



## THE ROLE OF CAREGIVER COMMUNICATION IN SHAPING INDEPENDENT ATTITUDES IN FOSTERED CHILDREN (Case Study at the Putri Siti Aisyah Aek Kanopan Orphanage)

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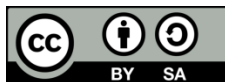
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### ABSTRACT

*Children living in orphanages generally come from underprivileged family backgrounds and therefore require special attention and guidance. This study aims to analyze the role of caregiver communication in shaping the independence of foster children at Putri Siti Aisyah Orphanage in Aek Kanopan. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques including interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings show that caregivers train the children to become independent by instilling discipline in daily activities. The communication established between caregivers and foster children plays a crucial role in fostering the children's independence. The communication approach adopted by caregivers combines both humanistic and authoritative methods, emphasizing empathy as well as firmness in nurturing. The foster children exhibit positive development in terms of behavior, responsibility, and social skills. Communication challenges such as the children's reserved attitudes, diverse backgrounds, and environmental influences can be overcome through patient and consistent communication. This study affirms that caregivers function not only as guides but also as companions who support the process of developing children's independence. The findings highlight the importance of continuous and effective communication in supporting the growth of foster children into self-reliant individuals.*

**Keywords:** communication, caregiver, attitude of independence, foster children

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A child's life and development are inextricably linked to the attention of their parents. Parents play a crucial role as the first place where children experience love, attention, and gain knowledge. (Arsini, et.al, 2023). Some children are less fortunate to be raised in a complete, harmonious family, and are financially well-off. Some children must face harsh realities, such as the loss of one or even both

parents due to death, experiencing family disintegration due to divorce, and struggling amidst hardship. (Aryianto, 2023). This study will examine the role of communication between caregivers and orphanage caregivers in shaping the independence of foster children at the Putri Siti Aisyah Orphanage in Aek Kanopan.

The Putri Siti Aisyah Orphanage, as a place for foster children who do not receive family care, plays a crucial role in shaping their personalities, one of which is independence. Orphanages essentially help children learn to be independent, which is certainly not easy, especially without direct parental support. Independence is a skill they must master, just like children living in orphanages. (Syah, et.al, 2022).

Independence is essential for guiding foster children so they can face various challenges in life without relying on others, especially after they leave the orphanage. (Fatmah, et.al, 2024). The approach taken by caregivers when interacting with their foster children influences how these children behave later in life, and how they apply what the caregivers have taught them in their communication. Communication is the activity of conveying information (messages) from one person to another to achieve mutually beneficial goals. (Zahra, et.al, 2023).

Developing autonomy is a crucial aspect in preparing foster children to navigate life's complexities independently, particularly once they transition out of institutional care. The way caregivers engage with the children—both in behavior and communication style—plays a formative role in shaping the children's long-term character and interpersonal competencies (Harianto et al., 2023). The interactions they experience within the orphanage can leave a lasting imprint on how they understand responsibility, make decisions, and relate to others. In this context, communication is not merely about transferring information, but it functions as a transformative process that fosters understanding, builds trust, and empowers children to grow into self-reliant individuals (Dalimunthe, 2022).

Orphanages, as a place where caregivers and foster children interact, are inseparable from the communication process. Interactions between caregivers and foster children can help foster independence in foster children. (Dayana, et.al, 2021). This research is novel because it specifically examines the role of caregiver communication within the Putri Siti Aisyah Orphanage in Aek Kanopan, a setting that has not been extensively researched. One emerging issue is the role of communication between orphanage caregivers in fostering independent attitudes among foster children at the Siti Aisyah Putri Orphanage in Aek Kanopan.

The researchers decided to focus on the orphanage administrators, the primary caregivers at the Siti Aisyah Putri Orphanage in Aek Kanopan. They are the ones who communicate directly with the foster children in an effort to foster independence. The researchers chose to examine children's independence because it is a positive quality that enables individuals to develop positive perceptions reflecting self-confidence, responsibility, and concern for their surroundings. It

also encourages optimism and the awareness that their goals will be more easily achieved (Dalimunthe et al., 2020).

Through this research, the researcher hopes that this study or article will assist the orphanage, especially the caregivers, in implementing guidance programs to develop the independence of foster children. This research is expected to provide solutions to various obstacles that may hinder this guidance process. This study is not solely intended to fulfill academic inquiry but also aims to offer practical contributions for the daily operations of the orphanage. In particular, the findings are expected to support caregivers in designing more effective mentoring strategies that nurture the self-reliance of foster children. By identifying patterns of communication and the underlying challenges, the research aspires to become a reference for resolving common barriers that may disrupt the development process. Ultimately, it is envisioned that the insights gained from this study can help enhance the caregiving environment and strengthen the long-term personal growth of the children under institutional care.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The researcher conducted in-depth observations and was directly involved in the field, recording various events that occurred (Lince, 2022). The goal was to understand the meaning and processes that occur in the communication practices of caregivers in shaping the attitudes of independent foster children in the surrounding environment.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews are a method for gathering information, views, and opinions needed for research, through verbal questions and answers between the interviewer and informants (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Interviews were conducted with caregivers and several foster children as informants. Direct observations were conducted at the Putri Siti Aisyah Aek Kanopan Orphanage to observe direct interactions in daily life at the orphanage. The documentation used by the researcher included photographs of activities and other relevant data. In this study, the interactions of caregivers at the orphanage were directly involved in shaping the attitudes of independent foster children. The researcher chose Putri Siti Aisyah Aek Kanopan Orphanage as the research location because of the caregivers' active role in shaping the attitudes of independent foster children. Data analysis was conducted using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. Data reduction involves selecting relevant data according to the research focus. The reduced data is then presented in narrative form, and conclusions are drawn to address the research focus.

### 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The Putri Siti Aisyah Orphanage was officially established in September 2011, organized by the regional leadership of Aisyah Labura. Management is handed over to the PDA Labura social welfare council, abbreviated as MKS PDA Labura. With the expansion of the management, Aisyah regularly delivers donations, both in the form of money and basic necessities, to the Rantoprapat Putri Orphanage. With the expansion of the Labura region, Aisyah determined to establish her own Putri Siti Aisyah Orphanage, which remains the only orphanage in Labura to date. The orphanage experiences the Quranic verse Al-Ma'un, which was once widely studied by KH. Ahmad Dahlan (the founder of Muhammadiyah). It has been applied in real life, namely by caring for and providing adequate services to orphans, half-brothers, and the poor who need assistance, especially in terms of education. The education of these foster children is also equipped with advanced religious knowledge to instill good faith and morals. Communication between caregivers and foster children at the Putri Siti Aisyah Aek Kanopan Orphanage plays a crucial role in fostering their independence. Communication by caregivers extends beyond instruction to building emotional closeness with foster children through daily conversations, advice, guidance, and attention to the children's backgrounds and psychological well-being. Caregivers also understand that each child comes from a diverse family background, from orphans to the poor. This influences the attitudes and behaviors of the children under their care. Devito's humanistic approach emphasizes effective communication that prioritizes empathy, support, positivity, and equality (Nurrochmani et al., 2024). Caregivers strive to recognize each child's individual background and tailor their approach to ensure they feel valued and understood. One foster child stated that they felt comfortable living at the orphanage because they felt like they were part of a family, and the caregivers were seen as understanding their situation.

Caregivers recognize the importance of building strong communication relationships with foster children as a foundation for character development. Caregivers must also maintain continuous communication with their foster children, as this is how they can convey their expectations. Communication is crucial in the foster care process at the orphanage (Ritonga et al., 2024). This communication is also carried out using an authoritative approach, where caregivers are warm but firm, providing clear direction, boundaries, and consequences when children break rules. This is in line with authoritative theory, which emphasizes a balance between affection and control (Nasution et al., 2024). For example, caregivers routinely remind foster children to maintain cleanliness, carry out their duties, pray on time, and so on.

Caregivers understand that meaningful and consistent communication is fundamental in fostering the moral and emotional growth of foster children. It is through sustained dialogue that values, expectations, and guidance are

internalized by the children. In shaping responsible behavior, caregivers often apply a balanced method that integrates empathy with discipline. This communicative stance reflects an authoritative style—where nurturing support is complemented by clear structures and firm guidance. Rather than relying on punitive measures, caregivers focus on building mutual respect while establishing behavioral standards, such as cleanliness, timely prayer, and task fulfillment. These daily reinforcements become critical touchpoints in cultivating a sense of responsibility and self-regulation among the children.

The caregiver's role is not only as a guide but also as a motivator and role model. Caregivers encourage children to dare to try new things, be disciplined, and take responsibility for themselves. For example, a third-grade foster child exemplified by learning to wash his own clothes, tidy up his belongings, and maintain a clean environment. This sense of independence comes through communication, which builds self-confidence and awareness of personal responsibilities (Ohorella et al., 2024). Furthermore, children are trained through activities such as daily duties, morning exercises, and group discussions. These activities not only strengthen religious values and togetherness, but also provide a platform for children to be active and responsible. Children are given the opportunity to emcee events, recite the Quran in front of their peers, share experiences, and even invite alumni of the orphanage to motivate the foster children. This directly fosters courage, communication skills, and self-confidence in the foster children.

Several children acknowledged experiencing positive changes after living at the orphanage, ranging from improved morals, increased Quran memorization, social skills, and independence in carrying out daily activities. This process is certainly inseparable from the ongoing communication between the caregivers and the foster children. Although not all children show rapid changes, the caregivers consistently employ a patient, communicative approach full of guidance.

The process of communication and fostering children's independence does not always go smoothly. Several obstacles often arise, such as children's closed-mindedness about their personal problems. One caregiver reported that children often hesitate to open up, reluctant to share their concerns early on, which ultimately escalates the problem. Another obstacle is the differences in the characteristics of foster children, who have diverse backgrounds, personalities, and behaviors. Then, the influence of the orphanage environment also becomes an obstacle, because the children's social interactions outside make some of them less disciplined. However, over time, through this approach, But over time, through an empathetic and open approach, children begin to show confidence in sharing their problems with caregivers.

Encouraging independence through caregiver communication is not without its challenges. In practice, caregivers often encounter emotional barriers, particularly when children are reluctant to express their feelings or disclose personal difficulties. This hesitancy can delay timely intervention and, in some cases,

exacerbate underlying issues. Additionally, the diverse life experiences and temperaments of the children create varying levels of responsiveness to guidance. Environmental factors, including external social influences, also pose behavioral challenges—some children struggle to maintain discipline after exposure to less structured interactions outside the orphanage. Nonetheless, with consistent empathy and nonjudgmental dialogue, caregivers gradually earn the children's trust. As relationships deepen, many of the children begin to open up, allowing more constructive and responsive communication to take place.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Communication between caregivers at the Putri Siti A Isyah Aek Kanopan Orphanage plays a crucial role in fostering the independence of foster children. Caregivers not only communicate in an instructional manner but also build emotional bonds through Devito's humanistic approach, which emphasizes openness, empathy, support, positivity, and equality. This approach, reinforced by authoritative theory, balances compassion and assertiveness, enabling caregivers to create an environment conducive to children's mental and social growth. Continuous communication fosters strong emotional bonds, encouraging children to be confident, responsible, and courageous in facing challenges. Various activities designed at the orphanage, such as daily tasks, public speaking training, and motivational sessions from alumni, serve as important tools for fostering children's independence and self-confidence.

Although communication is not always smooth and often challenging, obstacles such as children's closed-mindedness about personal issues can be overcome by caregivers consistently cultivating patience and an open approach. This research confirms that communication is not only a tool for conveying messages but also a means of developing children's character and independence. Communication between caregivers and foster children is a key foundation for fostering character and independence in the orphanage. Thus, it is important for caregivers to continue to develop their communication skills in order to create independent children who are ready to face life outside the orphanage.

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