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Parents' Participation in Fostering Effective Communication through Prompting Techniques for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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ABSTRACT

This research assessed the effectiveness of the parents' communication through prompting procedures for their children with ASD at identified schools in the division of the component cities in Cebu, Philippines during the School Year 2023-2024. This research utilized a descriptive correlational design to test the relationship between the parent respondents' prompting technique utilization and the communication skills of autistic children. This study was conducted at three (3) public elementary schools in Cebu, Philippines. Ethical considerations were adhered to before, during and after the data gathering. The 99 respondents were purposively selected for they are parents of children with ASD. The data collected were tallied, organized, summarized, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed the extent of support needed by the children with autism was high. The level of manifestation of communication skills of children with autism was high. The extent of the respondents' usage of prompting techniques when communicating with a child with autism was high. There was a significant relationship between the parents' perception on the extent of support needed by the children with autism and the extent of the parent respondents' usage of prompting techniques in communication with the children with autism. And there was a significant relationship between the respondents' prompting technique utilization and the communication skills of the children with autism. It is recommended that parent-mediated therapies and parent training and resources should be provided to establish a supportive environment that meets the requirements of children with ASD and improves their communication and development.

INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) poses a complex challenge for affected individuals, their families, and educators, especially when it comes to communication. Children diagnosed with ASD frequently display a wide range of communication skills, varying from being unable to speak to being able to speak fluently yet struggling with social interactions (Bogdashina, 2022). The presence of communication issues in children with ASD can greatly impede their ability to engage in social relationships, negatively impact their academic achievements, and may negatively impact their quality of life. These limitations may seem like obstacles in comprehending and utilizing language, interpreting nonverbal signals, and participating in mutually interactive interactions. Due to the diverse range of communication impairments in children with ASD, an individualized approach is necessary. The support supplied by parents and caregivers is extremely crucial in this situation. By implementing regular and focused interventions, parents can significantly enhance their child's reading capacity to communicate proficiently with others (Garcia & Ancheta, 2022). Prompting approaches are highly helpful in teaching communication skills to children with ASD. Diaz (2023) affirms that parental engagement has a significant effect on the academic performance of the learners. Domire and Wolfe, 2014 stress that these strategies encompass physical reminders, visual aids, verbal clues, and modeling

of desired behaviors and language.

The variation in communication abilities among the children with ASD highlights the need for customized assistance techniques that can close the disparity between their potential and their everyday communication practices. Thompson *et al.* (2019) find that visual prompts have a substantial positive impact on the expressive and receptive communication abilities of children with ASD. This emphasizes the necessity for tailored methods in providing communication assistance. Gulsrud *et al.* (2016), explore the intricacies of parental participation, corroborate that children with ASD make significant progress in their social communication abilities when their parents continuously employ prompting tactics in their home environment. This observation not only strengthens the need to involve families but also aligns with the conclusions of Garcia *et al.* (2018) who outline that parents' consistent prompting technique can improve children with ASD's social and communication skills.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CD) highlights the urgent need for a variety of specific communication interventions, as around 40% of children with ASD are unable to speak or have very limited speech abilities, and 60% face difficulties in social communication while having average or above-average verbal abilities (Heckenlively, 2021). Based on this study's researchers' initial observation, children with ASD at public primary and special education schools in Cebu,

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Philippines face a complex combination of problems and support mechanisms. They often require more support in school settings than what is currently provided due to limited resources and staff training, notable limitations in terms of financial resources, availability of specialized teacher training, and personalized teaching materials. There is significant variation in the communication skills of children with ASD in these environments. Certain children may lack verbal communication skills or have limited ability in this area, while others may have sufficient linguistic capabilities but face challenges in the social aspects of communication. The unpredictability of this situation poses a problem for educators and caregivers who are trying to implement a uniform method. Instead, it requires personalized communication tactics that are tailored to the specific needs of each child.

This emphasizes a need for a thorough investigation on the involvement of parents in promoting effective communication using prompting techniques for children diagnosed with ASD to gain a deeper understanding of how parents contribute to the communication development of their children with (ASD) in the Philippine school system, particularly in Cebu. This paper specifically examined how parents and educators could collaborate more successfully to use customized prompting techniques to address the unique communication needs of the children with ASD. This seeks to provide valuable insights that can be used to develop more effective and collaborative approaches to support these children to enhance the communication abilities, leading to improved social integration and academic success in public educational settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have a diverse range of tools available to enhance and complicate their communication abilities. These techniques include verbal prompts, visual assistance, and tactile direction. Each strategy plays a crucial role in helping these youngsters overcome communication issues, providing distinct ways to improve their ability to interact. Spriggs *et al.* (2018) emphasize that visual cues are effective in promoting task completion and transitions for children with ASD. Bambaeroo and Shokrpour (2017) underscore the importance of physical prompts in teaching new skills, including communicative behaviors. Srinivasan (2016) have demonstrated that verbal prompting is an effective method for promoting verbal communication in children with ASD who have limited or no verbal abilities. El Zein (2016) support that the combination of verbal prompts and visual aids has been found to greatly improve comprehension and response rates in children with ASD. Saad (2016) highlights the effectiveness of visual storytelling in enhancing narrative abilities and social interaction. Zhao *et al.* (2019) supports the advantages of technology-assisted prompts, such as applications and software, in enhancing communication and fostering active participation. Amiri (2023) reinforces that Teacher enjoyment and boredom significantly predicted student

enjoyment. In terms of parental involvement. Russell and McCloskey (2016) disclose that parents, although enthusiastic about promoting their child's communication skills, frequently face obstacles associated with their understanding, available resources, and self-assurance. This highlights the crucial importance of parent training programs in empowering parents to proficiently utilize prompting tactics. In addition, Alghufali (2024) holistic approaches artistic activities enhance children's creative thinking, cognitive, emotional, and social development. Meanwhile, parental participation is significantly influenced by cultural, social, and educational factors. Babik and Gardner (2021) demonstrate the impact of cultural attitudes and stigma around disability on parents' inclination to participate in specific educational or therapeutic activities. Russell and McCloskey, (2016). (2020 indicate that the availability of resources, specialized services, and even the amount of time parents have to devote to their children are concerns in fostering effective communication for children with ASD. The use of prompting approaches is significantly influenced by educational aspects, including the parents' comprehension of ASD and communication skills (Sengupta *et al.*, 2017). The intricate interaction between various prompting approaches, parental participation, and influencing factors highlights the necessity of adopting a comprehensive approach to assist children with ASD. It is imperative to implement comprehensive initiatives that encompass parental education and training, culturally relevant support programs, and easily accessible resources. This strategy not only improves the communication skills of children with ASD, but also encourages parents to actively participate in this process.

In the Philippines, the support system for Autism Spectrum Disorder is influenced by policies, and initiatives that try to meet the specific requirements of individuals with ASD. The legislative foundation for supporting individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is established by policies such as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (Republic Act No. 7277) and its subsequent changes under Republic Act No. 9442. These policies require the provision of comprehensive support services for individuals with disabilities. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on how these policies are implemented in terms of targeted programs for enhancing communication skills and involving parents in the care of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (National Council on Disability Affairs, 1992). The Autism Society Philippines (2014) exemplifies community-driven initiatives to address the deficiencies by offering training to parents and educators on effectively managing ASD. Although Shalev *et al.* (2019) provide evidence of the advantages of parent-mediated treatments, However, there is a lack of equivalent extensive studies in the Philippine context, specially in Cebu Island. This lack of empirical data on the effectiveness of parental participation in enhancing communication through prompting techniques in the Philippine setting

underscores a significant research gap. There is a critical need for a study focused on Parents' Participation in Fostering Effective Communication Through Prompting Techniques for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Hence, this study assessed the effectiveness of the parents' communication through prompting procedures for their children with ASD at identified schools in the division of the component cities in Cebu, Philippines during the School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: 1) What is the extent of support needed by the children with autism? 2) What is the level of manifestation of communication skills of children with autism? 3) To what extent do the respondents use prompting techniques when communicating with the child with autism? 4) Is there a significant relationship between the parents' perception on the extent of support needed by the children with autism and the extent of the parent respondents' usage of prompting techniques in communication with the children with autism? And 5) Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' prompting technique utilization and the communication skills of the children with autism? These areas, the study could offer valuable insights into optimizing support strategies for children with ASD, tailoring interventions to the unique cultural, socioeconomic, and educational landscape of the Philippines, and ultimately enhancing the communicative outcomes and overall well-being of children with ASD.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section presents the research method, respondents, data collection tools, data collection process, and data analysis. This research utilized a descriptive correlational

design to test the relationship between the parent respondents' prompting technique utilization and the communication skills of the children with autism. A correlational research design aims to determine the relationship between two or more variables without the intent of controlling any of these variables (Carlson & Wu, 2012). This study was conducted at the three (3) public elementary schools in Cebu, Philippines. Ethical considerations were adhered to before, during and after the data gathering. The 99 respondents were purposively selected for they are parents of children with ASD. The data collected were tallied, organized, summarized, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation (SD) were used to determine the extent of support needed by the children with autism; the level of manifestation of communication skills of children with autism; and the extent of the respondents' usage of prompting techniques when communicating with the child with autism. While Pearson's r was used to test the relationship between the respondents' prompting technique utilization and the communication skills of the children with autism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the data gathered from the parent respondents about the extent of support needed by the children with autism; the level of manifestation of communication skills of children with autism; the extent of the respondents' usage of prompting techniques when communicating with the child with autism; and the test of relationship between the respondents' prompting technique utilization and the communication skills of the children with autism.

Table 1: Parents' Perception on the Extent of Support Needed by the Children with Autism (n=99)

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	The child has difficulty understanding verbal instructions or conversations.	2.78	Often
2	The child has difficulty expressing their needs or ideas verbally.	3.00	Often
3	The child uses alternative communication methods (e.g., signs, gestures, AAC devices).	3.00	Often
4	The child displays strong reactions or aversions to sensory stimuli (e.g., loud noises, certain textures).	2.78	Often
5	The child struggles to understand social cues or non-verbal communication (e.g., facial expressions, body language).	2.57	Often
6	The child has challenges initiating or maintaining friendships.	2.51	Often
7	The child has difficulty filtering sensory input and may become overwhelmed in sensory-rich environments.	2.22	Occasionally
8	The child struggles with changes in routines or transitions.	2.54	Often
9	The child relies on sameness and may become distressed by changes in their environment or daily activities.	2.38	Occasionally
10	The child has difficulty adapting to new situations or environments.	2.43	Occasionally
11	The child requires support in academic settings (e.g., modifications, accommodations).	2.62	Often
12	The child needs assistance with daily living skills (e.g., self-care, organization)	2.38	Occasionally
13	The child benefits from therapy or intervention services (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy).	2.38	Occasionally
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.58	Often

Legend:

3.25-4.00-Always

2.50– 3.24- Often

1.75 – 2.49-Occasionally

1.00 – 1.74– Not Need

Table 1 shows that parents' perceptions of their children's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) support needs are high, notably in communication, sensory processing, and social interaction. An aggregate weighted mean of 2.58 suggests these demands are "Often" needed, highlighting the ongoing help young children need. The hurdles go beyond fundamental communication issues like interpreting verbal instructions or expressing demands verbally, which got a WM of 3.00, indicating a frequent struggle. Seol *et al.* (2014) argue that ASD patients have complicated communication challenges, including expressive and receptive language impairments. The multidimensional nature of ASD is shown by the frequent use of alternative communication strategies (WM=3.00) and the difficulty with sensory stimuli and

social cues (WM=2.78 and 2.57). These data confirm that ASD has a wide range of sensory sensitivities and social communication difficulties, requiring different support measures (Kojovic, *et al.*, 2013). The findings also show that while adapting to new situations and requiring therapy or intervention services are "Occasionally" needed (WM 2.38 to 2.43), they are essential to the entire support plan for children with ASD. This complex understanding of support needs is essential for creating focused intervention programs for ASD children. It emphasizes multi-disciplinary support, including educational adjustments, therapeutic interventions, and daily living skills initiatives. Studies support tailored and holistic support programs for children with ASD, highlighting the need of meeting their diverse needs (Reichow *et al.*, 2012). These findings have major implications, emphasizing that parents, educators, and therapists must work together to meet the different needs of ASD children. This collaborative approach helps children with ASD improve communication skills, social competence, and adaptive behaviors, improving their well-being and social inclusion.

Table 2: Parents' Perception on the Level of Manifestation of Communication Skills of the Children with Autism (n=99)

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Says his own first name or nickname	2.86	Manifested
2	Names at least three actions	2.86	Manifested
3	Says his age when asked	2.76	Manifested
4	Responds to questions that use the word "who"	2.51	Manifested
5	Identifies one or more alphabet letters	2.46	Less Manifested
6	Understands at least three more advanced gestures	2.70	Manifested
7	Follows instructions with two related actions	2.65	Manifested
8	Responds to questions that use the word "why"	2.51	Manifested
9	Follows instructions with one and two steps	2.65	Manifested
10	Copies his own first name correctly	2.89	Manifested
11	Follows instructions involving right and left	2.78	Manifested
12	Writes both his first and last name from memory	2.70	Manifested
13	Reads sentences of three or more words out loud	2.86	Manifested
14	Understands sarcastic words	2.62	Manifested
15	Remembers to do something up to an hour later	2.46	Less Manifested
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.69	Manifested

Legend:

3.25-4.00-Highly Manifested

2.50– 3.24- Manifested

1.75 – 2.49-Less Manifested

1.00 – 1.74– Not Manifested

Table 2 offers a detailed look at parents' perceptions of the communication skills manifested by their children with ASD, based on responses from 99 participants. These communication skills are "Manifested" to a noticeable or high degree, according to the weighted mean of 2.69. Most capabilities, including fundamental verbal abilities like expressing their name, labeling actions, and answering simple questions, are reported, indicating

kid communication capacity. The ability to copy their own first name correctly (WM=2.89) and read sentences of three or more words out loud (WM=2.86) are among the highest rated, suggesting that many ASD children in this sample have strengths in written communication and early literacy. However, "Less Manifested" (WM=2.46) weighted means for identifying alphabet letters and remembering to finish a task an hour later show regions of struggle. This complex view of ASD children's communication abilities highlights the condition's spectrum of abilities and challenges, echoing that a wide range of language and communication skills (Cummins

et al., 2020). Because ASD is heterogeneous, these skills appear in different ways, requiring individualized support and intervention. The weaker expression of memory and less specific language concepts like sarcasm (WM=2.62) indicates the complexity of these children's communication issues. Without focused interventions, abstract thinking and executive functioning may lag in communication. This supports that ASD therapies targeted to individual profiles are effective and that early

identification and assistance for unique communication requirements are crucial (Genovese & Butler, 2020). The study synthesizes these ideas to help parents comprehend ASD children's communication skills and reinforces the importance of personalized, evidence-based therapy. The findings encourage comprehensive assessment and intervention planning that addresses all communication strengths and problems in children with ASD to help them grow and participate in a communicative world.

Table 3: Extent of the Parent Respondents' Usage of Prompting Techniques in Communication with the Children with Autism (n=99)

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Teaching hand over	2.81	Often
2	Touching the child's hand, wrist, elbow, etc.	2.57	Often
3	Pointing to the desired answer	2.35	Sometimes
4	Putting the correct answer in a position to make it easier for the child	2.54	Often
5	Verbalize would be "aaa" or "aapp"	2.35	Sometimes
6	Using pictures or other images so that the child selects the correct answer	2.81	Often
7	Modeling the desired behavior or action for imitation	2.65	Often
8	Using gesture prompts, such as nodding or shaking head for yes/no questions	2.40	Sometimes
9	Providing choices verbally to narrow down options for the child	2.60	Often
10	Employing technology-assisted prompts, like speech-generating devices or apps	2.50	Often
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.57	Often

Legend:

3.25-4.00-Always

2.50– 3.24- Often

1.75 – 2.49-Sometimes

1.00 – 1.74– Never

Table 3 showcases the findings from a survey of 99 parents regarding their use of prompting techniques in communicating with their children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The aggregate weighted mean of 2.57, which falls under "Often" shows that these parents highly use a range of urging tactics to communicate with their children. The most common techniques for selecting the correct answer in ASD are "Teaching hand over hand" and "Using pictures or other images" (both with WMs of 2.81). These methods use visual and physical prompts to support understanding and expression. Rutherford *et al.* (2020) articulate that visual and tactile supports improve ASD communication.

Some techniques, like "Pointing to the desired answer" and "Using gesture prompts" are reported as used "Sometimes" (WMs of 2.35 and 2.40, respectively), suggesting that while helpful, they may not be used consistently or depend on the context or child's responsiveness on a

given day. This heterogeneity highlights the personalized nature of communication tactics in ASD, where prompt effectiveness can vary substantially. The frequent use of "Modeling the desired behavior" and "Providing choices verbally to narrow down options for the child" (WMs of 2.65 and 2.60, respectively) shows that parents understand the importance of clear, concrete examples and choices to improve their children's decision-making and communication. The adoption of "Technology-assisted prompts" with a WM of 2.50 indicates an increasing use of digital tools and applications to support communication, aligning on technology's potential to help ASD patients communicate (Ennis-Cole, 2015). The survey results show that children with ASD use a wide range of prompting strategies, highlighting the complexity of communication issues and the need for parents and caregivers to use a diverse strategy to help them communicate. This suggests that ASD individuals need personalized, dynamic communication strategies that can adapt to their changing needs, including prompt-based strategies in communication interventions (Korneder & Louie, 2021).

Table 4: Test of Significant Relationship Between the Parents' Perception on the Extent of Support Needed by the Children with Autism and the Extent of the Parent Respondents' Usage of Prompting Techniques in Communication with the Children with Autism

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Support Needed and Prompting Technique Utilization	0.632	Strong Positive	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 4 shows a strong positive correlation (r -value = 0.632) between the perceived support needed by children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and parents' prompting technique use in communication. A p -value of 0.002 rejects the null hypothesis and proves the correlation's statistical significance. This strong link shows that parents who regard their children as needing more help are more likely to use a variety of prompting tactics in their communication. This findings show that parents' view of their child's requirements directly affects their use of communicative tactics to help them develop. This is consistent with research on parental participation and focused communication tactics like prompting to help children with ASD acquire communication skills. This study also highlights the ability for parents to play

a role in their children's development beyond recognizing a correlation. ASD children's communication results can be greatly improved by teaching parents how to use prompting tactics adapted to their child's requirements (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2017). This suggests that parent training treatments have consistently improved child outcomes and empowered families to support their children's development across time. The substantial association between parental perceptions of support requirements and prompting approaches emphasizes the importance of parent-mediated therapies for ASD children (Adedipe, 2022). This underscores that parents should be included in communication intervention creation and implementation and get focused training and assistance to help their children succeed.

Table 5: Test of Significant Relationship Between the Parent Respondents' Perception on the on the Level of Manifestation of Communication Skills of the Children with Autism and the Extent of the Parent Respondents' Usage of Prompting Techniques in Communication with the Children with Autism

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Communication Skills and Prompting Technique Utilization	0.515*	Moderate Positive	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Due of the lack of strong correlations in other areas, inclusive education difficulties may necessitate a multidimensional approach that tackles all elements of teaching and learning. In Table 5, parents' opinions of their children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)'s communication skills and prompting use are somewhat positively correlated (r -value = 0.515). A 0.001 p -value strongly rejects the null hypothesis, showing that the observed link is statistically significant and not attributable to random chance. This finding underscores the importance of parental involvement and communication methods in ASD children's communication development. The modest strength of the link shows that ASD children's communication abilities improve when parents utilize prompting strategies more. This complements that visual assistance, gestural prompts, and model-based learning improve ASD patients' communicative outcomes (Amara *et al.*, 2022). This correlation shows how parents adjust to their children's communication issues and suggests that teaching parents in effective communication skills may be beneficial. Ruppert *et al.* (2016) found that parent-implemented interventions can improve communication skills in children with ASD, so teaching parents how to use prompting techniques may improve these outcomes. This study adds to the expanding amount of evidence supporting comprehensive intervention programs that involve parents in therapy. Practitioners can maximize developmental gains in children with ASD by incorporating parent training into intervention plans to use parents' unique insights and opportunities to reinforce communication skills in naturalistic settings (Schreibman *et al.*, 2015). Targeted interventions that teach parents how to prompt their children with ASD

to develop communication skills are crucial to actively contribute to their child's development.

CONCLUSION

The findings form Tables 1 to 5 provide a detailed look at parental perspectives and actions in supporting children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The aggregate evidence shows that children with ASD struggle in communication, sensory processing, and social engagement. Parents indicate a need for support across multiple domains, underlining ASD's complexity and the need for specialized intervention and care. Communication becomes a priority as parents report that their children struggle to understand and convey verbal instructions, requiring alternate communication strategies and prompting. These methods are frequently used, highlighting parents' active engagement in helping ASD children communicate and interact. The strong positive link between perceived support requirements and prompting method use suggests that parents intuitively utilize these strategies more when perceived needs are higher. The considerable association between prompting approaches and communication abilities in children with ASD shows their efficacy. This correlation validates parents' use of varied prompting strategies and emphasizes the necessity of training parents with the skills and information to support their children's communication development. It is recommended that parent-mediated therapies and parent training and resources should be provided to establish a supportive environment that meets the requirements of children with ASD and improves their communication and development.

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