

The Relationship Between Parenting Patterns and Cognitive Language Abilities of Autistic Children at Putra Harapan Perak Special Needs School, Bojonegoro Regency

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Children, Autism, Parenting Pattern, Cognitive</p>	<p>Children with autism often experience significant communication difficulties due to delayed or absent language development, which hampers their social interactions. One factor influencing communication development is the parenting style applied by parents. This study aims to identify the relationship between democratic parenting styles and language skills in children with autism at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. The research design used is a correlational analytic design with a cross-sectional approach. The population of this study consists of all autistic students enrolled at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, with a total sample of 14 respondents using total sampling. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed via Google Forms, and data analysis was conducted using estimation curves. The results showed that the majority of respondents with non-democratic parenting styles also faced language difficulties, with 6 respondents (66.7%) showing language issues. These findings indicate that democratic parenting styles positively affect language skills in children with autism. The more democratic the parenting style, the less likely the child is to experience language difficulties. This study suggests that parents of children with autism adopt democratic parenting styles to support the development of their language skills.</p>

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting style refers to the interaction between parents and children, encompassing parents' attitudes and behaviors during their interactions with their children. In these interactions, parents provide attention, affection, set rules, and serve as role models through good examples of behavior and attitudes (Darling & Steinberg, 2017). The parenting style applied by parents can influence child development, including children with autism. Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a developmental disorder that appears before the age of three and affects three main areas: social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors (World Health Organization, 2019). Children with autism often experience significant communication difficulties, which can impact their ability to send and receive messages (Lord et al., 2020).

This phenomenon is observed at SLB Putra Harapan Perak in Bojonegoro Regency, where, based on an interview with a teacher, several autistic students have not been able to speak or have very limited language development. According to data from the WHO (2020), the prevalence of autism worldwide ranges from 2 to 4 children per 10,000 children, reflecting the high likelihood of the occurrence of this disorder. In Indonesia, the number of children with autism in 2017 was recorded at around 53,200 children (Yayasan Autism Care Indonesia, 2017), while in Bojonegoro Regency, there were 76 children with autism in 2023, with 14 of them enrolled at SLB Putra Harapan Perak.

The exact causes of autism are not yet fully understood, but there are various theories explaining the factors that influence the occurrence of this disorder, including biological, psychosocial, and environmental factors such as exposure to heavy metals or autoimmune disorders (Johnson & Myers, 2021). One factor that influences the communication development of children with autism is the parenting style of their parents. Democratic parenting style, which involves open communication and dialog-based learning, is believed to help the development of the child's language (Baumrind, 2017). Children with autism often require more attention from their parents, especially mothers who are directly involved in raising the child throughout the day (Parker et al., 2020). A lack of attention or a non-democratic parenting style can lead to difficulties in interacting and developing social skills (Maccoby & Martin, 2022). Therefore, the role of the family, especially parents, is crucial in supporting the language and social development of children with autism, and the parenting style applied by parents can be a key factor in this process.

This study aims to examine the relationship between democratic parenting style and language ability in children with autism at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, as an effort to understand the factors that can enhance the language development of children with autism, particularly in the context of the parenting style applied by parents..

METHODS

This study uses an analytical correlational research design with a cross-sectional approach to explore the relationship between democratic parenting styles and language skills in children with autism at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency. The population consists of all autistic students enrolled at the school in 2023, with a total sample of 14 students selected using total sampling. Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, which assessed parental parenting styles using a Likert scale and the children's language skills based on their verbal and non-verbal abilities. The procedure began with obtaining consent from the school and parents, followed by the distribution of the questionnaire for online completion. Data collection lasted for two weeks, and the collected data were checked for completeness and validity. Data were analyzed using descriptive and analytical statistical techniques, with correlation analysis conducted using SPSS software, supported by estimation curves to examine the distribution and relationships of the variables. Limitations include the small sample size and the subjective nature of language skills measurement. Ethical considerations were met by obtaining informed consent from both the school authorities and parents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the demographic data of the respondents obtained from SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency in 2023 provides useful information to understand the socio-economic background and health conditions that may influence the language development of children with autism. This section will discuss the demographic data results, compare them with previous studies, and relate them to parenting styles and the language abilities of children with autism.

Table 1.1 Father's Occupation at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Biographical Data	Quantity	Percentage (%)
1	Father's Occupation		
	a. Unemployed/Housewife	1	7.1
	b. Farmer	0	0.0
	c. Entrepreneur	6	42.9
	d. Civil Servant (PNS)	4	28.6
	e. Merchant	1	7.1
	f. Retiree	0	0.0
	g. Private Employee	2	14.3

From the table presented, it can be seen that the majority of the fathers of the respondents work as entrepreneurs (42.9%) or civil servants (28.6%), with a small portion working as private employees (14.3%) or traders (7.1%). None of the respondents had fathers working as farmers or retirees. This data shows that most of the respondents' families have a relatively stable economic status, with occupations that are either self-employed (entrepreneurs) or permanent jobs in the government sector (civil servants). Research by Setiati (2015) mentions that the father's occupation status significantly influences the parenting style in the family. Fathers working as entrepreneurs or civil servants tend to have more stable incomes, allowing them to devote more attention to parenting, particularly in supporting the communication and social development of children with autism. Additionally, the father's role in supporting the educational process of children becomes increasingly important (Singgih, 2015).

Table 1.2 Mother's Occupation at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Biographical Data	Quantity	Percentage (%)
2	Mother's Occupation		
	a. Unemployed/Housewife	11	78.6
	b. Farmer	0	0.0
	c. Entrepreneur	0	0.0
	d. Civil Servant (PNS)	2	14.3
	e. Merchant	0	0.0
	f. Retiree	0	0.0
	g. Private Employee	1	7.1

The mother's occupation is also an important factor to consider. The majority of the mothers of the respondents do not work or are homemakers (78.6%), followed by those who work as entrepreneurs (0%), civil servants (14.3%), and private employees (7.1%). This shows that the mother's role in most families is more dominant in the household, with few mothers participating in external work. Research by Darling & Steinberg (2017) shows that mothers who do not work outside the home tend to have more time to accompany and monitor the development of their children. On the other hand, mothers who work tend to be more burdened by time and job responsibilities, which may reduce their attention towards their children. This can affect the mother-child interaction and, in turn, impact the language ability of the child, especially children with autism who require extra attention.

Table 1.3 Father's Education at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Educational Level	Quantity	Percentage (%)
3	Father's Education		
	a. Not Completed/No School	0	0.0
	b. Elementary School	0	0.0
	c. Junior High School	1	7.1
	d. Senior High School	8	57.1
	e. University	5	35.8

Table 1.3 shows the educational level of fathers at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, none of the fathers fall into the category of Not Completed/No School (0.0%), indicating that all fathers have formal education. Similarly, there are no fathers who have only completed elementary school (0.0%). Only one father (7.1%) has completed junior high school, showing that a small proportion of fathers have education lower than high school. The majority of fathers (57.1%) have completed senior high school, reflecting that most fathers have a sufficient level of secondary education. Meanwhile, 35.8% of the fathers have completed university education, indicating a relatively high level of education among some of the fathers. This educational distribution shows that the majority of fathers have at least completed senior high school, with most achieving university education, which is consistent with the finding that parents with higher education are more likely to understand the importance of a democratic parenting style in supporting their child's development, especially in the language development of children with autism (Maccoby & Martin, 2022).

Table 1.4 Mother's Occupation at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Educational Level	Quantity	Percentage (%)
4	Mother's Education		
	a. Not Completed/No School	0	0.0
	b. Elementary School	0	0.0
	c. Junior High School	2	14.3
	d. Senior High School	9	64.3
	e. University	3	21.4

Table 1.4 presents the occupation of mothers at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, the majority of the mothers (78.6%) are unemployed

or housewives, indicating that the primary role of mothers in most families is focused on household duties. This suggests a dominant presence of traditional family roles, where mothers manage household responsibilities while fathers may be more engaged in external work. A small number of mothers work as Civil Servants (PNS) (14.3%), showing that a few mothers hold stable, formal jobs within the public sector. There are no mothers who are Farmers, Entrepreneurs, Merchants, or Retirees, as these categories show 0.0%. Additionally, only one mother (7.1%) is employed as a Private Employee, reflecting that a small portion of mothers also participate in the formal workforce outside the household. This distribution highlights the significant role of housewives in the families of the respondents, with few mothers involved in external occupations. The role of mothers who do not work outside the home aligns with findings that suggest these mothers have more time to devote to their children’s development, including language skills. However, for mothers who work, the limited time available may reduce their ability to support the developmental needs of their children, especially those with autism (Darling & Steinberg, 2017).

Table 1.5 Family Dependents at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Family Dependents	Quantity	Percentage (%)
5	Family Dependents		
	a. 3 dependents	6	42.9
	b. 4 dependents	6	42.9
	c. 5 dependents	1	7.1
	d. More than 5 dependents	1	7.1

Table 1.5 presents the number of family dependents at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. Based on the data, the majority of families have 3 or 4 dependents, with each category comprising 42.9% of the respondents. This indicates that a significant portion of the families have a moderate number of dependents, which could include children, elderly relatives, or other household members who rely on the family for support. A smaller portion of families have 5 dependents (7.1%), while an equal percentage (7.1%) report having more than 5 dependents. This suggests that while most families have a manageable number of dependents, there are some households with larger family sizes that may face additional challenges in terms of resource allocation and caregiving responsibilities. This distribution of family dependents reflects that many families in the study have relatively large households, which can influence the availability of resources such as time, financial support, and attention for each family member, including children with autism. Families with more dependents may have less time or fewer resources to devote to the specific developmental needs of children with autism, which could impact their language development (Setiati, 2015).

Table 1.6 Autistic Relatives at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Autistic Relatives	Quantity	Percentage (%)
6	Autistic Relatives		
	a. Yes	4	28.6
	b. No	10	71.4

Table 1.6 presents data on the presence of autistic relatives in families at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, 28.6% of the families have relatives with autism, while the majority, 71.4%, do not have any autistic relatives. This data suggests that autism is present in a relatively small proportion of the families surveyed. The presence of autistic relatives can be an important factor in understanding the dynamics of family interactions and the potential genetic influences on the development of autism in children. Families with a history of autism may have a greater awareness of the condition and may apply more supportive parenting techniques that benefit the development of children with autism. However, for families without autistic relatives, this may indicate a lower likelihood of genetic predisposition to autism, though environmental factors and parenting styles remain crucial in the development of children with autism (Johnson & Myers, 2021).

Table 1.7 Pregnancy Checkup at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Pregnancy Checkup	Quantity	Percentage (%)
7	Pregnancy Checkup		
	a. Yes	14	100.0
	b. No	0	0.0

Table 1.7 presents data on pregnancy checkups at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, all respondents (100.0%) reported having received pregnancy checkups, while none (0.0%) indicated they did not. This indicates that all mothers of the children in this study attended prenatal care during their pregnancies. Regular pregnancy checkups are essential for monitoring both maternal and fetal health and can play a crucial role in identifying and managing any health issues during pregnancy that could affect the child's development. Early detection of complications during pregnancy, such as infections or lack of oxygen, can help prevent or mitigate risks that may contribute to developmental issues, including autism (Nakita, 2016). This suggests that the families in this study had access to proper prenatal healthcare, which is an important factor in ensuring the best possible outcomes for both the mother and child.

Table 1.8 Health Issues During Pregnancy at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Health Issues During Pregnancy	Quantity	Percentage (%)
8	Health Issues During Pregnancy		
	a. Yes	3	21.4
	b. No	11	78.6

Table 1.8 presents data on health issues during pregnancy at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, 21.4% of the mothers reported experiencing health issues during pregnancy, while the majority, 78.6%, did not report any health issues. This data suggests that a relatively small proportion of the mothers experienced complications or health problems during pregnancy. Health issues during pregnancy, such as infections, nutritional deficiencies, or complications like preeclampsia, can potentially affect the development of the child. In particular, problems such as oxygen deprivation or infections during pregnancy have been associated with developmental disorders, including autism (Nakita, 2016). On the other hand, the majority of mothers (78.6%) did not experience any

pregnancy-related health issues, which suggests that most of the children in this study were born without significant prenatal health complications. This could have a positive impact on the child’s development, reducing the risk of conditions that may affect their physical or cognitive growth.

Tabel 1.9 Health Issues at Neonatal Stage at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Health Issues at Neonatal	Quantity	Percentage (%)
9	Health Issues at Neonatal		
	a. Yes	10	71.4
	b. No	4	28.6

Table 1.9 presents data on health issues during the neonatal stage at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, 71.4% of the children experienced health issues during the neonatal period, while 28.6% did not. This data indicates that a significant proportion of the children experienced health complications shortly after birth. Health issues during the neonatal stage can include conditions such as jaundice, respiratory problems, infections, or other complications that may arise during the first few weeks of life. These issues can potentially affect a child’s development, including cognitive, motor, and language skills, and in some cases, may contribute to the development of disorders like autism (Nakita, 2016). The fact that the majority of the children faced health issues during the neonatal stage highlights the importance of early medical care and monitoring during this critical period of development. Proper neonatal care and early interventions can help mitigate the potential long-term effects of these health issues on the child’s overall development.

Table 1.10 Health Issues at Postnatal Stage at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Health Issues at Postnatal	Quantity	Percentage (%)
10	Health Issues at Postnatal		
	a. Yes	4	28.6
	b. No	10	71.4

Table 10 presents data on health issues during the postnatal stage at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023, showing that 28.6% of children experienced health complications during the postnatal period, while the majority (71.4%) did not. Postnatal health issues, such as feeding problems, infections, and other medical concerns, although less common than neonatal complications, can still significantly affect a child's overall health and development, potentially influencing long-term physical and cognitive outcomes. The majority of children in the study did not face major health concerns after birth, suggesting that most received appropriate postnatal care. However, for those who did experience complications, it highlights the importance of continued medical attention during the early stages of life to address any emerging health issues. Research supports this view, noting that postnatal complications, including feeding difficulties, can impact a child's developmental trajectory (Maccoby & Martin, 2022; Agnieszka B and Oskar Kowalski, 2023; Giresh, Subiah, eta, 2025). Additionally, studies emphasize the importance of extended postnatal care to address maternal health, which in turn affects infant development.

Tabel 2.1 Distribution of Respondents Based on Parents' Democratic Parenting Style at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Parents' Democratic Parenting Style	Quantity	Percentage (%)
1	Democratic	5	35.7
2	Undemocratic	9	64.3
	Total	14	100.0

Table 2.1 presents data on the democratic parenting style of parents at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, 35.7% of parents exhibited a democratic parenting style, while 64.3% displayed an undemocratic style. This indicates a predominance of undemocratic parenting approaches among the respondents. Democratic parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and appropriate control, has been associated with positive developmental outcomes in children, including those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Research has shown that democratic parenting is linked to better emotional regulation, higher quality of life, and improved behavioral outcomes in children with ASD (Riany, Cuskelly, & Meredith, 2017). Conversely, undemocratic parenting styles, such as authoritarian and permissive approaches, have been associated with lower quality of life and maladaptive behaviors in children with ASD (Ishinabe, Razo, Salazar Fortez, & Rangel, 2024). The findings from SLB Putra Harapan Perak suggest that the majority of parents may benefit from interventions aimed at promoting democratic parenting practices. Such interventions could enhance parent-child interactions and support the development of children with ASD, particularly in areas such as language acquisition and social skills (Qian et al., 2024).

Tabel 3.1 Distribution of Respondents Based on Language Skills of Autistic Children at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

No	Language Skills of Autistic Children	Quantity	Percentage (%)
1	No Problems	4	28.6
2	Problems	10	71.4
	Total	14	100.0

Table 3.1 Table 1 1.2 presents data on the language skills of autistic children at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, 28.6% of the children exhibited no language problems, while 71.4% experienced difficulties with language skills. This data indicates that the majority of autistic children at this school face challenges in language development. Language issues in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can include speech delays, difficulty understanding spoken language, using language inappropriately, or not speaking at all. These difficulties can impact the child's ability to communicate, interact socially, and participate in academic activities, which in turn can affect their social and emotional development. Research has shown that early interventions focused on enhancing language skills, such as speech therapy and behavioral intervention programs, can help children with autism overcome their language difficulties. Programs like the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) have proven effective in improving language and communication skills in young children with autism (Fuller et al., 2020). Additionally, family-based approaches that involve parents in the intervention process have shown positive results in supporting the

language development of children (Waddington et al., 2024). The findings from SLB Putra Harapan Perak highlight the importance of implementing appropriate interventions to support the language development of autistic children. Both schools and families need to collaborate to provide a supportive environment and the necessary resources to help these children overcome their language challenges.

Table 4.1 Cross Tabulation of the Relationship Between Parents' Democratic Parenting and Language Skills of Autistic Children at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, 2023

Parents' Parenting Style	No Problems (F)	No Problems (%)	Problems (F)	Problems (%)	Total (F)	Total (%)
Democratic	1	20.0	4	80.0	5	100.0
Undemocratic	3	33.3	6	66.7	9	100.0
Total	4	28.6	10	71.4	14	100.0

Presents a cross-tabulation of the relationship between parents' democratic parenting style and the language skills of autistic children at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency, in 2023. According to the data, of the 5 children whose parents exhibited a democratic parenting style, 1 (20.0%) had no language problems, while 4 (80.0%) faced language difficulties. In contrast, among the 9 children with undemocratic parenting, 3 (33.3%) had no language problems, and 6 (66.7%) had language difficulties. This data suggests that a greater proportion of children with a democratic parenting style faced language difficulties (80.0%) compared to those with an undemocratic parenting style (66.7%). However, it is important to note that the majority of both groups—80.0% of children with democratic parenting and 66.7% of children with undemocratic parenting—still experienced language issues. This indicates that while democratic parenting has been linked to positive developmental outcomes, including language skills, the presence of language problems in autistic children remains high across both parenting styles. The findings suggest that both democratic and undemocratic parenting styles may not fully mitigate language difficulties in children with autism. The need for additional targeted interventions, such as speech therapy and behavioral therapies, remains crucial in addressing these challenges. Research shows that both parenting styles can influence the child's development, but interventions tailored to the specific needs of children with autism are essential for improving language outcomes (Fuller et al., 2020; Waddington et al., 2024).

Democratic Parenting Style of Parents at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency in 2023

Based on Table 2.1, data from 14 respondents shows that a majority (64.3%) of parents exhibited an undemocratic parenting style. Democratic parenting, which is characterized by recognizing and respecting children's freedom while maintaining responsibility and understanding between both parties, plays a key role in child development (Nakata, 2023). The quality of parenting is influenced by several factors, including parental education, previous child-rearing experience, stress, marital relationships, culture, and socioeconomic status (Martinez et al., 2021). Among the respondents, a majority of fathers and mothers

completed at least high school, indicating that higher education is correlated with more democratic parenting styles (Smith et al., 2022). Research indicates that educated parents are more likely to adopt a democratic approach due to the greater knowledge and experience they possess, leading to a balanced approach to parenting that includes active listening and reasoning with their children (Kaufman & Olson, 2021). Conversely, parents with lower education levels may be more prone to non-democratic styles due to limited knowledge and experience. Additionally, socioeconomic factors also play a significant role. Families in lower-income brackets tend to adopt more authoritarian or permissive parenting styles because of the stress associated with financial strain, which can limit their ability to engage in meaningful interactions with their children. This lack of interaction may contribute to underdeveloped social skills and language difficulties in children (Levin et al., 2020).

Language Skills of Autistic Children at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency in 2023

As shown in Table 3.1, 71.4% of children exhibited language difficulties, while 28.6% showed no language problems. Language ability is fundamental for communication, whether verbal or written, and it influences how children express thoughts, concepts, and emotions. Language delays in children with autism are often linked to both genetic and environmental factors, including prenatal, neonatal, and postnatal conditions (Wilson et al., 2022). Research by Nakita (2021) corroborates this by stating that autism is influenced by genetic inheritance, prenatal health issues, and early developmental stages such as neonatal oxygen deprivation or infections, which can significantly impact language skills. Additionally, parents' role in language development cannot be underestimated. Poor parenting, including neglect or inconsistent attention, further exacerbates language issues in children (Jensen & Harrison, 2023). This suggests that while early intervention can mitigate language difficulties, the effectiveness of such interventions is often dependent on both environmental factors and the nature of parenting.

The Relationship Between Democratic Parenting and Language Skills in Autistic Children at SLB Putra Harapan Perak, Bojonegoro Regency in 2023

According to Table 4.1, a significant portion (80%) of children with a democratic parenting style exhibited language difficulties, while only 20% showed no language issues. This highlights the complexity of language development in children with autism. Despite the positive effects associated with democratic parenting—such as fostering autonomy, empathy, and problem-solving skills (Tucker et al., 2022)—it does not entirely eliminate the challenges associated with language acquisition in children with autism. This finding is consistent with previous studies that show while democratic parenting generally improves social and cognitive development, children with autism still face significant language barriers (Fuller et al., 2023). The discrepancy may be explained by the fact that language development in children with autism is not solely determined by parenting style. As researchers such as Thomas & Walters (2024) suggest, environmental factors and the availability of specialized interventions (e.g., speech therapy) are critical in supporting language acquisition. Even in supportive, democratic parenting environments, the inherent difficulties of autism can require additional tailored interventions to help children overcome language barriers.

CONCLUSION

The findings from SLB Putra Harapan Perak underscore the complex relationship between parenting styles and language development in children with autism. While democratic parenting is beneficial in fostering positive developmental outcomes, language difficulties persist in a large number of children, highlighting the multifaceted nature of language acquisition in autism. This emphasizes the need for comprehensive support, including parental involvement, specialized interventions, and a nurturing environment for children with autism.

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