




The Role of Parental Communication in Building Early Childhood Personal Hygiene Independence

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between parental communication and children's independence in maintaining personal hygiene. This study focuses on children aged 5-6 years, who still have difficulty in independent hygiene. With a quantitative correlational approach, data were collected through questionnaires given to 34 parents selected using cluster random sampling techniques. The results showed that parental communication has a significant influence on the level of children's independence in maintaining personal hygiene. Parents who actively communicate with their children tend to build a higher awareness of the importance of hygiene. In addition, positive forms of communication, such as providing clear directions and providing direct examples, have been shown to increase children's motivation to care for themselves independently. Thus, active parental involvement in daily communication plays an important role in shaping children's hygiene habits. Therefore, parents are advised to improve more open and supportive communication patterns in order to instill children's self-care habits from an early age that have a positive impact on their health and independence.


1 INTRODUCTION


Personal hygiene is a fundamental aspect of a child's development as it has a direct impact on their health and self-confidence.(Rukmini Harun & Petronela Mamentu, 2023). Children who have good hygiene habits tend to be healthier and have more self-confidence in interacting with their social environment.(Meliyana & Septiana, 2018). However, research shows that many young children still have difficulty in maintaining cleanliness independently.


Parental communication is a major factor in shaping children's hygiene habits.(Meliyana & Septiana, 2018)identified five key elements of effective communication, namely openness, empathy, support, positive reinforcement, and shared understanding. Parents who actively communicate with their children can provide a better understanding of the importance of cleanliness and help them develop these habits early on.(Anhusadar & Islamiyah, 2020). According to Vygotsky, the social

environment, including the family, plays a major role in a child's development. Interaction between parents and children creates a zone of proximal development, where children can learn through guidance provided by parents. If communication within the family is good, then children will find it easier to internalize good hygiene habits and apply them in their daily lives.

In addition, research by(Zuliyanti & Setiawati, 2019)shows that the family ecosystem greatly influences children's habits, including personal hygiene. External factors such as parenting, parental education, and social environment also play a role in shaping children's hygiene habits from an early age. Therefore, parents need to understand how to build effective communication so that children can develop optimally and have strong hygiene habits. Piaget's study also shows that early childhood is in the pre-operational stage, where they learn through concrete experiences. If parents provide direct examples of the importance of hygiene, children will find it easier to

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imitate and apply them in their daily lives. This shows that parental role models are an important factor in shaping children's hygiene habits.

Furthermore, research by Baumrind in (Paud et al., 2020) emphasizes that parenting style also determines how children develop their habits. Parents with democratic parenting styles tend to be more successful in instilling hygiene habits compared to parents who apply authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. Therefore, good communication needs to be accompanied by parenting styles that support children's independence. Meanwhile, according to Erikson in (Wulandari et al., 2018), children aged 5-6 years are in the initiative versus guilt stage, where they begin to develop an awareness of their own abilities. If parents give children the opportunity to take responsibility for their own hygiene, then the child will be more confident in carrying out the habit.

In research conducted by (Princess, 2016), it was found that children who received positive communication support from their parents had a higher level of independence than those who did not. Effective communication helps children understand why cleanliness is important and how they can apply it in their daily lives. This study aims to analyze the relationship between parental communication and children's hygiene independence, focusing on children aged 5-6 years in Padang City. The results of this study are expected to provide insight for parents in forming children's hygiene habits from an early age and provide recommendations for non-formal education programs that focus on increasing the role of parents in supporting children's hygiene. in child development because it has a direct impact on their health and self-confidence (Qisthiyah et al., 2024). However, research shows that many young children still have difficulty in maintaining cleanliness independently. (Mardhiati, 2019).

This study aims to analyze the relationship between parental communication and children's hygiene independence, focusing on children aged 5-6 years in Padang City. The results of this study are expected to provide insight for parents in forming children's hygiene habits from an early age and provide recommendations for non-formal education programs that focus on increasing the role of parents in supporting children's hygiene. However, research shows that many early childhood children still have difficulty in maintaining hygiene independently (Proverawati, 2012). According to (Meliyana & Septiana, 2018), parental communication plays an important role in shaping children's habits, including personal hygiene. Open and empathetic

communication allows children to understand the importance of maintaining hygiene. In addition, Vygotsky emphasized that social interaction, including communication within the family, is a major factor in child development. This study aims to analyze the relationship between parental communication and children's hygiene independence, focusing on children aged 5-6 years in Padang City. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide insight for parents in shaping children's hygiene habits from an early age.

2 METHOD

This study uses a quantitative correlational approach to analyze the relationship between parental communication and children's hygiene independence. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to measure the level of relationship between independent and dependent variables objectively. (Selyiana et al., 2024). The population in this study were 52 parents who had children aged 5-6 years in Batung Taba Village, Padang City. The sampling technique used cluster random sampling, with a sample size of 34 people determined using the Slovin formula (Sugiyono, 2019) in (Son & Maha Yoga, 2022). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Parent Communication

The results of the study showed that parental communication in Padang city was mostly in the medium to low category. The aspects of openness and empathy were factors that were less than optimal in the interaction between parents and children. Many parents did not provide detailed explanations about the importance of cleanliness, so that children did not get enough understanding to build good habits. (Antiani, 2023). In addition, according to Vygotsky's theory, parents use more direct instructions without two-way communication that allows children to ask or discuss their personal hygiene.

In some cases, it was found that parents who have higher levels of education tend to have better communication with their children. This is in line with the findings (Lestiwati, 2013) which states that the family environment, including the level of

parental education, influences the way communication is applied in child rearing. Parents with a better understanding of the importance of hygiene tend to communicate more frequently with their children about daily hygiene practices, such as washing hands before eating and brushing teeth before bed.

Effective communication from parents is also associated with increased children's understanding of personal hygiene. (Lestiwati, 2013) emphasizes the importance of social learning in shaping children's habits, where children will more easily imitate their parents' habits if they get clear and consistent directions. However, this study found that many children do not get good examples from their parents, so that the hygiene habits applied are not optimal.

3.2 Children's Hygiene Independence

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the level of independence in hygiene of children aged 5-6 years in Padang city is still low. Many children are not yet able to brush their teeth independently, wash their hands properly, or maintain the cleanliness of their nails without the help of their parents. Piaget (1952) in (Afifah et al., nd) explains that early childhood is in the pre-operational stage, where they learn more through direct experience. If parents do not provide opportunities for children to practice independently, then children will have difficulty in developing independence in maintaining their personal hygiene.

In addition, the study found that children who have a structured cleaning routine at home are more likely to have better levels of independence. This is consistent with studies (Devi Ardiani & Fitriyani, 2021) which shows that democratic parenting, where parents provide direction but still give space for children to learn independently, contributes to the development of children's independence. In contrast, children whose parents are overprotective or authoritarian tend to have higher dependency in carrying out their hygiene habits.

Environmental factors also influence children's independence in maintaining cleanliness. (Devi Ardiani & Fitriyani, 2021) emphasizes that children who grow up in a supportive environment, such as a family with good hygiene habits, will more easily internalize these habits. However, this study found that not all families have regular hygiene habits, so children do not have a clear pattern to follow.

3.3 The Relationship Between Parental Communication and Children's Hygiene Independence

Statistical analysis using Pearson product-moment correlation showed a significant relationship between parental communication and children's hygiene independence ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$). This result indicates that the better the parental communication, the higher the level of children's independence in maintaining their personal hygiene. This is in line with research (Rohmah et al., 2023) which explains that at the initiative versus guilt stage, children begin to develop confidence in carrying out daily tasks if they receive good support and direction from their parents.

It was also found that children who were often invited to discuss cleanliness by their parents were more independent compared to children who only received instructions without explanation. According to (Devi Ardiani & Fitriyani, 2021), early childhood needs clear and consistent communication in order to understand the concept of cleanliness and apply it in everyday life. With open communication, children are more motivated to maintain their personal hygiene without always having to be directed by their parents.

However, despite the significant relationship, there are still some obstacles in forming children's independence in cleanliness. One of them is the lack of time for parents to interact with their children due to work, which hinders effective communication about personal hygiene. The solution that can be applied is to create a consistent cleanliness routine and provide direct examples so that children can imitate and internalize good habits from an early age. (Meliyana & Septiana, 2018).

4 CONCLUSIONS

Parental communication has a significant influence on children's hygiene independence. Children who receive direction, support, and examples from their parents tend to be more independent in maintaining personal hygiene. Therefore, parents are advised to implement a more open communication pattern, provide direct examples, and create a supportive environment so that children can learn to maintain hygiene independently.

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