

EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM FOR SOCIALIZATION: TEACHERS' INSIGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Socialization between individuals is an important characteristic in human development. In individuals with autism, there is a enormous deficit with social skills and social reciprocity. Various natures of educational interventions and techniques are implemented to increase their social behavior in different setting. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects that the educational intervention using different techniques can have on the ability to exhibit a spontaneous greeting in various settings by a child diagnosed with autism. This study analyzed data collected from teacher/ parent's interview and observed behavior during intervention program. The information drawn from parents, teacher and by observed behavior reflected some crucial progress over the study period. The significant improvements in the targeted social behaviors were exhibited by the children with autism due to the different educational training. The interview schedule and observed behavior stood to be an effective tool for assessing the social behavior of child with autism.

Keywords: Socialization, human development, autism, education, intervention, Applied Behavioral Analysis

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Autism is inability to show the social emotional reciprocity. This disorder is characterized by deficit in communication skill, language comprehension, development of social skill and plays other relevant areas & a neurological disorder which persist through ought a life time. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) appears in the early stage of life (Davydova et al., 2021). Leo Kanner studied the syndrome of early infantile autism. Of the eleven children he observed, and identified an 'inability to relate themselves in the ordinary way to people and situations from the beginning of life' (1943). In most cases the disorder is identified before to six months in age & rarely diagnosis after the age of five. Jung, Song, Ha, Lee, Yang & Dhungana (2015) state that ASD is characterized by combination of deficit in language, interpersonal relationship skill, emotional and affective behavior & intellectual function to varying degrees & impairment normal function in various area (Sivaraman & Fahmie, 2018). There are various theory related to the education and treatment of ASD. It has been found those children who have communication skills around the age of six & have high IQ & have better educational result after they become adult.

Autism is known as "spectrum disorder" because the severity of symptoms ranges from mild learning social difficulties to severe impairment with multiple problem and highly unusual behavior (Miranda et al., 2020). This disorder may occur alone or could be accompanied by various problems such as mental retardation or seizures. Autism is not a rare disorder, being the third most disorder common development disorder; its prevalence is greater than that of Down syndrome. Typically, 20 out of 10000 peoples have autism or have autistic symptoms. 80% of those are boys. People with autism tend to appear indifferent and remote and are unable to form emotional bonds with others (Kaur & Arora, 2019). In addition, they will often have unusual response to sensory experience such as the noise of lackey faucet becoming extremely disruptive whereas most people will eventually show forms of habituation or adaptation to the persistent noise (Lord et al., 2018). Each of these symptoms runs the gamut from mild to severe. They will present differently in each individual child. For intendance, a child may have little trouble learning to read but exhibit extremely poor social interaction. Each child will display social, behavioral and communication patterns that are individual but fit into the overall diagnosis of ASD (Lord et al., 2018).

Autistic disorder display very particular behaviors early on and is considered a very severe disabilities, However the level of disability varies. They show common traits but also different characteristics. The degree of autistic disorder is determined, in general by their language use, interpersonal relationship behavior and social behaviors (U. Frith & Happé, 2005). Autistic children have the disabilities such as communication problem, sensory problem & face the resentment to change daily setting. This inability is related to the world seemed to be due to the fact these children experienced withdrawal, language difficulties, cognitive difficulties and with problems. The major drawback of these characteristics is the fact that people with autism are not able to communicate or to understand the attempts by others to communicate with them (Lord et al., 2018). This study intended to explore the insights and perception of teacher, parents how do the children with autism socialize with the educational intervention. It also embarks in what extent social interaction is related to educational program of school that shapes to the behavior of child with autism.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is typically diagnosed in childhood and has a wide range of symptoms, some being more severe than others are. These symptoms consist of communication, socialization, behavioral and interest impairments, as well as minimal social skills (Weiss & Lunsky, 2011). Due to these symptoms, a child with ASD may have trouble relating to peers and forming meaningful relationships. Children diagnosed with autism communicate verbally, nonverbally or a combination of both.. Social workers may encounter children with autism who express restricted and repetitive motor mannerisms in order to self-stimulate such as rocking, banging on objects, biting themselves and spinning (Mays, Beal-Alvarez, & Jolivette, 2011). Children diagnosed with autism are often looked at by their peers as being socially awkward.

An autism diagnosis can be perceived as a loss for the family, the grieving process associated with the birth of a child with disabilities is complicated by the parents' grieving the death of the 'expected' baby while at the same time trying to accept the 'imperfect' baby. Even though

they have the joy of being able to hold and love their baby their life is suddenly and drastically changed (Hooyman & Kramer, 2006, p. 200).

The causes of autism still unknown, parents experience blame for their child's autism. Some fathers may blame the autism on their wives (Barnes, Hall, Roberts, & Graff, 2011). This was once defined as refrigerator mother. The term "refrigerator mother" was invented by Leo Kenner. This word was used to describe a parent who were seen as cold and uncaring their child causing them to retreat into autism (Hirota & King, 2023). In addition to parents being affected by this diagnosis, the sibling of a child diagnosed with autism are also impacted. Siblings are impacted in similar ways as their parents. Siblings may experience worry, anger and embarrassment and have an inability to understand the autism diagnosis. The sibling's dream of having a normal playmate or companion is no longer congruent with their past expectations (Naseef, 1989).

Research has demonstrated the need for social interaction from infancy to adulthood in normal human development. Initiating conversation, making eye contact, and responding to dialogue are important components of socialization (Lauritsen, 2013). Child begins to develop these social skills at an early age through modeling by others. As children mature, they refine these social skills as they enter adolescence and grow into adulthood (Matson & Kozlowski, 2011). However, children with autism develop and mature differently. It appears that they do not comprehend nonverbal aspects of communication and usually lack social reciprocity, such as understanding conversations or their partners' thoughts, feelings, ideas, and desires (Amaral et al., 2011). Impaired social development is one of the major criteria in the diagnosis of autism. Social deficits are significant and appear throughout the child's development.

Rutter (1978) emphasized the fact that the unusual social development observed in autism was one of the essential defining features of autism, it was distinctive and not simply a function of intellectual disability. Children with autism often lack the necessary skills to make initial greetings or gestures. They are more responsive in situations in which their parents or other adults initiate conversations and maintain proximity, but they do not tend to initiate the conversation the way that other children do. Can children with autism learn how to initiate conversation with others?

Children with autism often lack the necessary skills to make initial greetings or gestures. They are more responsive in situations in which their parents or other adults initiate conversations and maintain proximity but they do not tend to initiate the conversation the way that other children do. The children with autism cannot learn how to initiate conversation with others in an unfamiliar setting. Research has shown that children with autism are more likely to initiate an interaction if prompted by another person (Gadia, Tuchman, & Rotta, 2004). Studies have also shown that children with autism can learn to make initial greetings in structured settings such as school. However, the few studies have demonstrated that individuals with autism initiate conversation in unstructured settings with little or no initial prompting. The ability to establish a conversation with another person through an initial greeting or gesture is an important ingredient to a successful social interaction. These skills must be developed through continuous reinforcement and repetition. Research has shown that continuous exposure to a skill, using applied behavior analysis and discrete trials, will have more outcomes that are successful and be more likely to be generalized to other settings (Gadia, Tuchman, & Rotta,

2004). Observing and comparing the outcomes of children with autism when initiating conversation in structured and familiar environments (home and school) and unfamiliar environments (the community) is needed to measure the impact of interventions that are taught in structured settings.

3.0 THEORETICAL GUIDELINES

The following theories guided for carrying out this study.

3.1 Theory of Mind

The theory of mind hypothesis seeks to explain pragmatic impairment of language and communication in terms of social deficit with some specific accompanying neuro-cognitive deficit. The cognitive theory of Boucher and Rutter also consider as central the autistic child difficulty in more complex cognitive inference about the content of mental state requiring the information across time and event Individuals diagnosed with autism are thought to have trouble in understanding the perspectives of other persons. The ability to grasp the perspective of another person is referred to as Theory of Mind (Lind & Bowler, 2010). At five months of age, children typically can recognize the different facial expressions of other persons and within a few more months are able to understand the meaning of these facial expressions (C. Frith & Frith, 2005). As young children become able to interpret the facial expressions of others, they begin to use this knowledge to alter or adapt their behavior.

3.2 Executive Function

Executive function are self-orientation behavior and include behavioral memory, self-regulation of emotion and ability to plan in advance. According to study, children with autism have difficulties with executive function. These problems are much more serious than those experienced by students with ADHD.

3.3 Theory of Weak Central Coherence

The research evidence has revealed that students with autism have weaker ability to collect partial information and perceive it as a whole (U. Frith & Happé, 2005). According to this theory most people perceive relevant partial information as meaningful whole rather than individual information and understand the order and meaning (Carlson et al., 2013). Meanwhile, students with autism process information in opposite way. They process information by dividing them and do not seem to find it necessary to combine the perceived information and data.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Study Design

This study employed qualitative research design with case study approach. The case study detailed information of phenomena from its real context. The information collected from multiple sources by natural context. One child of 19 years old studying in school named Special school for disabled and rehabilitation center (SSDRC), Koterswor, Kathmandu was purposively

selected for single case for the study. I visited to participant school and observed the social behavior of student with autism like initial greetings and spontaneous greetings. Now for the further information about social behavior of child with autism,

Parents, special teachers, Caretakers, ABA therapist, occupational therapist and speech therapist were purposively selected from the school. The activities of service providers were observed for a couple of weeks. Field notes were developed every day in the time of visiting. The participants were interviewed via semi structured interview guidelines. In the interview the open-ended questions were asked to reach to the relevant information for the purpose of rigorous data. For collecting the information, the actual behavior of child was observed in the different places into different setting. In the observation period, the social behavior of child has inspected in different places with and without prompting. The shown behavior was perceived and analyzed to draw the conclusion. The interview was taken to the teacher of SSRDC located in Kadaghari. The special education teachers and parents of children with autism were interviewed. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed as verbatim in Nepali followed by English. The transcription was sent to participant for memo checking. The document was prepared by the collected information. The prepared document was checked by respective expert and then after scanning the document was finalized. After receiving the transcription from participant after approval, data were analyzed thematically. The data collection and data analysis were simultaneous and ongoing activities that allowed for important understandings to be discovered along the way and then pursued in additional data collection efforts. The data were read and reread to generate codes. Firstly, transcribed data are coded and basic theme was extracted from the basic theme, the organized themes were drawn from basic theme by associating the similarity or dissimilarity. Then these units of meaning were separated and global theme was drawn during data analysis. The global themes were described with the theoretical alignment and relevant literature. This qualitative approach to inquiry also involves a case-study approach, where people and settings are explored in depth and described in detail in the final report. The nonmathematical procedure was designed throughout the whole data analysis to identify themes and patterns in qualitative data. The research findings of such type of analysis were presented in the form of propositions that summarizes the silent themes and patterns within individual lives and across individuals' lives. By this process findings and conclusion are drawn.

5.0 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The main theme developed from the data analysis was interpreted with the narration of participants as for the objectives of the study.

5.1 Social behavior of Child after School

As we know that school is of miniature of society. In school, the children from different background come and exchange their cultural habit whatever they have. By the opportunity of exchanging their ethnic habit from one community to other, their personality proceeds ahead to come with the reformation process. One of the participants said, " Every child is be able to enhance their social skill with the social and behavioral training of school". Regarding to children with autism, the various social skill trainings conducted in the school. The students are treated by the several interventions like music therapy, speech therapy, ABA therapy, physiotherapy that could support to enhance the social skills. In school when the teachers and

parents interviewed about their child, social skill and the hyperactive behavior are gradually underlying to the tolerable behavior. On the behalf of the behavior after school, the hyperactive behavior is slightly changing into adjusted behavior after the acquisition of training. The child with autism was gradually changed their stereotyped behavior with the social cues. Sometimes he seemed to be approaching to unknown person without showing any strange behavior. In the answer of parents when they asked about the play habit, the child usually wants to play the same type of game. However, the game was seemed to be very simple. Sometimes he was observed playing in very short interval of time.

5.2 Social Behavior of Child in Initial Greetings

When the child was brought to school, he was seemed completely lack of social behavior. In any operant behavior, he used to show disobedient behavior and not perform the respondent behavior. He thought that every aspects of environment were opposed to him. Initially they used to show the aloneness behavior not appearing to the peers, speechless, not making eye contact with others. He was seemed to be moody and showed the self-centered activity. On the behalf of initial greeting the teacher greet to the students by saying Namaste and teachers to the children by prompting. Repeatedly he teaches to the students for greetings with social interaction skills. In such activity some of the children are able to greet without prompting saying whatever is taught by teacher then child is approached to the teachers some of the children afraid with teacher and some of them are able to approach with teacher and perform the work assigned.

When the teachers clarify the way and meaning of greetings to the respected person then the child intends to practice and shows the positive response. In the case of behavior when attached to the teacher, if he likes to the teacher he shows the tolerable behavior and if not like to him shows the prospective of teaching dislike behavior. In the teaching learning activity, it is difficult to teach the behavior skill in the beginning depending on their level of severity. In the beginning, when children came to school, he showed the loneness behavior, self-centric, not interacting to others. The child did not like to play and not try to establish the corresponding behavior with peers. The students could not maintain the attention behavior in the classroom. They could not understand what the teachers say. They could not express their feelings and motives as well. The child diagnosed with autism cannot recognize their peers and usually shows the unfamiliar persons approaching to him.

5.3 The Behavior of Child before School

According to the development of psychology, the child before 3 years of age is categorized into childhood period. According to the cognitive stage of Jean Piaget the child lies in pre operational period. In this period child interact with family by verbal expression. But the child diagnosed with autism could not do so in linear progress so that language development is adversely affected in the presence of autism. One of the participants said, 'In this age, the child was unable to adjust with the other children of same age group. He showed the loneness behavior and could not imitate the behavior of others'. In this regard, the parent told that the children diagnosed with autism had not memorable expression. His desire was unable to communicate with others but sometimes he liked to keep in touch with mother. There was difficulty in feeling and memorizing the context for children with autism. He wanted to achieve anyway whatever he needs. Otherwise, he showed the unusual behavior like moving heads,

thrilling body and shaking hands. The teacher taught behavioral therapy for shaping their uncontrolled and withdrawal behavior at school and home.

5.4 Behavior of Child after School

As we know that school is representative of miniature of society. In school, the children from different background come and exchange their cultural habit whatever they have. By the opportunity of exchanging their ethnic habit from one community to other, their personality proceeds ahead to come with the reformation process. By the same phenomenon, every child will be able to enhance their social skill by the behavioral training of school. Regarding to children with autism the various social skill trainings were conducted. The students are treated by the various types of therapy like music therapy, speech therapy, physiotherapy that can support to develop the social behavior. In school when children are interviewed social skill and the hyperactive behavior are gradually underlying to the tolerable behavior. Participant said, 'On the behalf of social behavior after school, the hyperactive behavior is slightly changing into adjusted behavior'. The child with autism is continuously diluted the stereotyped behavior. Sometimes, he seems to be approaching to unknown person without showing any strange behavior. In the answer of parents when they were asked about the play habit, the child usually wants to play the same type of game. The game is seemed to be very simple. Sometimes he was observed playing for very short interval of time. When the parents of child were asked about the change in behavior of child different from family environment, they said that they found the progressive behavioral change occurred due to the use of different therapy in school. Sometimes when child was approached by unknown person, he used to show the unaccepted behavior. But after the treatment of school the child with autism can approach to the new person.

In the presence of unknown person, sometimes he can acknowledge when he was prompted like hello. According to the response of parents, they could success to obtain the positive behavioral change in their child with autism. In the special school when children are interviewed by social skills with the praise on reward. They became happy in giving the prize. The interviewed parents claim that in the moment of approaching familiar person like mother, father and known person, initially he neglects and tries to away from them but when those persons are appearing to play the game, he likes than he slowly becomes tolerable and tries to adapt with them. In some cases, if the child became happy, he tries to appear with their parents and sometimes hug them. Regarding to the response of 4 parents, they answered that the social skill training assisted by school mates the children with autism enabling to socialization. Sometimes such types of students can understand the expression of other persons. In some cases the child with autism are able to response by eye contact. They can show the tolerable behavior into the social setting. In the information of parents, when the child with autism is taken to crowdly place like, Bazaar, Chowk and ceremony, the child used to exhibit the strange behavior and sometimes seems to be showing the self-uncontrolled behavior like self-impulsive type. His emotions have supposed to be beyond the control. When he was treated at school, his socialization behavior seems to be modified and regardless his impulsive behavior. In the question about improvement of child used to sit alone and avoided to grouping activity. His activity was not regular but the parents said that their children were able to adjust in social activity acquired the language improvement. The children's behavior was inclined to the scheduled action. The child can feel the regular activity and adapted to the natural setting. In

the supplement practice at school, the child was able to interact in some extent. But they said that the child is able to entertain very short interval of time. If the child is compared for long time, he will feel suffocation and shows the impulsive behavior. The parents highlighted that the child diagnosed with autism can improve the adaptive skills when treatment and sometime can understand hardly the other perception. According to the conceptual approach of theory of mind, the capacity of understanding other people's opinion and interaction them is the progressive reformation of cognitive aspect of individual with autism. So the cognitive development of child makes the child interactivity with others. In the beginning the food habit was not good when he is treated by school than the food habit of child is improved and communication by gesture when he felt hungry and thirsty. By the supplement of speech therapy from school, child improved his communication habit by either gesture or weak sound. The answer obtained by parents deals that at early intervention the child diagnosed with autism generally couldn't be stable when coming in contact with peers but after educational support he is able to play with peers with limited support. The parents said that the child diagnosed with autism was not able to induce the initial language such as baba, mamu, but after some days later in the answer of parents when child is treated by school make the child involving the initial word like baba or mumu. After 3 or 4 years, back most of the parents are claiming that when children with autism are taken to special school, the fundamental behavior change has been occurred. Initial language was not developed by 9/8 years. After speech therapy given by school the child with autism slightly face to others and expressed his general intention by backing his head and hands.

6.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study-analyzed data collected from interview, observation and document analysis. A child diagnosed with autism in situations that provided them with the opportunity to demonstrate socially appropriate greetings. The study result has deduced that the various techniques affect to child's ability to engage in social behaviors. Simpson (2001) claims that ABA is effective strategies to increase spontaneous greetings of children with autism and improves his social skills by targeting specific behaviors. The socialization skills like initial greeting and respect to elderly and waiting for turn during school is better to teach students with autism (Simpson, 2004). The children with autism require instruction to make change in spontaneous social greeting and exhibited appropriate behaviors while interacting with others. By the construct of theory of executive function, the child with autism learned and implemented the social skills needed to interact successfully with others in different settings (home and school) which denote generalization of skills (Simpson, 2005). Baron-Cohen et al. (1997) states that autistic children are believed to have difficulty in understanding the perspectives of other persons and are lacking what is commonly known as having a "theory of mind". Similarly, individuals with autism have trouble in understanding many social beliefs that are not explicitly stated and that often change with the social context (U. Frith, 1989). In this prospective study, the students were educated by using several techniques to develop a spontaneous social greeting and appropriate daily activities. However, due to deficits in theory of mind, this student initially had trouble in exhibiting appropriate behavior (engaging in self-stimulating behaviors). The results depict that prompting was unnecessary by the end of the educational program. In terms of self-stimulating behaviors, the findings were inconsistent, but there was an improvement for the demonstration of appropriate behaviors daily by the tenth week, with continued prompting (Baron-Cohen et al., 1997). According to Frith (1989), children interpret the facial expressions

of others and use this knowledge to alter or adapt their behavior. The understanding of other people may think and feel differently from oneself is child's use of "theory of mind" (Baron-Cohen et al., 1997). Understanding the facial expressions and social cues of others was imperative as highlighted by the participants. If the unknown person appeared not to be interested, then the student would be less inclined to socialize. However, if the unknown person appeared to be interested (smiling) then the child was inclined to approach the person and interacted (Baron-Cohen et al., 1997). An absence of theory of mind knowledge is thought to underlie some of the social impairments and deficits in empathy often seen in individuals with autism (Lord et al., 2000). The children become more adaptable to surroundings as they become more familiar with counterparts. This child's theory of mind deficit was observed in his difficulty by interpreting the facial expressions of others. The children's comfort level and inclination to provide a response was affected by his understanding of the person's social behavior (Baraily, 2021). The student was initially more reserved and had difficulty in interpreting the facial expressions of others. The child had initially engaged in self-stimulating behaviors (flapping hands) and he did not incline to provide any greeting or nonverbal gesture. As the educational program progressed, the student gradually became comfortable with and more consistent in greeting various setting and he was seemingly more confident with what was expected of him. The nonverbal communication problems are commonly exhibited in individuals with autism. It is not surprising that the children had difficulty with understanding expressive gestures such as a raised eyebrow (C. Frith & Frith, 2005). The participants urged that the child improved his ability to engage in and understand nonverbal communication in the classroom. It is well known that engaging in self-stimulating behaviors is prominent in autistic children (Wellman, 2011). Despite the growth in understanding of nonverbal behaviors, the children are found to be least amount of success in eliminating self-stimulatory behaviors and continued to rely on prompting to disengage the self-stimulating behaviors (Wellman, 2011). Continuous prompting is beneficial to learn the new behavior and the reduction of prompts is often associated with increased independent performance of skills and the generalization of newly learned skills to different environments (Breaux et al., 2022). Children with autism frequently cannot apply what they have learned in one situation and utilize it in a similar setting. Lewis (2010) believes that generalization in various environments is the "acid test" for mastered social skills. The findings showed that intensive program completed at home and in school for socialization of children with autism. So, the child with autism increased the generalization and self-initiation of social skills across the multiple settings. The teacher observed the behavior of child in various settings and found expected behavior of child to approach others and make a spontaneous greeting (Wolfberg et al., 2012). During the teaching of socialization skills through prompt learning, the children with autism becomes more confident, smiling and showing interest in approaching unfamiliar persons rather than engaging in avoidance behaviors (Lewis, 2016). When engaging in social interactions, individuals with autism have difficulties with engaging in nonverbal social behaviors such as establishing eye contact, using proper voice tone and maintaining appropriate social distance from others. The children with autism have a tendency to repeat what others say, make embarrassing remarks or make remarks that appear to be extremely formal and inappropriate given a close affective relationship to the listener (Lord et al., 2018). These behaviors by the children were observed when the educational program started. The student with autism had a tendency to repeat what others said and did not make appropriate eye contact or effectively use social gestures (). By using theory of executive function, the child's ability to make an appropriate social greeting and demonstrate the necessary nonverbal behaviors is improved with appropriate social

intervention. The student was able to transit from prompting to self-initiation of these behaviors after the intervention period. From the participant's perspective, the most significant improvements were exhibited in socially appropriate nonverbal behaviors such as head nodding and making eye contact, and with his ability to offer a verbal response. According to theory of mind, individuals with autism have difficulty interacting with others, listening, and making appropriate interpretations of the other person's intent (Lind & Bowler, 2010). It appeared that the student no longer relied on the prompting from others to make appropriate eye contact, offer a head nod, maintain appropriate distance and offer a greeting. The student could now initiate this 'learned behavior'. The educational program was successful in increasing the child's ability to make social greetings across various intervention techniques.

Given the study results, interpretation of the findings has noted specific factors that may have had an impact on this student's ability to engage in socially appropriate behaviors. These include possible modification in the behaviors of autistic child possible subjectivity that student was observed and treated using ABA in different environmental settings where behavior observations were conducted.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The study reveals that different social skill strategies are crucial for analyzing behaviors and achieving behavioral change. Consistency in the implementation of social skill intervention program is essential for positive results. The study found inconsistent behavior initially reflects untreated children but gradually improves with consistent training. The intervention also reflects untreated children but gradually improves with consistent training. The intervention also showed difference in offering prompts for desired behavior. Parental professional involvement and community involvement and community-based instruction can improve social learning in children with autism. Treatment can be provided in both classroom and home settings, incorporating therapeutic techniques. Children with autism often engage in solitary activities but are interested in social interaction. Different strategies such as pictorial methods, music therapy, speech therapy and play skills have improved socialization.

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