat, 2019) supports this question that socialization is the process that an individual goes through for forming life guidelines, basic principles of life, dexterity, motives, attitudes and all of his behaviour in accordance with his/her current and future role in society. Socialization is also referred to as the process of guidance by parents (Yusuf, 2014). Meanwhile, Ambron (in Yusuf, 2014) defines socialization as a learning process that guides children towards the development of social personality so that they can become responsible and effective members of society.

So it can be concluded that socialization is a process of social interaction, where individuals (children) can carry out various activities according to the demands of society based on what has been experienced, the opportunity to do so, as well as the guidance children, receive from parents and the environment.

b. Social Skills of Preschool Children

According to Yusuf (2014), social skills are the ability to get along with other people. This ability is obtained from the environment, both parents, siblings, peers or other adults. So the social development of children is strongly influenced by the process of guidance from parents. Social development itself is a person's ability to behave or behaviour procedures in interacting with society (Hurlock, 2011). Thus we can understand social skills as the ability of a child to apply the values, norms, habits needed for his development as a member of society which in this study is associated with the completion of the developmental tasks of preschool children.

c. Factors Affecting Preschool Children's Social Skills

According to Trisnatiswati, Kasiati & Retnowati (2010) the factors that influence socialization ability are: 1) Family, A family is a social group that influences the socialization process of children since children will follow everything that is taught or exemplified by parents in socializing. 2) Peer group, They are friends who give feedback to children about their abilities. Children's experiences outside the home are complementary to their experiences at home. This experience greatly determines the attitudes and patterns of children's social behaviour. If the child likes it, the child will be encouraged to behave by

the expectations of the social group. 3) Teacher, The teacher is someone who is required to be smart and able to educate children to be active, creative and intelligent. For building children's social skills, there must be a good learning environment rich in stimuli, for example providing a variety of materials, facilities and infrastructure that can stimulate all of their senses.

3. Preschool Children

a. Definition of Preschool Children

Preschoolers are often defined as children who are in a phase before they enter school. This term is used to distinguish between children who have attended school and children who have not been to school. The term preschool is a term for educators for children who attend Taman Indira or Kindergarten. Hurlock (2011) suggests that preschool childhood is also called early childhood, extending between the ages of two to six years. The same thing was also stated by Mukaromah (2019) that preschool or early childhood is around the age of 2 to 6 years.

According to Wijirahayu, Krisnatuti & Muflikhati (2016), the preschool period begins at the age of three to five years and is a confusing transitional period for parents since children are forming their identities. When viewed from the perspective of education in Indonesia, based on Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 27 of 1990 concerning Preschool Education, preschoolers are children aged 4 to 6 years. Referring to the description above, since the sample is Kindergarten students and not Playgroup students, the author limits preschool children to the age range of four to six years in accordance with Government Regulation.

b. Characteristics of Preschool Children

The characteristics of preschool children according to Riyanto (2014) are: 1) Physical characteristics, Preschool children use basic motor skills such as running, walking, climbing and jumping as part of their play. Not only does it make them active, but it gives them a sense of purpose and is less concerned with individual activities. 2) Social characteristics, Most children at this stage have one or two friends, but they change friends quickly. Feelings of sympathy and empathy for friends have also developed. In addition, they are usually able to share their initiative. 3) Emotional Characteristics, Children tend to express themselves freely, Often shows anger and jealousy. 4) Cognitive characteristics, Preschool children are generally skilled in language, most of them like to talk and some like to be good listeners.

The characteristics of the development of preschool children, as explained by Yusuf (2014) are as follows: 1) Physical Development, 2) Intellectual Development, 3) Emotional Development, 4) Language Development, 5) Social Development, 6) Play Development, 7) Personality Development, 8) Moral Development, 9) Development of Religious Awareness.

4. Employment Status of Mothers

a. Working Mothers

Working mothers are mothers who have a dual role, namely being a housewife and also having responsibilities for work outside the home both in the formal and informal sector or part-time or full-time.

b. Non-Working Mothers

Non-Working Mothers are mothers who play a role or have responsibilities as housewives and do not have responsibilities or are not tied to work outside the home and do not leave the house at scheduled

times.

5. Frames of Mind

Children's communication and social skills are influenced by their parents, especially mothers. In the process of achieving these abilities, several factors influence the ability of children and are related to the work status of mothers it can cause differences in abilities between working mothers and non-working mothers.

Influencing factors in communication skills are health factors. Healthy children have more opportunities in the process of communication skills. Working mothers, of course, have the income to support family finances in fulfilling children's nutrition and have broader knowledge obtained from outside the home regarding children's health. This is justified by research conducted by Purnama (in Herlina, 2018) that children of working mothers grow up healthier overall than children whose mothers stay at home all day. Family relationship factors are also decisive. Children who have good relationships with parents are certainly more active in communicating. When compared to non-working mothers, working mothers tend to give more treatment and attention to their children. Maybe because of their guilt for leaving their children to work. As confirmed by Noya (2019), working mothers have feelings of guilt so they tend to pamper and fulfil their children's needs, and are overprotective. The other is the socioeconomic status factor of the family. Children of working mothers' families get more facilities to support the process of developing their communication skills. This is because the mother indirectly contributes to the family's finances. This is in accordance with the statement of Astari & Safira (2019) that children from poor families experience delays in language development, perhaps due to gaps in intelligence or learning opportunities.

Factors that influence social skills are family factors. According to research conducted by Nasucha, Nur'aini & Indriawati (2019), children of working mothers are intellectually more responsive and socially more independent. When the mother works, her child naturally has to be separated from the mother and taken care of by someone else. This causes children to become independent and better at social skills. Children will learn to adapt since there are many kinds of people around them.

Based on the description above, it is stated whether the difference in the amount of time between working and non-working mothers can affect the quality or effectiveness of mother-child interaction. Can it make a difference in children's abilities, especially communication and social skills?

6. Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical concepts described above, the following hypotheses are put forward: H1: There is a difference in communication skills in terms of the mother's employment status in preschool children Kindergarten Bina Insani Jakarta. H2 : There is a difference in social skills based on the mother's employment status at the Jakarta Insani Kindergarten.

Research Methods

Data were collected using a structured observation method with an observation tool called a checklist. The checklist for communication skills is made based on the communication aspects as proposed by Muhammad (in Aufirandra, adelya & Ulyah, 2017) which consists of the ability to receive messages, the ability to send messages, the ability to provide feedback. The checklist contains 30 items. Meanwhile, the checklist for social skills was made based on the initial social aspects proposed by (Hurlock, 2011), namely parallel play, associative play, cooperative play, audience. The checklist contains 30 items.

The data analysis technique used in this study is based on the purpose of the hypothesis of the study. H_a used in this study will be tested through statistical analysis H_o which states that there is no difference between communication skills and social skills in terms of preschool children in Kindergarten X. The purpose of this study was to see the difference, the data analysis was carried out using the Non-Parametric Mann Whitney technique, namely the difference test of two separate data parameters for small samples. For convenience and accuracy, the researcher used SPSS version 21.00 for windows.

Data Analysis and Discussion

By employing the Non-Parametric Mann Whitney technique with the support of SPSS 21.00 for windows, the Mann Whitney coefficient for communication skills = 15 and $p = 0.000$ while for social skills the coefficient = 13.5 and $p = 0.000$. That means there is a difference in the communication skills of preschool children in Kindergarten X in terms of the mother's employment status and likewise in the social skills.

Discussion

Analysis of research data using the Non-Parametric Mann Whitney technique through the SPSS version 14.00 program for windows resulted in the Mann Whitney coefficient value for communication skills = 15 and for social skills = 13.5 and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. This indicates that the hypothesis (H_o) is rejected, which means that there is a significant difference between the communication skills and social skills of preschool children in Kindergarten X in terms of the mother's employment status.

As mentioned above, it is evident that the communication skills and social skills of preschool children have a significant relationship with their mother's employment status. Obtaining the Mann Whitney coefficient value for communication skills = 15 and the Mann Whitney coefficient value for social skills = 13.5 and $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ indicates a positive correlation between communication skills and social skills with the mother's employment status. So the communication skills and social skills of children of working mothers are better than those of non-working mothers or housewives.

Children's communication skills and social skills are influenced by various factors. One of the factors that are considered important is the quality of family interactions, especially mother-child interactions. In this regard, the results of this study are supported by the opinion of Bocknek et al., (2012) who suggest in their research that good interaction between mother and child is very important because it can provide many feelings, experiences and social and emotional learning so that children can have a good level of socio-emotional development. Nasucha, Nur'aini & Indriawati (2019) also stated in their research that children of working mothers are intellectually more responsive and socially more independent than other children.

At the preschool age, parents, especially mothers, are the first to determine the personality and character development of children. The role and function of the family, especially mothers, have a big influence on children's education, both in terms of life values and the way the children communicate which will affect their further socialization. Mother is the closest figure to the children, all mothers' behaviour greatly influences the child's ability to socialize.

Communication skills are the extent to which individuals (children) can send messages to other people to create understanding and the ability to provide feedback. Meanwhile, the social skill is the extent to which individuals (children) can establish social contact with the environment or other people and can adapt according to norms, morals and traditions.

According to Hawadi (in Sari, 2018) preschool-age children can understand 1500 to 2000 words. This is supported by Vygotsky (in Arnianti, 2019) that at the age of 4 to 5 years, children can speak and use language well, with minimum speech errors. The influencing factors on children's communication skills and related to maternal employment status are health, family economic status, and family relationships.

Next, Jannah, Yacob & Julianto (2017) also argue that preschool children are also referred to as the pre gang age period. At the age of 3 to 6 years, children learn to establish social contacts with people outside the home, especially with children their age. The influencing factors on children's social skills and related to the employment status of mothers are families.

Based on the categorization of communication skills, 15 students with working mothers tend to have high communication skills. None of them is classified as low or moderate. Meanwhile, the communication skills of 18 students with non-working mothers tend to be high while it tends to be moderate in two students and low in three students.

Based on the categorization of social skills, 15 students whose mothers work tend to have high social skills, none are classified as low or moderate. Meanwhile, the social skills of 18 students whose mothers do not work also tend to be high, while it tends to be moderate in 4 students, and low in 1 student.

Conclusion

The results of the data analysis which were then supported by the discussion resulted in the conclusion that there were differences in the communication skills and social skills of Kindergarten X preschool children in terms of the mother's employment status.

For further research, academic colleagues are expected to examine specifically other factors that may influence children's communication skills and social skills such as culture, gender, child's birth order, social/economic status and so on. Appropriate ways of interacting with children need to be widely introduced to mothers, both working and non-working mothers. Mothers need to be involved in children's lives to help them grow and develop in various aspects of life so that they can carry out these aspects. The main aspects here are communication and social skills.

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