

# The Meaning of Work and Work Performance on Autism Therapist: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

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**Abstract:-** There search was made for examine the impact of the meaning of work on work performance mediated work engagement. The variables tested in this study were the meaning of work as exogenous variables, performance as an endogenous variable, work engagement as a mediator as a moderator fit with empirical data. Research respondents were autism therapists at institutions for autism in Karawang as many as 203 therapists. Data analysis using Structural Equation Model (SEM) using partial least squares (PLS). Based on the test results, the hypothetical model has SRMR of 0,082 or below 0.10 the majority of the fit index. The model has met the good fit parameters. This means that the theoretical research model can be accepted as a model that fits the data in the field, namely the influence of the meaning of work and organizational support on performance mediated by work engagement moderated by character strength according to empirical data. The results showed that there was a significant effect of work meaning on work performance mediated work engagement.

**Keywords:-** Work Performance, Meaning of Work, Work Engagement.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the institution has undergone many changes due to changes in the strategic environment, which can be seen from the change in the management system of the institution so that it can still achieve effectiveness and efficiency. The management of this changing institution, of course, involves human resources who are the determinants of the institution's steps [1].

The human resource factor has now become the focus of attention for the world of work. Today, the success and success of the institution is highly dependent on the quality of human resources. A successful institution is an institution that is able to manage its human resources well. Human resources, especially in institutions engaged in services, have become a major factor in the success of achieving its goals. This is increasingly evident in institutions that directly interact with consumers who need these services. In institutions for autism, for example, services are not only felt by children, but services from human resources in the institution are also felt by their parents. The things that are seen and felt by children and parents describe the quality of services from institutions for autism. In institutions for autism, human resources are often referred to as therapists for autism.

Nowadays, institutions for autism have developed quite rapidly because from year to year the number of autism increases. According to the latest data, the number of children with special needs in Indonesia is recorded at 1,544,184 children, with 330,764 children (21.42 percent) in the age range of 5-18 years. From this data, only 85,737 autism attend to school. This means that there are 245,027 autism who have not received education in schools, both special schools such as therapeutic institutions or inclusive schools [2]. The increase in the number of autism requires therapeutic institutions for children with autism to provide good and quality services.

The success of the institution is based on the quality of therapists working in institution, in other words the quality of the institution is adjusted on contribution of therapist in institution. The successful management of human resources properly and progressively can be a good start for the smooth implementation of work programs and the achievement of institutional goals. Human resources are increasingly considered to have an important role in achieving institutional goals, because the key to the success of institutions to be able to grow and develop lies in human resources [3].

The quality of human resources cannot be separated from how the institution builds and creates strong human resources and makes a positive contribution to the institution through performance. The therapist's performance is the result of work in quality and quantity achieved by the therapist in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to the therapist [4].

Every institution will always try to improve employee performance, with the hope that the institution's goals will be achieved [5]. Positive performance will provide great benefits for the institution. The higher the quality of the therapist's performance, the higher the income for the institution. In other words, optimal therapist performance is needed to increase productivity and maintain the viability of the institution. In improving the performance of the therapist, the institution takes several ways [6]. Performance is a pattern of behavior and actions of the therapist that are relevant to the goals of the institution [7].

Employee performance is the work achieved by individuals in carrying out their duties in accordance with assigned responsibilities [8]. Individual performance contributes to group performance which in turn contributes to company performance. In highly effective institutions, management helps to create a positive balance, namely the

whole that is greater than the sum of the parts of the institution. Performance is a measurement of the expected work results in the form of optimal results [9, 10].

Employee performance is influenced by many factors, both internal and external factors. Internal factors include attachment, knowledge, ability and self-efficacy [11]. External factors are the environment or the climate of the institution. Therapists who have attachment are motivated to give their best effort, otherwise low attachment to therapists will have an impact on low performance [12]. If employees have an attachment to their work, it will make it easier for the institution to realize the vision of the institution [13]. Employee engagement has a direct and positive influence on employee performance in pioneering companies [14,15].

Employee engagement is an important factor in improving the therapist's performance in the institution. Therapists who have self-attachment shall be motivated for giving good effort. In contrast, low therapist attachment, not only affects performance but increases turnover intention, decreases customer satisfaction and increases absenteeism [16]. Engagement to work as a positivity, fulfillment of work from the center of the mind is characterized [17].

The therapist's work engagement can create success for the institution, one of which is the improvement of therapist's performance [18].

Work engagement is the result of the therapist's meaning of his work [19]. The meaning of work is that the

therapist interprets the work he is doing, can improve the welfare of the therapist, even at least the therapist is able to be more open in accepting things that happen to his work [20]. The meaning of work is the therapist's meaning of his work, namely as a job, career or calling [21].

The meaning of work includes beliefs about the role of work in the therapist's life and reflects this in the therapist's feelings about the work being done, the therapist's behavior at work and the types of goals sought in the work.

**II. METHOD**

This study uses quantitative research methods with three variables, namely work performance as an endogenous variable, employee engagement as a mediator variable and meaning of work as an exogenous variable. This study involved 203 autism therapists in Karawang Regency, Indonesia. Data analysis uses SmartPLS version 23.0 and the research scale consists of a work performance scale adapted from the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) with a reliability value of 0.60, employee engagement adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) with a reliability value of 0.68 and the meaning of work which was adapted from Morin's Meaning of Work Questionnaire (MMoWQ) with a reliability value of 0.93. These three scales have a reliability value above 0.50 which means that the reliability of the size model of each variable is sufficient and feasible to use.

**III. RESULT**

*A. Descriptive Demographic Results of Respondents*

	<b>Kategori</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
Sex	Male	9	4.4
	Female	194	95.6
Age	19 until 25 years old	68	33.5
	26 until 30 years old	95	19.7
	31 until 50 years old	40	19.7
Educational background	Senior High School	121	59.6
	Diploma Degree	35	17.2
	Bachelor's degree	47	23.2
Years of service	0 until 1 year	11	5.4
	2 until 3 years	113	55.7
	4 until 7 years	79	38.9

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Based on table 1, the description of the sex of the research respondents is the largest percentage of women than men. This is because the type of work engaged in social services requires creativity and patience. In the last education percentage, the largest number of research respondents is high school compared to others. This is because the institutions of autism in Karawang at the time of recruitment did not require higher education. The desire to serve and patience in work are the things that are most needed. In the age category, the largest percentage of research respondents were aged 26-30 years with 95 people

(46.8%) compared to others. This is because the type of work that is engaged in social services and providing therapy to autism requires high physical strength, so that the institution for autism in Karawang when recruiting limit's the maximum age. In terms of the percentage of years of service in terms of years of service, most of the respondents had a tenure of more than 2-3 years, as many as 113 people (55.7%). This shows that the respondents have not been categorized as experienced enough because the therapist has not participated in the institution for a long time, which is between 2 to 3 years.

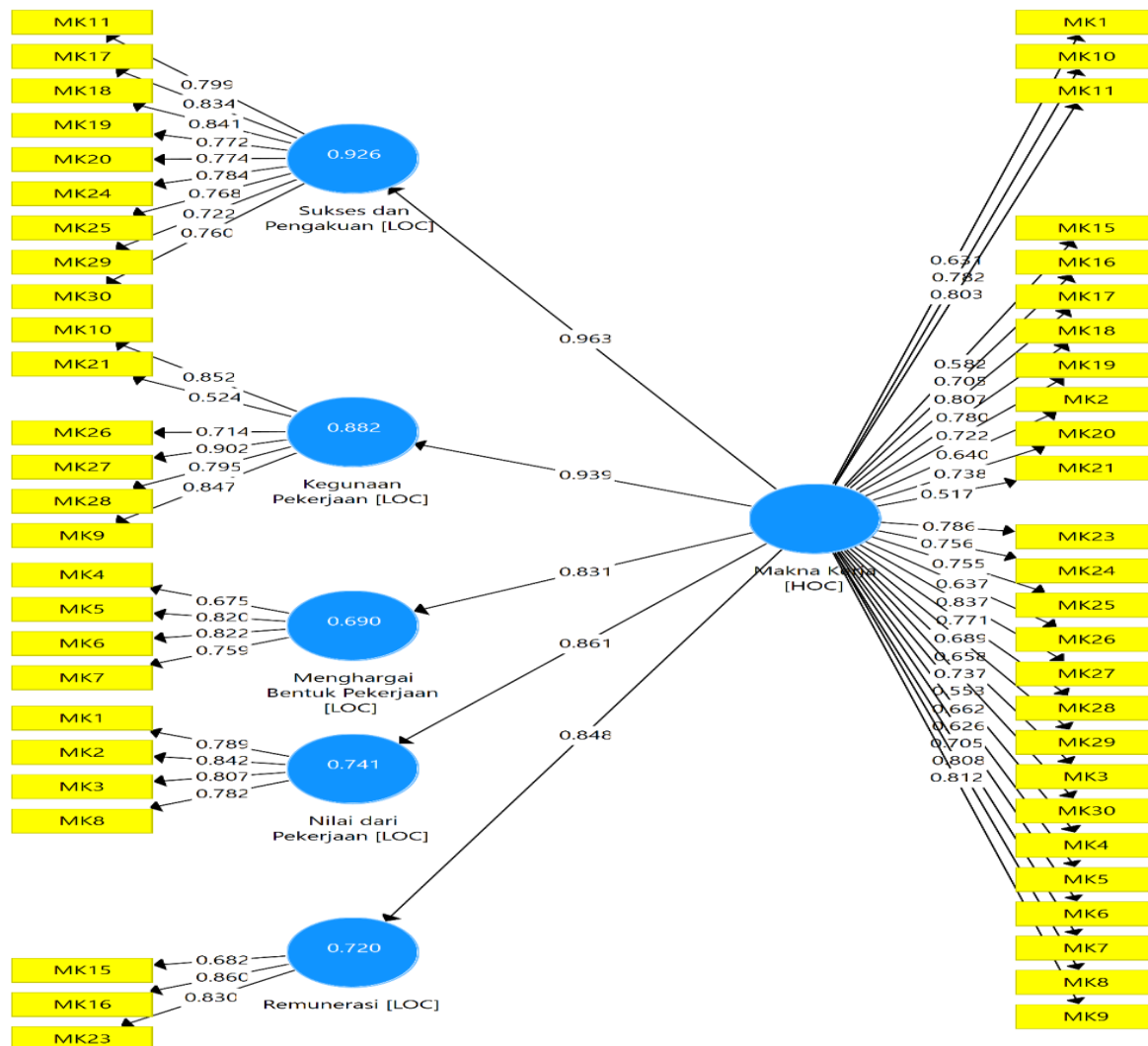
B. Analisis Exploratory Factor Analysis

• Construct the Meaning of Work

➤ Convergent Validity Test

Hair, et al suggests the reflective model in this study is above 0,5[22], if the outer loading is less than 0.4, the reflective indicator should be

removed. When outer loading is between 0,4 and 0,7 it is recommended to keep or delete items depending on the outer loading (height) of other items [23, 24]. In this research, researchers took 0,5.



	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Jobs Use [LOC]	0.612
Meaning of Work [HOC]	0.509
Appreciating the form of work [LOC]	0.595
Value of Work [LOC]	0.649
Remuneration [LOC]	0.631
Success and Recognition [LOC]	0.616

Table 2: Result of Average Variance Extracted Construct of Work Meaning

From the results of the analysis of table 2 above, all measuring/indicator items which are representations of each dimension are valid.

➤ Construct Reliability Test

Meanwhile, the reliability test was carried out using the composite reliability test by looking at all values of the latent variable having a composite reliability value of 0.7, it can be concluded that the construct has good reliability, or the scale used as a tool in this study is reliable or consistent.

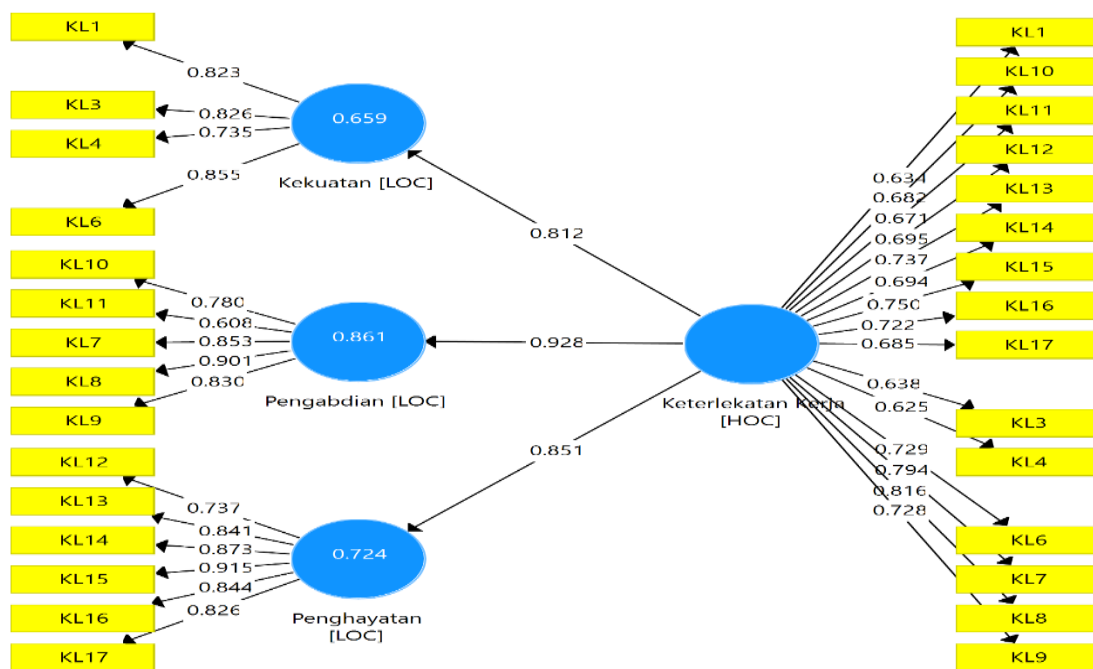
	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>rho_A</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>
Jobs Use [LOC]	0,866	0,887	0,902
Meaning of Work [HOC]	0,960	0,963	0,964
Appreciating the form of work [LOC]	0,771	0,777	0,854
Value of Work [LOC]	0,820	0,825	0,881
Remuneration [LOC]	0,711	0,746	0,836
Sukses dan Pengakuan [LOC]	0,922	0,923	0,935

Table 3 above, shows that the results of the composite reliability test show that all latent variable values have a

value of 0.70 and Cronbach's alpha and rho\_A have a value of 0.60. Thus, all constructs can be accepted for reliability.

• **Work Engagement Construct**

➤ Convergent Validity Test



	<i>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</i>
Vigor [LOC]	0,658
Work Engagement [HOC]	0,502
Dedication [LOC]	0,641
Absorption [LOC]	0,707

Table 3: Results of Average Variance Extracted Construct of Work Attachment

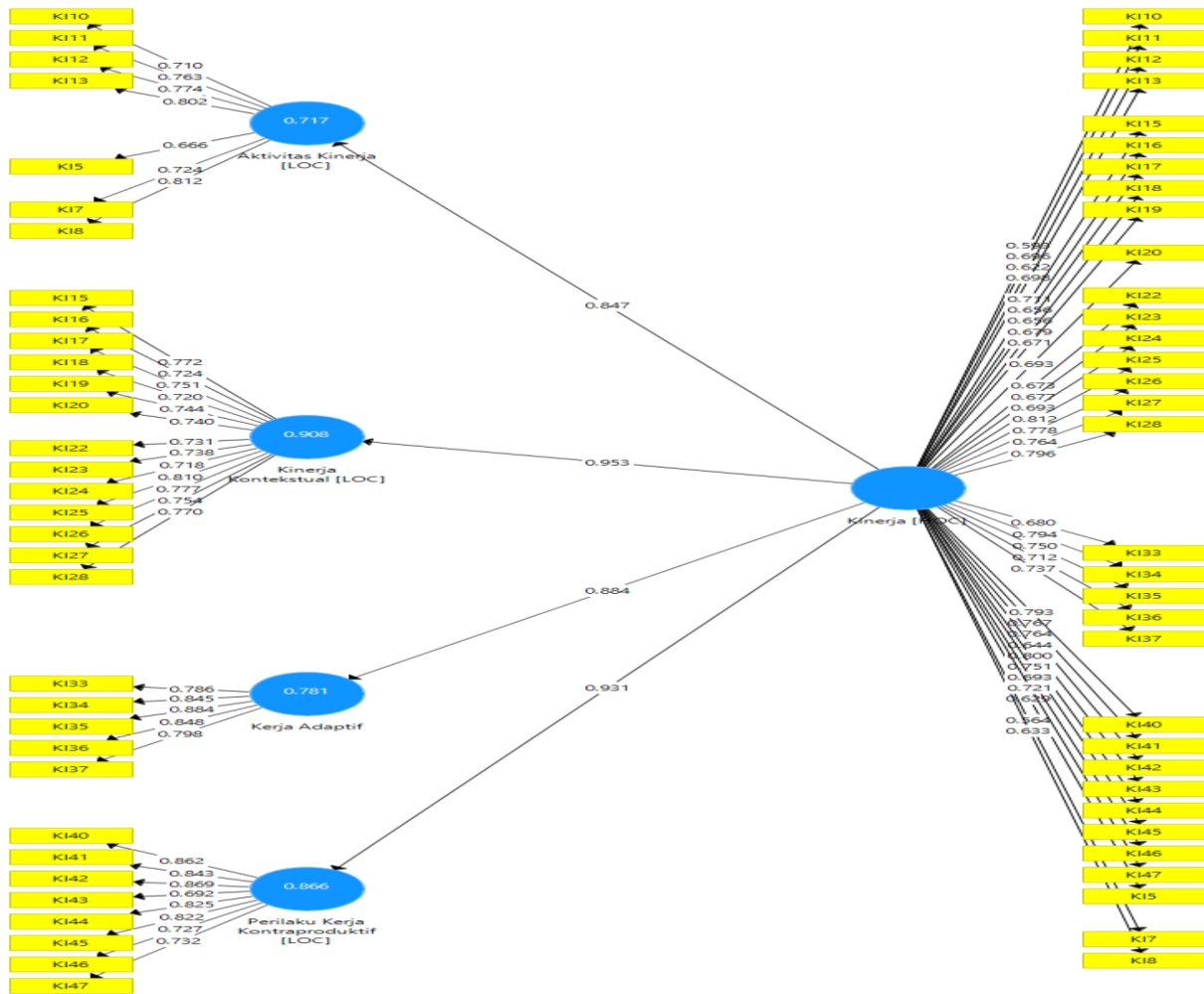
C. *Construct Reliability Testing*

The results of construct reliability construct work engagement.

	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>rho_A</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>
Vigor [LOC]	0,825	0,830	0,885
Work Engagement [HOC]	0,929	0,931	0,938
Dedication [LOC]	0,854	0,863	0,898
Absorption [LOC]	0,916	0,917	0,935

Table 4: Results of Construct Reliability Construct of Work Attachment

• **Work Performance Construct**  
 ➤ **Convergent Validity Test**



D. Construct Reliability Testing

	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>rho_A</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>
Performance Activities [LOC]	0,871	0,873	0,901
Adaptive Work	0,889	0,891	0,919
Contextual Performance [LOC]	0,935	0,937	0,944
Work Performance [HOC]	0,969	0,970	0,971
Counterproductive Work Behavior [LOC]	0,918	0,921	0,934

Table 5: Results of Construct Reliability Construct of Work Performance

E. Hypothesis Test

- Correlation meaning of work and work performance

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T Statistics (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P Values</i>
Meaning of Work [HOC] to Work Performance [HOC]	-0.007	-0.008	0.068	0.098	0,922

Table 6: Correlation meaning of work and work performance

- Correlation of work engagement to work performance

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T Statistics ((O/STDEV))</i>	<i>P Values</i>
<b>Work Engagement [HOC] to Work Performance [HOC]</b>	0.838	0.839	0.023	36.569	<b>0.000</b>

Table 7: Correlation of work engagement to work performance

- Correlation of the meaning of work on performance mediated by work engagement

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T Statistics ((O/STDEV))</i>	<i>P Values</i>
<b>Meaning of Work [HOC] to Work Performance [HOC] Mediated Work Engagement [HOC]</b>	0.235	0.037	0.065	3.539	<b>0.000</b>

Table 8: Correlation of the meaning of work on performance mediated by work engagement

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The meaning of work in this study does not have a direct, positive and significant effect on performance. This contradicts the opinion of Wahyuni, which states that the meaning of work includes beliefs about the role of work in an individual's life and reflects it in individual feelings about the work being done, individual behavior at work and the types of goals fought for in work[24]. In Puspita's research found a low value of the effect of work meaning on performance in hospital workers [25].

Puplamp states that the meaning of work is a significant contribution to finding the purpose of life that has an impact on the quality of work [26]. Wrzesniewski also states that the meaning of work is related to performance so that the institution can achieve the expected success [27]. There is a therapist's psychological attachment to the institution, so that the therapist survives and carries out the vision of the institution well.

The contribution of participation is greater than identification and loyalty, this is because participation is the desire to do and try seriously in the interests of the institution reflected in the therapist to accept and carry out all the tasks and obligations assigned to him. The therapist is not just doing his job but always trying to exceed the minimum standards set by the institution. The therapist will also be encouraged to carry out work outside of their duties and roles if their assistance is needed by the institution. This participation must also be supported by the therapist's loyalty, namely the desire to maintain membership in the institution, then trust and acceptance of the goals and values of the main institution, forming a series of meanings of work for the therapist.

The effect of positive and significant work meaning on performance through work attachment as a mediator. Therapists who understand the meaning of work reinforced by work attachment can produce responsibility, warmth and the existence of goals to be achieved. It can be explained that the therapist feels that the institution provides work challenges for the therapist and communicates work attachment to its members, then high responsibility will

encourage the therapist to complete his work optimally. The therapist feels that each therapist is given personal responsibility in carrying out their duties. The therapist feels able to make decisions to solve work-related problems without asking the principal for help first. This is in line with the opinion of Morin, the meaning of work is when the individual interprets the work that is being carried out, is able to improve the welfare of the therapist, even at least the therapist is able to be more open in accepting things that happen to his work that have an impact on good performance [28].

The effect of work attachment is positive and significant on performance. Humans in life have basic needs that cannot be eliminated, because these needs underlie the behavior of the therapist. If the therapist at work feels his needs are being met, it will lead to work attachment in the therapist. Employees' perceptions of things related to their work and work attachment involve a sense of security, a sense of fairness, a sense of enjoyment, a sense of belonging, passion and pride in their work or the therapist's positive feelings and attitudes towards his work means that the more the therapist feels attached. with his work, the therapist will be more committed to his work, more motivated to give all his abilities to the institution and try to work as best as possible, loyal, more stable and productive.

In this study, work attachment has the greatest contribution, this is because the therapist's attachment to work has a very positive impact on the institution. If the therapist is seriously involved in his work and is satisfied with what he is doing, the therapist can produce quality performance in achieving the goals of the institution. The opinion of Mujasih which states that work attachment is an illusory force that motivates the therapist to improve his work performance at a higher level, a sense of job ownership and pride, enthusiasm and interest, commitment in carrying out his work [29].

## V. CONCLUSION

- There is no positive and significant effect of meaning of work on work performance in autism therapy institutions in Karawang.
- There is an effect of work engagement on work performance in autism therapy institutions in Karawang
- There is an effect of the meaning of work on work performance with work engagement as a mediator in the autism therapy institution in Karawang.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

In writing this article, we consist of three teams, namely MS, AB & TG where each has a task, namely MS & AB is to conduct research and collect research data in the field, Meanwhile, TG is responsible for translating this article into English so that the tasks and functions are clear in the preparation of this article.

This article can contribute to the wider community, especially therapists for autism. By publishing in leading journals, authors can share research results openly with readers.

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