



Analysis of Autism Children's Classifications in Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted with the fundamental aim of carrying out a careful analysis of the classification of children with autism in the elementary school environment. Using the case study method, the research approach includes consideration of various aspects, including cognitive characteristics, behavior and social interactions. Data was collected through observations, interviews with teachers, as well as examination of related documents, providing a strong basis for in-depth analysis. With a focus on a deeper understanding of the varied characteristics of children with autism at the elementary school level, the main aim of the research was to classify these children based on their cognitive abilities, behavior and level of social interaction. It is hoped that the results of this research can be used as a basis for designing educational programs that are more appropriate to the individual needs of each autistic child. The benefits are not only limited to improving learning effectiveness, but also include supporting social integration in the elementary school environment. This research involved subjects of children who had autism and attended elementary school. Study participants included children with varying cognitive characteristics, behavior, and levels of social interaction. The results highlight significant variation in the characteristics of children with autism in elementary school, allowing classification based on their cognitive abilities, behavior and level of social interaction. Some children show a positive response to certain learning methods, while others require a more individualistic approach. It is hoped that the classification of research results will provide a solid basis for improving educational programs, increasing learning effectiveness, and supporting the social integration of children with autism in the elementary school environment.

Clasification, Autism, Elementary

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INTRODUCTION

Autism, a term that comes from Greek, consists of the word "auto" which means independent. The meaning of this term reflects the condition of individuals with autism, where they seem to live in their own world. Safaria (2005: 1), as explained in

Suteja's (2014) research, explains that Kenner describes this disorder as an inability to interact with other people. This disorder is also accompanied by language problems which are characterized by delays in language acquisition, echolalia, mutism, sentence reversals, repetitive and stereotyped play activity patterns, and very poor memory. Autism can also be recognized through symptoms that appear in early childhood, which Kanner calls infantile autism (autism in children). These indicators include difficulties in social interaction, problems in communication, and repetitive play behavior.

A person with autism may have difficulty understanding and responding to the emotional expressions of others, as well as showing an inability to develop social skills appropriate to their age-appropriate developmental stage. It needs to be understood that autism has a spectrum, meaning that each individual who experiences autism can show different levels of severity and characteristics. Therefore, a comprehensive and inclusive approach in providing support to individuals with autism is very important to ensure that they can optimize the development of their potential, while taking into account the special needs that each individual may have. Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder in children, characterized by impairments and delays in areas such as cognition, language, behavior and social interaction. This discomfort is increasing along with the increase in the number of children with autism. Currently, with advances in diagnostic methods, it is estimated that the number of children receiving an autism diagnosis will increase. The high prevalence rate of autism shows the need for serious attention to this condition, both in preventing and treating it. Advances in technology and understanding of autism are helping to detect the condition more accurately, but are also revealing that the number of individuals affected by autism is expanding. Not only does this condition impact children's cognitive development, it also affects language skills, daily behavior and social interactions. Therefore, collaborative efforts are needed from various parties, including families, schools and communities, to provide appropriate support and understanding to children who face these challenges. In the face of the fact that the number of individuals experiencing autism continues to increase, it is crucial for us as a society to increase understanding, provide support for further research, and create an inclusive environment for those living with autism. By doing this, together we can create a society that is more welcoming and supportive for all individuals, including those with special needs such as autism.

According to Tuner & Hamner (1990), as quoted by Maftuhatin (2014) in the latest research by Akhmad Syah (2022), it was revealed that extraordinary children are individuals who are different in several aspects from children in general. This category includes individuals with specific and unique needs that differentiate them from the majority of children and therefore require special attention and approaches to support

the maximum potential development of each child. Septy Nurfadhillah and colleagues stated in 2021 that autism is a complex developmental disorder, associated with problems with communication, social interaction and imaginative activity. In fact, signs of autism can appear from infancy. Autistic children generally show typical behavior such as flapping their hands, swinging their arms back and forth, and making consistent sounds. The increasing need to understand the special needs of children with autism is becoming increasingly urgent, given the complexity of this developmental disorder. With awareness of these differences, it is possible to create an environment that supports their growth towards their full potential.

Appropriate education and intervention can provide the support necessary to ensure that autistic children can overcome their barriers and engage actively in daily life. Autism is a comprehensive developmental disorder in children which is characterized by disturbances and delays in various aspects, including cognitive, language, behavior, communication and social interaction. This disorder causes children not to develop according to normal pathways, especially in interacting with other people. Autistic children use unusual language, perhaps even completely unintelligible. In general, autistic children tend to show rigid or rebellious behavior, and are ritualistic. This means that autistic children often perform repetitive actions, which may arise as a result of developmental processes that are usually seen before the child reaches the age of 3 years, as explained by Winarno in 2013. The importance of understanding these characteristics of autism allows parents, educators, and health professionals to provide appropriate support and intervention. By using a holistic, evidence-based approach, it is possible to create an environment that supports the development of children with autism, helps them overcome the obstacles they face, and improves their quality of life. Most autistic children show behavior that is unusual or different from children in general. To help them communicate and regulate behavior, the term "visual aids" is used to refer to various objects or images that support autistic children. In this context, images are considered an effective visual aid to facilitate communication.

The use of pictures helps autistic children understand the environment around them, helps them identify objects, people or situations, and makes it easier for them to understand the stimuli they receive. As stated by Kidd (2011), pictures can be a very useful tool in facilitating communication in autistic children. It cannot be denied that almost all autistic children face behavioral problems, although the level of intensity and variation can vary from one child to another. To overcome behavioral problems or behavioral problems that commonly occur in autistic children, Winarno (2013) emphasized that the application of visual aids or strategies could be the solution. This approach can help reduce or reduce behavioral problems that may arise, thereby

improving the quality of life of autistic children and providing more effective support to themselves and their surrounding environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach, a research method that involves a case study or phenomenological approach. The main focus of this qualitative research was to investigate in depth the experiences and variations of children with autism in special schools. Through this approach, researchers can detail and understand the context and nuances related to the lives of children with autism. The population that was the research subject was all children with autism in special schools. In this study, the sample was selected in a representative manner, including children with varying levels of cognitive abilities, types of behavior, and levels of social interaction. The selection of diverse samples allows researchers to understand various aspects and spectrums of children's experiences with autism, ranging from severity to the unique characteristics of each individual. With this qualitative approach, it is hoped that research can provide an in-depth and contextual picture of how children with autism face challenges and interact in a special school environment. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide valuable insights to increase understanding of the special needs of children with autism in educational contexts. Data collection in this research was carried out through two main methods, namely direct interviews with teachers and direct observation of children's behavior and social interactions in special school environments. Through interviews, researchers communicated directly with teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences in teaching children with autism. This interview approach can provide a rich perspective and insight into the challenges and strategies implemented in that particular learning environment.

A concrete understanding of children's characteristics is obtained through direct observation of their behavior and social interactions. By conducting direct observations, researchers can record various aspects of children's responses to certain school environments, including the way they interact with teachers and fellow children. This observation process provides a real-time picture of the adaptation and interactions of autistic children in the school context, and helps describe the dynamics of their daily lives. It is hoped that the combination of interviews with teachers and direct observation can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth picture of the experiences of autistic children in special school environments, as well as the unique characteristics that influence their learning processes and daily interactions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found significant variation in the characteristics of children with autism at the elementary school level. Some of the main factors influencing this variation

involve the level of cognitive ability, type of behavior, and level of social interaction. This diversity of characteristics is a crucial aspect in a deep understanding of children with autism, showing that each child has a unique profile. The role of the level of cognitive ability becomes significant in describing the range of their intellectual abilities, while the type of behavior and level of social interaction provide additional dimensions to the differences between one individual and another. By understanding this diversity, educators and professionals at the elementary school level can design more individualized and tailored approaches to meet each child's specific needs. This is a very important first step in helping children with autism reach their full potential, while creating an inclusive learning environment and providing the support needed. Classification based on level of cognitive ability in children with autism shows significant variations. The results showed that some children with autism show differences in the level of their cognitive abilities. Some children may demonstrate high cognitive abilities, while others may face greater challenges in this regard. The diversity in levels of cognitive abilities illustrates that each child with autism is unique.

Some may have high intellectual potential, while others may require a more specific learning approach according to their ability level. This grouping by level of cognitive ability can provide valuable guidance for educators and professionals in adapting learning strategies, ensuring that each child receives support appropriate to their needs, and enabling them to develop to their full potential. This analysis also highlights variations in the types of behavior exhibited by children with autism, suggesting that each child responds differently to learning. Some children show a positive response to certain learning approaches, while others may require more individualized and tailored strategies. The existence of variation in this type of behavior emphasizes the importance of a personalized learning approach.

Each child is considered a unique individual with different responses to the learning environment. By recognizing these differences, educators and professionals can design learning strategies that suit the characteristics and needs of each child. This personalized approach is key to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, where every child can develop their potential in the most effective way for them. The results showed differences in the level of social interaction among children with autism. Some children may show higher engagement in social interactions, while others may be more likely to be isolated. This understanding provides a strong basis for designing strategies that can improve the social interactions of children with autism. By being aware of these differences, educators and professionals can develop approaches tailored to each child's level of social engagement. Strategies aimed at increasing social interactions may include implementing learning methods that support collaboration, building social skills, and creating an environment that supports positive interactions. A deep understanding of the level of social interaction of children with autism is an

essential basis for creating an inclusive social environment and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to engage positively in social interactions. The findings of this study have significant implications for designing educational programs that better suit the individual needs of each child with autism. Grouping children based on their characteristics provides a strong basis for designing more effective learning strategies and supporting their optimal development. By understanding variations in levels of cognitive ability, types of behavior, and levels of social interaction, educators can adopt a more focused and tailored approach.

A deeper understanding of children's responses to learning methods can help in designing more personalized and targeted strategies, creating inclusive and supportive learning environments. The implications of this research emphasize the need to adapt educational approaches to ensure that every child with autism can access and benefit from learning in the way that is most effective for them. This provides the basis for improving the quality of inclusive education that takes into account the special and unique needs of each child with autism. Based on the research results, the concept that an individualistic approach is mandatory in providing educational support to children with autism is increasingly strengthened.

This approach involves personalizing learning methods, providing specialized support, and deep understanding of each child's unique needs. The advantage of the individualistic approach lies in recognizing the diversity in levels of cognitive abilities, types of behavior, and levels of social interaction among children with autism. By adopting this approach, educators can design more specific and appropriate learning programs, adapting learning strategies to the characteristics of each child. An individualistic approach is not only about providing information in a personalized manner, but also involves forming a strong bond between educator and child. Personalizing learning methods involves implementing teaching techniques that suit each child's preferences and learning style, thereby ensuring that each child with autism can reach his or her potential optimally. The impact of implementing this approach is to create an educational environment that is inclusive, supportive, and ensures that every child receives assistance and support according to their needs and potential. This research provides deep insight into the complexities of children with autism in the elementary school environment. Implementing a more focused approach can help support the social integration of these children, creating an inclusive school environment. By understanding the differences in levels of cognitive abilities, types of behavior, and levels of social interaction among children with autism, more focused approaches to encouraging social integration can be designed. This involves developing learning strategies that take into account the child's individual needs and preferences, while creating opportunities for positive interaction in the school environment. Support for social integration does not only include interactions between children, but also

involves interactions with teachers and school staff. By creating an inclusive environment, children with autism can feel accepted and supported in their social development. In effect, this not only benefits the children's personal development, but also creates a school culture that is friendlier and more supportive for all students.

CONCLUSION

Autism is a developmental disorder that involves various aspects, including cognitive, language, behavior, communication and social interaction. This term comes from Greek, reflecting the condition of individuals who are seen living in their own world. Autism spans a wide spectrum, with each individual exhibiting different degrees of severity and characteristics. Children with autism can experience difficulties in social interaction, problems in communicating, and repetitive play behavior. These symptoms can appear from early childhood, and it is important to understand that each individual with autism has different specific needs. In the face of the fact that the number of individuals experiencing autism continues to increase, it is important for society to increase understanding, provide support for further research, and create an inclusive environment. Appropriate education and intervention can help children with autism overcome the obstacles they face and become actively involved in daily life. The importance of understanding the characteristics of autism allows for appropriate support from parents, educators and health professionals. The use of visual aids, such as pictures, can be an effective solution in helping communication and managing the behavior of children with autism.

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