

**THE ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN PROMOTING SOCIAL SKILLS
OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY AT ABIGAIL FOUNDATION**

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DECLARATION

I, KIRABO MELLISA LYNNETE, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted to any institution, degree or qualification, either in full or in part. Throughout the work I have acknowledged all sources used

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APPROVAL

This research dissertation has been reviewed and approved under my supervision

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities at Abigail Foundation. The study objectives include; investigating the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with developmental disabilities, examining the role of group play therapy strategy in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities, examining the influence of collaboration between parents and occupation therapists in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities.

The study was conducted using qualitative approaches with a combination of an exploratory research design and semi-structured interviews were administered to the main study population and key informants. Additionally, the observational check list helped in documenting observational behaviours and the study findings found that despite the challenges registered by occupational therapists when dealing with children with disabilities, occupational therapy plays a significant role in the enhancement of social skills of children with disabilities. However, this therapeutic approach requires collaborative efforts with parents, other professionals, interventions, and strategies like group play therapy strategy.

The researcher concluded that these therapeutic approaches emphasize holistic assessments and targeted interventions to effectively address social skill deficits, and promote positive interactions hence contributing to long-term social integration. The researcher further recommended that to facilitate long-term integration, social workers should advocate for community-based rehabilitation since it's a community-based strategy. The government should also invest more in special needs schools since the schools are few and expensive which limits children from marginalized communities to have access to education.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Children with disabilities usually face unique challenges in developing social skills which are crucial for their overall well-being and integration in their communities. Social skill deficit affects their social interactions, participation, and social relationships. The ability to participate in social activities and form meaningful connections is not only important for their emotional well-being and quality of life but also plays a vital role in their academic, social, and vocational success. Recognizing the significance of addressing these challenges, occupational therapy has emerged as a valuable intervention in promoting social skills of children with disabilities (Dallalba et al, 2015). This research explored the pivotal role of Occupational therapy in enhancing the social skills of children with disability.

Furthermore, it investigated the strategies used in occupational therapy for the enhancement of social skills with a major focus on group play therapy strategy and the impact of collaboration between parents of children with disabilities and occupational therapists in fostering social skill development. By examining these aspects, this paper aims to shed light on the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills and integration of children with various disabilities and seeks to provide insights into effective interventions and collaborative approaches that can be employed to empower children with disabilities to thrive socially, live fulfilling lives, participate and contribute meaningfully in their communities.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 Historical background

Globally 15% of the population have some form of disability, which is presented either at birth or acquired later in life and approximately 240 million of this population are children (UNICEF November 2021). Children with disabilities are a diverse group and face several challenges which can lead to functional difficulties such as social functioning and overall well-being. These challenges make their participation and inclusion harder to achieve. However, the extent to which children with disabilities can fully participate in society greatly depends on the extent to which they are accommodated and included in the society (UNICEF, 2022)

Over the years, social exclusion and negative stereotypes have been a complex issue that has greatly affected the inclusion of children with disability in the community and the capacity to achieve basic goals such as social interaction. These children experience difficulty in expressing their ideas and this can significantly interfere with forming meaningful

interpersonal relationships. While there are many disability-focused NGOs, there has not been enough focus on how occupational therapy promotes the social skills of children with disability and how it addresses the challenges these children face regarding social aspects. (CBR Africa, 2016)

Occupational therapy uses a holistic approach to promote the social skills of children with disabilities. This includes several interventions, activities, and techniques that are aimed at facilitating the social interaction of these children. This approach focuses on individualized support to create an inclusive environment that can enable these children to fully and actively participate in their communities. (social engagement and communication) (C Schulze, 2016)

1.1.2 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

About 16% of Ugandan children have a disability (World Bank, 2020). Unfortunately, many of these children are neglected in many aspects of society and are underrepresented in terms of social institutions and interactions because inclusivity in this field is limited. Poor social skills hinder their development and can prevent these children from forming meaningful relationships in all aspects of their lives. However, every child's social skill is unique and also depends on the type of disability.

Occupational therapy has emerged over the years especially with disability-focused NGOs and institutions in Uganda to promote the social and emotional well-being of children with disability. Abigail Foundation is one of the disability-focused NGOs that work tirelessly in this field to support children to improve their social interaction and create meaningful relationships with a focus of creating inclusive environments that will support children with disabilities to actively and fully participate in social activities. (Sunrise Medical, 2019)

1.1.3 CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) defines occupational therapy as a client-centered health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal is to help individuals regain independence in all areas of their lives.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes disability as having a long-term mental, physical, intellectual, or sensory impairment that hinders one's participation in society on an equal basis with others. According to the World Health Organisation, disability has three dimensions; ¹impairments in a person's body structure function or mental functioning.

²Activity limitations such as difficulty in seeing, walking, hearing, or problem-solving.

³Participation restrictions in normal daily activities such as engaging in social and recreational activities, working, obtaining health care and preventive services.

According to the American Psychological Association, social skills are a set of learned abilities that enable an individual to interact appropriately in a given social context. This involves communication that is both verbal and non-verbal. (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2018)

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Mirahmadi and Hemmati (2016), the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills among children with disabilities is a critical area of concern due to the significant impact social interaction has on overall well-being and quality of life. Human beings are social creatures and require social living skills to enable them successfully interact with others and have appropriate social behaviours. Despite the recognized importance of social skills, there still exists a gap in understanding the specific occupational therapy strategies that enhance social competencies in children with disabilities. This gap limits the potential outcomes in social skill development of children with disabilities. Therefore, there's a need to investigate the role of occupational therapy in fostering social skill development and identify the strategies and their effectiveness in addressing social skill development. This study therefore aimed to bridge this gap by exploring the role of occupational therapy with a focus on understanding its effectiveness and strategies used for the development of skills for these children.

2.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main objective

To investigate the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with developmental disabilities.

Specific objectives

To examine the role of group play therapy strategy in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities

To examine the influence of collaboration between parents and occupation therapists in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities.

2.2 Research questions

What is the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with developmental disabilities?

What is the role of group play therapy strategy in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities?

What is the influence of collaboration between parents and occupational therapists in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities?

2.3 Scope of the Study

2.3.1 Geographical Scope

This research was conducted in Namugongo division specifically at Abigail Foundation located in Wakiso district. Abigail Foundation is a non-governmental organization that is located in Namugongo, Kyaliwajjala ward, Kira municipality. It has several activities and programs aimed at integrating children with special needs to fully realize their potential and participate in their communities. In their efforts to give disability a human race, they aim to provide an environment that is inclusive for these children in all aspects of their lives. Some of the activities they do include skilling children, special needs education, advocacy, counselling and guidance, and therapy sessions for these children to improve their mobility, social interactions, and skills. Abigail has a program of assisted living at the agency. This program is aimed at promoting the independence of these individuals with special needs. Since they also aim at reintegrating these children into the community, they carry out community-based rehabilitation (CBR) with a focus on promoting the full participation of these children in their communities. Since self-determination is highly valued, families and caretakers of some children prefer home-based services.

2.3.2 Time Scope

The study was conducted from June 2024 to August 2024.

2.3.3 Content scope

The study was limited to the variables within the conceptual framework, it examined the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disability at Abigail Foundation. The study also included strategies used by occupational therapists to promote social skills of children with disability and also explored the effectiveness of these strategies.

2.4 Justification of the study

According to the Uganda population and housing census of 2020/2021 about 2,027,148 Ugandan Children have a certain form of disability with an estimation of 1,052,000 boys and 974,488 girls (National Action Plan for Children with disability, 2016/17-2020/21). Most of these children still face social barriers that adversely impact their physical and social development and overall well-being. For children who usually face these social barriers, the importance of fostering these social skills becomes even more pronounced. While there's a substantial body of research on some of the interventions that foster social skill development of children with disabilities, there remains a gap in understanding the impact of these interventions on social skill development therefore there's a need for evidence-based practice. This study therefore aims to address this critical gap by diving into the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities to inform evidence-based interventions tailored to the unique needs of children with disabilities. Investigating the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities is not only academically compelling, but also informs practical implications for practice, policy development and advocacy, interdisciplinary collaboration, and resource allocation. Furthermore, this study has the potential to enhance well-being, improve quality of life, and outcomes, and foster greater inclusion and participation of children with disabilities in the community.

2.5 Significance of the study

Exploring the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disability is significant because it sheds light on how to support social development, and participation and ensure social inclusion of these children to enhance their well-being. By gaining valuable insights from healthcare professionals, educators, and parents, this research will help to inform the development of inclusive practices in the community hence promoting participation of children with disability in various aspects of life. This study on the role of occupational therapy in promoting the social skills of children with disability will also be of high relevance to research contributing to the body of knowledge.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

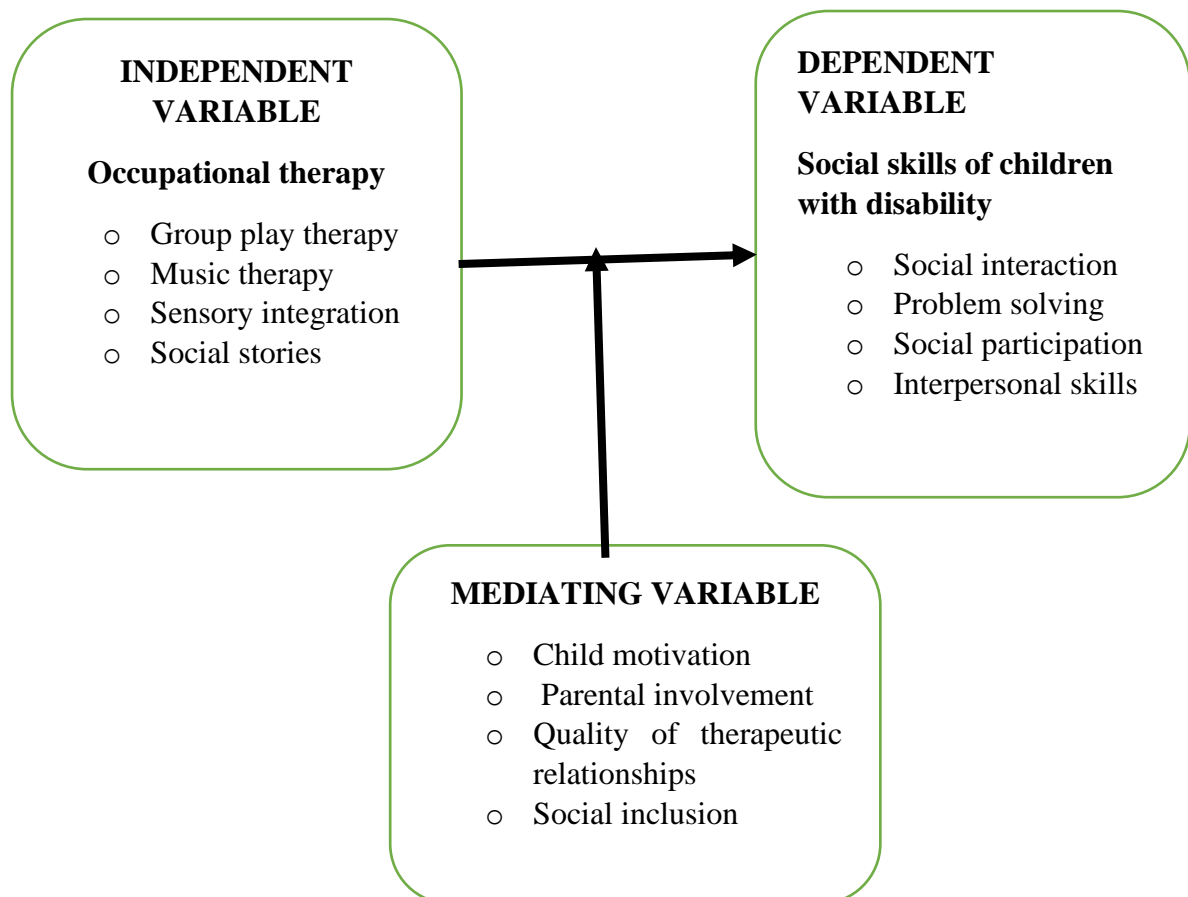
The generalization of the study was only limited to the sample population used in the study. Data for this research was collected from a specific geographical area (Abigail Foundation). Therefore, there was a possibility that the findings could not be generalized to the whole

country. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher explored existing data and literature from different geographical areas within the country to supplement the primary data. Additionally, the researcher utilized meta-analysis techniques of existing secondary data hence enhancing the generalizability of the results.

Participants were likely to hide some data that was relevant to the study. This is due to the fear of the unknown upon disclosing their private information thus limiting the collection of important data which would greatly contribute to the research findings. The researcher sought consent from all the respondents before they participated in this study. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided. The researcher also assured the respondents that the responses provided were purely academic only where anonymity is advocated for.

Time constraints were likely to be a challenge. However, the researcher focused on key aspects of the research topic while collaborating with professionals within the organization to ensure a thorough exploration of the topic within the available timeframe. Further, the researcher utilized existing literature to streamline information gathering and analysis.

2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The conceptual framework above shows the relationship between occupational therapy and social skills of children with disability. Occupational therapy will include the following sub-variables; group play therapy, music therapy, sensory integration, and social stories. The dependent variable will include; social interaction, problem-solving, social participation, and interpersonal skills.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.8 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literature to explain the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disability.

2.8.1 Role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disability.

Children with disabilities often experience social skill deficit which affects their overall well-being and quality of life. That is to say, they experience social difficulties that come with a diagnosis of a physical, emotional, or learning disability. Difficulty usually reflects in forms like social isolation, low self-esteem, higher levels of stress and anxiety, poor social skills, and learned helplessness. (Helen, 2015). Similarly, Tanner et al. 2015 state that children with developmental disabilities such as autism, cerebral palsy, down syndrome, and behavioral disorders usually experience difficulties with social interaction and participation, leisure, and play coupled with restricted and repetitive behaviours which can affect occupational performance

According to Access Foundation (2018), social skills play a crucial role in shaping and grooming individuality for either a normal individual or a person with a disability. Over time, individuals learn social skills through observation and social interaction with others. However, this is not the case for children with disabilities since they may not learn vicariously from observations or participation in their community. Most children with disabilities have to be directly taught social skills. This is because the disability impacts their ability to understand and interpret social cues. Direct teaching helps break down the social skills into manageable steps based on the child's ability hence providing an opportunity for practice, and reinforcement and making it easier for children with disability to apply them in real-life situations.

Al Angels (2024), stresses that supporting children with disabilities requires a collaborative multidisciplinary approach involving the provision of tailored interventions, accommodations, and support services that enable these children to overcome barriers, develop essential skills, and participate fully in social, educational, and recreational activities enabling them to lead fulfilling lives and contribute positively to their communities. Similarly, Helen (2015), further points out that children whose social needs are met through professional support will develop skills to function better and effectively later as adults.

According to Dall-alba et al. (2015), early intervention through Occupational therapy is beneficial in supporting children with developmental disabilities. This intervention supports social skill development and minimizes the impact of the disability on development. Occupational therapists have been acknowledged as leaders in promoting and providing early intervention services to infants and children with disability across a range of settings. Bumin et al. (2015) in agreement state that one of the difficulties children with disabilities face due to social skill deficits is sensory integration. As a result of sensory integration dysfunction, these children experience hindrances in achieving roles they are expected to accomplish in their lives and display behaviours that can hinder their participation. However, Occupational therapy practices ensure that these children fully participate in communal life by minimizing the difficulties they experience in daily life through the implementation of effective interventions that facilitate social skill development.

Occupational therapy particularly deals with promoting the health and well-being of individuals through occupation. Furthermore, it assists people to participate in activities of everyday life and enhance their quality of life. For people with impairments, it helps them to function and supports participation. (Pellegrini, 2015)

Dall-alba et al. (2015) further noted that developmental disabilities originated at birth or during childhood and restrict individuals from functioning in several major life activities. However occupational therapy equips them with social skills that enable them to adjust to different social situations, interpreting social signals and reacting correctly to the feelings and needs of others. These skills are vital for developing successful social relationships.

In conclusion, while the research highlights the significance of social skills in a child's development, it is crucial to explore how occupational therapy promotes social skill development. However, the above scholars majorly focused on difficulties children with disabilities face when they have social skill deficits and also the importance of social skill development but rather didn't conduct in-depth research on some of the interventions that promote social skills of children with disabilities. This research seeks to therefore bridge the gap by exploring the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disability.

2.8.2 Role of group play therapy in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities

Group play therapy is a play group-based strategy aimed at supporting children with disabilities who are experiencing social, behavioral, emotional, and relational disorders. This therapy aims to provide therapeutic and safe environments where children can fully participate, and experience empathy, acceptance, and social interaction (University of North Texas, n.d). Additionally, it supports children with developmental disabilities to practice and learn new social and coping skills (ibid). Children with disabilities often face social difficulties therefore there's a need for effective strategies and interventions and group therapy is one of the successful strategies because it emphasizes peer-to-peer interactions, and expands self-expression and awareness. (Wikes et al. 2016)

Similarly, Chinekesh (2015) argues that play is one of the most effective strategies to help children with disabilities develop social skills and also solve inner conflict problems because it provides therapeutic solutions to expand expression and relieve stress hence enhancing social interaction and adaptability in children. Group therapy enhances the social skills of children with a disability because it is a medium of communication and teaches empirically supported techniques to these children in a fun and engaging way (Ashori & Yazdanipour, 2018)

According to Mirahmadi and Hemmati (2016), group Play is effective because it's practical when teaching children social skills. During play, children always express their emotions, and feelings and experience fearful and stressful situations that they cannot cope with in the real world hence facilitating emotional regulation. Furthermore, during these sessions, children can express their fears, needs, and inclinations, which they could not express in real-life situations because of their limited verbal abilities. This study also indicates that play therapy reduces the intensity of anti-social behaviours that lead them to isolate themselves hence improving their interpersonal skills.

Children with disabilities usually face notable difficulties in their social skills and this is displayed by difficulty in social interaction, communication, and participation. As a result of these difficulties, it affects their autonomy, well-being, and quality of life hence worsening social deficiencies and isolation. In the study made by Guiyarch et al. (2017) social skill training groups were highly recommended as they were necessary for promoting the interpersonal skills and relationships of children with disabilities. The training was done in the form of structured groups and these were designed to make the children socially competent in situations and interactions so that they could fully participate in social life with age-based and

appropriate objectives through group exercises and activities. This improved the social skills of this population, quality of life and decreased the feeling of isolation. However, the researcher pointed out that for the group to be effective and efficient, a small number of children 4 to 8 is preferable.

Developmental disabilities limit individual's social functioning and attention deficit hyperactivity is one of the most predominant developmental disorders. Children with ADHD experience social difficulties that affect their social cognition and this is a result of deficits in skill acquisition. During peer-to-peer interaction, these children experience difficulty in cooperative play, responding to social cues, sharing, problem-solving, and performing skills (Wikes et al. 2016). Due to these difficulties, they are rejected by peers and have fewer social relationships. One of the main issues that prevents them from forming meaningful relationships is the failure of emotion regulation due to a decreased capacity for forethought. The researcher further states that group play therapy is effective and efficient for children with such difficulties. This is because children are supported to perform skills and accomplish tasks in a naturally occurring social environment (ibid)

In conclusion, the above literature is focused and aligns with the topic of interest. However, further refinement and clarification grounded on evidence-based practice would enhance its effectiveness, especially in the targeted geographical area. This will enable the researcher to examine the role of group play therapy in the enhancement of social skills of children with disabilities within a group setting hence enhancing evidence-based strategies for this vulnerable population. This research therefore aimed to compare group play strategy to individual interventions while exploring potential moderating factors that may influence the effectiveness of this therapy. The researcher Cochran et al. 2023 argue that there's a deficit of perception regarding this therapy and it is often misinterpreted by some individuals therefore this study further gave clarity on the duration, composition, and structure of group play sessions tailored to meet the diverse needs of this population.

2.8.3 The influence of collaboration between parents and occupational therapists in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities

Parents play a vital role in the therapy process and the way they react to the demands of such interventions is important, especially for those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, it's important to ensure parent engagement. To maximize intervention effectiveness, parents' views must be considered. Parents' expectations before taking part in parent-child interaction interventions contribute to how they may engage throughout the intervention process (Levickis et al. 2020) Usually, parents may experience barriers and that includes, parents' uncertainty about the nature of the intervention and different attitudes regarding intervention strategies and approaches. However, during the intervention process parent involvement in early stages increases confidence in how they support their child's development.

Parents respond differently to strategies and interventions regarding their children depending on their expectations and attitudes toward the intervention thus these different perspectives must be understood by occupational therapists before the intervention begins to ensure successful engagement. The collaboration of parents and occupational therapists contributes to parents' ability to continue implementing the strategies outside the intervention context. Most importantly, having a two-way and open dialogue in the initial stages is important not only for sharing information but also build on parents understanding of the intervention to set mutually agreed goals (ibid)

Similarly, Kruijsen et al. (2015) argue that understanding the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding their child's interventions addresses their needs and influences their engagement in the intervention. Engaging with them in the early stages influences treatment participation. According to this study, parents whose children were going under occupational therapy had different needs and needed time to build collaborative relationships with their children's therapists. However, the study emphasized the importance of recognizing the broader context of the child's family, community, and culture because they have an impact on the daily life of the child and also on parents' attitudes, support, and resources they provide there engaging with them will guide the therapist to know their perspectives to come up with interventions that are effective for the enhancement of social skills.

Collaboration of occupational therapists with parents helps the therapist to make observations, listen, and guide the parents to learn the skills needed for the advancement of the child's skills. Collaboratively working with parents promotes the generalization and maintenance of social skills because it increases parents' ability to implement the interventions as well as give and

receive feedback during the consultation process. Providing structure for problem-solving and reflective guidance, parents can attain prioritized goals that can lead to a significant improvement in children's participation (Enroth, 2021)

In conclusion, it's essential to raise awareness of how parental involvement can support children's social competence in their daily lives. Parental participation in occupational therapy processes guides both the parents and occupational therapist to identify children's individual needs, set goals, and effective strategies, and facilitate the participation of children with disabilities. This study therefore sought to add to the existing knowledge in order to explore why and how parents should be motivated to participate. This study therefore was a follow-up study to understand the continued effectiveness of parent participation in the occupational therapy plan of children with disabilities.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aimed to provide an overview of the methodology to be utilized during the study. The researcher employed an exploratory research design to lay the foundation for the subsequent exploration of the study. According to Akhtar (2016), exploratory research design aids in determining the best data collection method and subject selection. Akhtar further states that this research design lays the ground to explore in-depth research and serves as a foundation for a more conclusive study. Similarly, Olaglide and Lawal (2020) state that this research design is appropriate because it guides the researcher to a better understanding of the problem. Therefore, an exploratory research design was appropriate for this study.

Further, to analyse the data the researcher used qualitative analysis approaches. That is to say content and discourse analysis. According to Social Change Uk (n.d), content and discourse analysis are appropriate for qualitative research because they guide the researcher to identify the patterns, trends, and meanings to generate in-depth insights to address the research questions. Content analysis guided the researcher to analyse the written data and also conduct in-depth interviews with the participants, sort it out, and generate insights into the topic. Since this study aimed to understand how occupational therapy impacts the social skill development of children with disabilities, discourse analysis was appropriate. This is because discourse analysis focuses on the language used in a particular social context and this reveals characteristics of the person involved and also documents observable behaviours. Being that children with disabilities in most cases use both verbal and non-verbal communication to express their needs or show behaviour change, this analysis guided the researcher to analyse communication data like body language, gestures, and patterns of speech.

3.1 Research design.

An exploratory research design was employed in this study with a combination of qualitative approaches to data collection. This research design helped the researcher to investigate, understand, and develop new insights into the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities

3.2 Study population

According to Majid (2018), a study population is the population the researcher intends to study.

3.2.1 The parents and occupational therapists

The main study population in this research were the parents of children with disability and occupational therapists.

3.2.2 Key Informants

To obtain enriched and detailed insights into the role of occupational therapy in promoting the social skills of children with disabilities. it was crucial to include specific key informants as part of the study population. These included occupational therapists, social workers, special needs teachers, caregivers at the agency, and the District Community Development Officer.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size for the qualitative data was calculated using the Yamane formula with a 95% confidence level and 10% precision.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

From the formula

n= sample size

N= Total population

e = level of precision (0.1)

Estimated population and sample size of the study (Smith, 2018)

Table 3.4: Showing estimated population and sample size of the study (Source: primary data)

No	Sample category	Estimated study population	Sample size	Sampling method
1	Parents	20	17	Random
2	Occupation Therapist	2	2	Purposive
3	Special Needs teacher	1	1	Purposive
4	Social worker	1	1	Purposive
5	House mothers	8	8	Purposive
6	DCDO	1	1	Purposive
7	Total	33	30	

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The researcher employed the approach of purposive and random sampling from the population. Since the study focused on the role of occupational therapy in promoting the social skills of children with disabilities with a focus on examining the role of group play therapy and collaboration of parents and occupational therapists, the researcher selected participants that directly fit these criteria relevant to the research questions. In this case, the researcher considered children with disabilities receiving occupational therapy and randomly sampled parents or primary caregivers who actively collaborated with occupational therapists in their child's therapy sessions. This criterion was aimed at capturing the influence of parental involvement on the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions in the enhancement of social skill development. Random sampling ensured that the research findings are a representation of the entire population allowing generalizable conclusions regarding the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The researcher utilized qualitative data collection methods and these included interviews and observation. The researcher also considered both primary and secondary data. The primary data

was utilized through the use of interviews with occupational therapists, parents, or caregivers of children with disabilities. Secondary data was sought from existing studies, journals, and articles relevant to this study. The researcher also considered data from existing organization records like assessment forms and reports to compare the findings and also provide a detailed account of the interventions.

Observation was used in this study during therapy sessions and natural settings to understand the overall behaviour of this population. For example, children's engagement in social activities, social interaction, and participation.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

3.7.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to gain insights from the participants with the help of open-ended questions. This further enabled the researcher to gather valuable experiences and perceptions from participants regarding the role of occupational therapy, its interventions, and their impact on social skill development. Collecting data with the help of the interview guide further permitted sufficient flexibility in the structure of questioning to allow the participants to respond promptly to what was relevant. (Johnson, 2020)

3.7.2 Key Informant Interview

The purpose of these interviews was to collect information from participants who provided data and different perceptions relevant to the research topic. Informants were selected based on their experience and specialized knowledge and expertise in the field of paediatric occupational therapy, handling children with disabilities, particularly regarding interventions aimed at enhancing the social skills of children with disabilities. Below are key informants the researcher will consider.

3.7.3 Special Needs Teacher

Special needs teachers have specialized training and experience in working with children with disabilities in educational settings. Abigail Foundation has a provision of special needs education at the agency and the role of special needs teachers involves providing individualized instruction and support to help children with disabilities succeed academically and socially. That is to say activities of daily living. As key informants, they provided insights and information into specific social challenges children with disabilities encounter within a school environment and also provided valuable feedback on the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions in addressing these challenges, facilitating participation, and social inclusion in

classroom activities and peer interactions. SNE teachers worked closely with the occupational therapists.

3.7.4 Caregivers

Caregivers included guardians and house mothers at the agency. All these were important stakeholders in the lives of children with disabilities. They are involved in daily activities, support, and advocacy for the children's well-being. Being key informants, they provided first-hand information, experiences, and perspectives regarding the challenges, social needs, and strengths of these children with disabilities. Furthermore, they provided in-depth insights into the impact of occupational therapy in enhancing the social skill development of children with disabilities. Their perspectives offered valuable insights into the broader context of socialization, support networks, and social connections within their communities.

3.7.5 District Community Development Officer

The DCDO was one of the major stakeholders and provided in-depth insights into the local community's needs, resources, and challenges related to children with disabilities. Further, they offered knowledge of existing programs and services aimed at enhancing social skills and social inclusion of children with disabilities within Wakiso District. This information enabled the researcher to explore the topic in a large geographical scope. This is because the district community development officer possesses in-depth knowledge and experience about community needs, development initiatives, and resources needed for a specific group of people at the district level since they are the head of the community department of Wakiso district local government. Their expertise and knowledge of community and local dynamics, opportunities, and challenges offered a comprehensive viewpoint.

3.7.6 Social worker

Social workers specialize in addressing the psychosocial needs and improving the quality of life and well-being of individuals and families. Social workers were relevant to this study because they offered a holistic approach to the social dynamics and challenges faced by children with disabilities. For example, societal factors that influence their participation and socialization. Therefore, their insights guided the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of occupational therapy interventions, social support systems, and community resources in enhancing the social skills of children with disabilities.

3.8 OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLIST

This tool guided the researcher to systematically record and document observational behaviours, activities, and characteristics within the research context. The checklist typically involved a comprehensive review of the research objectives that informed the criteria in the checklist and ensured that all behaviours relevant to the study were observed and recorded accurately. (See Appendix 6)

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data obtained was analysed using content and discourse analysis. Content analysis guided the researcher to give a comprehensive exploration of the qualitative data while discourse analysis helped the researcher to analyse data while taking into account the social context in which the communication was occurring. This included both written, verbal, and non-verbal communication. Discourse analysis was appropriate for the research because it gave a ground to understand both the verbal and non-verbal communication between children with disabilities, their parents, and occupational therapist therefore the researcher was able to understand the context of those words, gestures, and additional meaning in natural setting where this communication occurred.

4.0 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study to ensure the rights and protection of participants and below are some of the guidelines that the researcher considered.

4.1 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality of the information shared by participants was guaranteed. The researcher used pseudonyms when reporting the findings and their identities were only known to the researcher and this created a safe and secure environment for them.

4.2 Informed consent

The researcher sought consent from participants before they participated in the research. Participation was voluntary and informed. However, participants were guaranteed that even when they agreed to participate, they could withdraw at any time from the research. In cases where the participant didn't understand English, consent forms and interview guide questions were translated to their language of convenience.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses the study's research findings which aimed at exploring the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities. Analysis in research transforms the collected data into findings by bringing structure, order, and meaning (John, 2015). The researcher therefore transformed the raw data into meaningful findings and interpretations by categorizing the data into codes and themes. The results have important implications for informing occupational therapy and supporting children with disabilities to develop essential social skills.

The qualitative data was analysed from interview guides and an observational checklist. According to Nyanjwa (2020), content analysis in qualitative research guides the researcher to identify recurring words, subjects, and concepts in images, video, or audio while discourse analysis is used to draw meaning to any type of visual, written or symbolic language in relation to social, cultural or historical context. Therefore, content and discourse analysis provided deep insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants and also into understanding the behaviour of children with disabilities within the social context. Before collecting data, an approval letter was given by the organization. (see appendix 6)

5.1 Analysis and interpretation of results

5.1.1 Objective One: Role of Occupational Therapy in promoting social skills of children with developmental disabilities.

Based on the transcriptions after conducting the interviews, the researcher was able to identify themes from the excerpt. The transcription allowed the researcher to take the interviews' contents and analyse them effectively. According to Flores (2017), transcribing interviews is an essential aspect of qualitative research because it allows the researcher to capture the participant's voices and experiences. It was evident that occupational therapy was the key to addressing the social skill deficits of children with developmental delays through addressing the barriers and fostering collaboration with the families to provide tailored interventions for enhancing the social integration and participation of these children. 11 questions were asked to Occupational therapists and 7 questions to the key informants to explore the role of occupational therapy. Table 3.5 provides a structured overview of the key themes captured that were relevant to the objective

Table 5.1.2: Data themes summary for the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with developmental delay

Themes	Description	Excerpt
Holistic Assessment and Planning	Comprehensive evaluation to tailor interventions to support social skill development	“Carry out initial assessments...to identify where the gaps are.”
Intervention Strategies	Therapeutic methods like group play and skill training	“Group play therapy...aimed at improving social skills”
Parental and Caregiver Involvement	Educating and empowering families in therapy support	“Empower parents and train them so that even when we are not around, therapy is ongoing at home”
Community Sensitization and Education	Raising awareness about disability and inclusion	“Sensitize communities about social skills and inclusion”
Long-term social Integration	The aim is to integrate children into social environments	“Create awareness and sensitize the community so as to reintegrate these children”
Therapy and Success Outcomes	Measurable improvements in social skills and behaviours	“Child X improved through consistent therapy”

Source: Primary data

5.1.3 Holistic Assessment and Planning

According to the table above, before the beginning of therapy, occupational therapists carry out initial comprehensive assessments to identify social skill deficits and these are some of the things they consider to identify the gaps and the kind of help or intervention to use; eye coordination, communication and this also looks at how they respond to social cues, emotional regulation, sensory stimulation. The assessments guide them into developing individualized care plans and interventions for each child. By addressing the holistic development of children, therapists can effectively choose an appropriate intervention that will respond to the special needs of the child and foster social skill development as earlier discussed in chapters one and two

5.1.4 Intervention strategies

The results in the table illustrate that occupational therapists use diverse therapeutic methods for example group play therapy and skills-based training sessions. However, group play therapy was mentioned as the specific intervention because it enhances the social skills of children with developmental delays through structured play activities. This supports the existing literature by Chinkesh (2015) in the literature review that states that group play therapy is one of the most effective strategies to help children with disabilities develop social skills and also solve inner conflict problems because it provides therapeutic solutions to expand expression and relieve stress hence enhancing social interaction and adaptability in children. As stated by the occupational therapist during the interview, “Children learn so much in play, for example, academics, speech, activities of daily living so that they can copy and learn from there with high-performance skills. Group therapy is good for social development” It was evident that this approach not only provided children with opportunities to learn skills within the social context but also learn socially acceptable behaviours from peers and people around them. Further, group play promoted emotional expression and peer interaction, and children learned sharing from turn-taking in a supportive environment. By incorporating these strategies, occupational therapists aimed at equipping the children with skills to effectively navigate social situations and build meaningful relationships with the peer

5.1.5 Parental and caregiver involvement

Parental and caregiver involvement played a crucial role in facilitating the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions. This aspect emphasized the importance of involving parents and caregivers in therapy processes to understand and support their child’s participation in therapy activities. Occupational therapy is effective when parents are supportive of the therapy processes. Through providing guidance and training to extend play-based learning at home, parents are empowered to reinforce social skill development outside therapy sessions. This facilitates the continuity of therapy and learning hence promoting the child’s overall development and social skills

5.1.6 Community Sensitization and Education

This emerged as one of the strategies employed by occupational therapists to foster inclusive environments for children with developmental delays. The participants indicated the need for raising awareness and challenging stigma to promote acceptance and inclusion of children with

disability in the community. Below are the common themes registered throughout the interviews;

- Societal stigma
- Cultural misconceptions
- Limited resources

Participants constantly reported that societal stigma, cultural misconceptions and limited resources hinder occupational therapy progress and integration of children with disabilities in their communities therefore this created the urgent need of community sensitization and education. As the following excerpts illustrate according to the participants;

“Societal beliefs, stigma and perceptions affects how they can associate with others in the community. This also lowers their self-esteem and these children might withdrawal from society. The society also believes that these with disabilities are contagious”

“Also, since the community labels them as children that have a “problem” they fail to initiate interaction”

“Those other peers without disability and people in the community look at them as different. These attitudes towards them are what determines their social skills”

“Societal beliefs are the ones that hinder the development of social skills of these children. They believe these children are mad and also associate them to witch craft and also that these disabilities are contagious and that these children are a curse, they isolate them hence limiting their social integration”

In the context of the above excerpts, Occupational therapy aims to address those barriers and limitations hence creating supportive environments that facilitate acceptance, social interaction, participation, integration, and interpersonal skills of children with development delays. (see dependent variable, Chapter 1 conceptual framework). This approach further expands opportunities for children to engage in social activities within their communities.

5.1.7 Long-term social integration

As indicated in Table 3.5, the main aim and result of occupational therapy is social integration. When carrying out initial assessments, therapists set short-term and long-term goals to be achieved and one of the long-term goals is to equip the children with skills that will promote independence to facilitate social integration. The participants reflected the commitment to fostering nurturing and supportive environments that will empower these children to thrive and ensure that they are socially accepted in the community. By focusing on social integration, occupational therapy seeks to enhance the overall development and quality of life of children with developmental delays.

5.1.8 Therapy and Success Outcomes

The outcomes were registered through measurable improvements in social skills and behaviours of children with developmental disabilities during therapy. The researcher took note of the behaviours of these children with the help of the observational checklist (Appendix 6) and documented of therapy sessions and activities within this context. The participants also shared success stories that indicated progress in social interaction, participation, and communication of children with developmental disabilities as a result of individualized interventions and consistent therapy. The results underscore the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with developmental disabilities

6.0 Objective two: Role of group play therapy strategy in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities.

The interviews and observational checklist gave the researcher detailed information and data about the process of group play therapy alongside other interventions like music therapy. The observational checklist guided the researcher to systematically document observational behaviours. For example, if the children were interactive during group activities, engaged well with peers, or expressed needs both verbally and non-verbally. Based on the findings, group play therapy strategy played a vital in enhancing the social skill development of children with disabilities by providing a structured environment for interaction, participation, and learning. Through this strategy, children learned important social skills such as social interaction, participation, problem-solving, turn-taking, sharing, and communication in a supportive setting. This approach not only encouraged peer interaction but also fostered teamwork, empathy, and emotional regulation. Group play therapy further allowed children to practice and generalize these skills in real-life situations hence contributing to social integration and

participation. Additionally, the collaborative nature of group play therapy promoted a sense of belonging and self-confidence among children, enhancing their overall developmental outcomes and quality of life.

Table 6.1: Data themes summary for the role of group play strategy in the enhancement of social skills

Themes	Description	Excerpt
Peer Learning and Interaction	Learning through interaction with peers	“Children learn from each other in play”
Structured play Environment	Providing a controlled set for social interaction. Structured environments help children feel secure	“Supportive environment where these children are motivated, they are empowered to participate”
Turn-Taking and Sharing	Teaching skills like sharing through taking turns	“Group play therapy teaches them turn-taking and how to share”
Facilitating social participation	Encouraging active involvement in group play activities	“...group therapy empowers participation”

Source: Primary data

6.1.1 Peer Learning and Interaction

This is a fundamental aspect of group play therapy. The participants highlighted how group play therapy equips children with disabilities with social skills through peer interactions during structured play sessions. By engaging in group play therapy, children can observe, learn, imitate, and practice social skills and behaviours in a controlled and supportive environment. Peer-to-peer learning fosters a sense of belonging, social understanding, interaction, participation, and the ability to navigate socially acceptable behaviours and norms within the social context. According to the participants, group play therapy teaches these children how to share confined space with others and this reduces the feeling of isolation.

6.1.2 Structured Play Environment

As indicated in the table, structured play environments make children feel secure and supported. This empowers them to engage more confidently in social interactions. This structured approach ensures that children with disabilities participate actively in group settings

6.1.3 Turn-taking and sharing

This is one of the skills targeted in group play therapy. According to occupational therapists, when it comes to this aspect, during play, they always provide the children with few toys or resources so that they can learn turn-taking and share with their peers. Learning sharing and taking turns not only promotes cooperation but also enhance communication, compassion, and problem-solving skills. Since children learn a lot in play, mastering these skills in the play context, they are able in various social situations.

6.1.4 Facilitating social participation

This collaborative therapeutic approach ensures active participation and engagement during group play sessions. By involving children in group creative projects, games, sensory activities, therapists create opportunities and space for these children to practice social skills in a more interactive and fun way. Further, this group participation not only builds their self-esteem, but also fosters a sense of belonging, acceptance hence promoting positive social interactions, participations, and relationships.

7.0 Objective three: Influence of collaboration between parents and occupation therapists in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities.

The findings revealed that collaboration between parents and occupational therapists (OTs) is important in fostering the social skill development of children with disabilities. Occupational therapists brought specialized knowledge, therapeutic strategies and conducted assessments to identify specific social deficits, and developed tailored interventions like group play therapy and turn-taking exercises. Similarly, parents were partners in the therapeutic process by implementing these strategies at home and reinforcing skills learned during therapy sessions. This collaborative approach ensured that social skill development was supported consistently across different social contexts, and environments and maximizing its effectiveness. By educating parents about the importance of social skills and providing them with the tools to facilitate their child's progress, occupational therapists empower families to create nurturing and supportive environments. Effective collaboration not only enhanced the child's social interactions and communication but also boosted their self-confidence and overall quality of

life. Overcoming challenges such as communication gaps and unrealistic expectations are addressed through ongoing dialogue and mutual understanding between occupational therapists and parents, ensuring that interventions are tailored to the child's unique needs and abilities.

Table 7.1 Data themes summary for the influence of collaboration between parents and occupational therapists

Themes	Description	Excerpt
Crucial Partnership	Essential collaboration between parents and occupational therapists	“They are one of the important aspects that occupational therapist looks unto”
Educational Support	Providing parents with knowledge and basic rehabilitation skills	“Since OTs are few according to the need, so they empower parents and train them the basic rehabilitation skills so that even when the therapists are not around, therapy is still ongoing at home”
Improved interaction	Enhancing social interaction skills in children with disabilities	
Addressing communication gaps	Overcoming communication barriers with the parents	“...The other barrier is the communication gaps for example the caretaker not knowing what the therapist is doing or minimizing and there are higher chances of them not complying with the treatment”

Long term benefits	Sustaining developmental gains over time	“...achieved through consistency and right planning...”
Mutual Understanding	Building shared understanding and commitment	

Source: Primary data

7.1.1 Crucial Partnership

The transcripts emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts between parents, occupational therapists, and other professionals in setting up goals, and strategies and monitoring progress. Usually, when carrying out initial assessments, occupational therapists always work with the parents to set up short and long-term goals. Through collaborative efforts, occupational therapists and parents can align efforts to address social skill deficits and effectively support a child’s overall development. This partnership ensures a holistic approach to therapy that considers the family dynamics, the child’s needs, and strengths hence promoting individualized support for social skill development. The current findings align with the literature indicating that collaboratively working with parents promotes the generalization and maintenance of social skills because it increases parents’ ability to implement the interventions as well as give and receive feedback during the consultation process. Providing structure for problem-solving and reflective guidance, parents can attain prioritized goals that can lead to a significant improvement in children’s participation (Enroth, 2021)

7.1.2 Educational Support

According to the table above, educating parents with knowledge and basic rehabilitation skills enhances therapy outcomes. Based on the transcripts, they highlighted how therapists, social workers, and SNE teachers educate parents of these children with disabilities about behavioral strategies, therapeutic techniques, and intervention plans. By equipping them with these skills and knowledge, parents are empowered to participate in their child’s therapy journey and also monitor the therapy progress hence fostering a deeper understanding of social skill development and coming up with mutually agreed interventions and goals.

7.1.3 Improved interaction

Parental involvement in therapy sessions improves interaction between children and their environment. The findings demonstrated how joint efforts contribute to improved social

interaction skills, peer relationships, and social behaviours. The implementation of these strategies both at home and in therapeutic settings, creates opportunities for these children with disabilities to practice these social skills across different contexts hence equipping them with the ability to navigate social challenges, participate in social activities, and build meaningful connections.

7.1.4 Addressing communication gaps

The findings showed that some parents were still in denial, this put a communication barrier between them and occupational therapists. This is because they already had what they wanted the therapists to do and this made some start minimizing what therapists were doing which led to higher chances of them not complying with the treatment. These results are consistent with the existing literature in literature review which suggested that parents whose children were going under occupational therapy had different needs and needed time to build collaborative relationships with their children's therapists (Kruijsen et al. 2015). The transcripts highlighted the importance of clear and open communication channels to facilitate setting up mutually agreed goals, information exchange, and progress monitoring. This effective collaboration further facilitates a shared understanding of the child's needs and challenges hence making informed decisions and adjustments to therapy where needed. According to Occupational therapists, addressing these communication gaps promotes a cohesive approach to enhancing social skill development of children with disabilities.

7.1.5 Long-term benefits

Effective collaboration between occupational therapists and parents supports sustained social skill development and long-term social integration of children with disabilities. Offering a supportive environment at home and a therapy session context creates opportunities for these children to practice and refine skills. As reported by the therapists, the continuity of support and therapy contributes to the child's overall development, independence, and ability to participate in social interactions.

7.1.6 Mutual understanding

The findings revealed the need for mutual understanding between occupational therapists and parents of children with disabilities. As the therapists emphasized, mutual understanding fosters cohesiveness and space where parents are valued and empowered in their role as partners in their child's therapy. This further builds, rapport, trust, and respect between both parties. By collaborating and ensuring that there was mutual understanding, therapists took into

consideration the family dynamics, cultural considerations, and preferences that might have influenced the child's social skill development. This strengthened the therapeutic alliance, and parental involvement hence developing effective interventions that fostered social skill development of children with disabilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

8.0 Introduction

This study explored the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities at Abigail Foundation. This chapter therefore presents a summary of major findings which are based on the research objectives. It further gives a conclusion and recommendation based on the findings in the previous chapter. The findings not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge but also give insights that can inform practice, policy, and areas for further research.

8.1 Summary of Findings

8.1.1 Investigate the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with developmental delays.

The major findings indicated that occupational therapy used targeted interventions and collaborative efforts to enhance the social skills of children with developmental delays. Occupational therapists begun by conducting initial assessments to identify the social skill deficits in children. They looked at areas such as concentration, social interaction, and participation. These assessments gave them a basis to develop individualized therapy care plans like group therapy, music therapy, and collaborative efforts that were designed to enhance social skill development. Despite the challenges registered like limited resources and societal stigma, occupational therapy demonstrated significant success in enhancing social integration and participation for children with developmental disabilities. This finding is in agreement with Dall-alba et al. (2015) which states that early intervention through occupational therapy is beneficial in supporting children with developmental delays.

8.1.2 Examine the role of group play therapy strategy in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities

This second objective was well examined using both content and discourse analysis. The findings revealed that group play therapy equipped children with social skills like interaction, problem-solving, emotion regulation, and social participation. This is because these activities took place in a structured environment where the children were supported, monitored, and taught socially acceptable behaviours. As a result of this, children actively participate within the group setting.

8.1.3 Examine the influence of collaboration between parents and occupational therapists in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities

The findings indicated that collaboration between parents and occupational therapists is crucial to ensure consistency and maximize the therapy interventions for the enhancement of social skills of children with disabilities. The therapists emphasized that involving the parent addresses the communication gaps because parents respond differently to the proposed strategies and interventions regarding their children depending on their expectations and attitudes therefore it was important for the occupational therapist to understand the family dynamics and perspectives to develop mutually agreed goals with the parents. This further fostered supportive environments for the enhancement of social skills of children with disabilities.

9.0 Conclusions

While challenges exist, occupational therapy, group play therapy strategy, and collaborative efforts between parents and the therapists along with the support of special needs teachers and social workers play significant roles in the enhancement of social skill development of children with disabilities. These therapeutic approaches emphasize holistic assessments and targeted interventions to effectively address the social skill deficits, promote positive interactions, and contribute to the long-term social integration of these children. Additionally, by fostering these supportive environments, empowering and training families, and creating awareness and sensitization of the community, therapists strive to improve the quality of life of children with disabilities by facilitating their active social participation and inclusion in society.

9.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and findings from secondary data, the researcher hereby makes the following recommendations;

The government should invest more in Special needs schools since most of the private SNE schools are expensive and also few living children from marginalized communities with limited access to education. Further, social workers should advocate for community-based rehabilitation (CBR) because it facilitates the reintegration of these children since they are rehabilitated from their communities and it's a community-based strategy. This will reduce the stigma and labelling of people with disabilities.

Abigail Foundation should also increase the number of occupational therapists at the agency because therapists are few according to the needs and number of children. This will reduce burnout and also ensure the effectiveness of interventions and strategies.

9.1.1 Areas for further research

Deriving from the limitations of the study; and time constraints, the researcher was unable to effectively explore and examine other strategies that occupational therapists use alongside group play therapy strategy. It is therefore imperative future researchers should examine other individual strategies that also contribute to the enhancement of social skills of children with disabilities.

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APPENDIX 1: MAP OF NAMUGONGO DIVISION, KIRA MUNICIPALITY



APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Respondent,

My name is Kirabo Mellisa Lynnete a Bachelor’s student of social work and Social Administration at Uganda Christian University Mukono. As a requirement for the award of a degree, a student is expected to undertake a research study. I have therefore chosen to achieve this by exploring the role of occupational therapy in promoting social skills of children with disabilities at Abigail Foundation Uganda. I, therefore humbly request you to participate in this interview.

The information that you will provide will be held with strict confidentiality, anonymity and participation is voluntary. However, I understand that even if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Your cooperation is greatly valued.

Thank you

Kirabo Mellisa Lynnete (0761377342)

Signature of Respondent

.....

Date

.....

THE END

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

1. How do you define social skills in the context of children with disabilities and why do you think they are important?
.....
.....
2. In your opinion, can you share the challenges or barriers that children with disabilities face in developing those social skills?
.....
.....
3. How can occupational therapy address those challenges
.....
.....
4. What specific interventions do you employ to enhance the social skills of children with disabilities during therapy sessions?
.....
.....
5. How do you assess the social skill levels of these children before choosing an appropriate intervention to use
.....
.....
6. What are the long-term effects of group play therapy on the social participation and integration of children with disabilities
.....
.....
7. How do you involve parents and caregivers in the therapy process to support social skill development of their children
.....
.....
8. How does that collaboration influence the enhancement of social skill development
.....
.....
9. What are the perceptions of parents regarding their involvement in occupational therapy interventions

.....
.....
10. What are the common barriers you encounter when working to improve social skills of children with disabilities and how do you overcome them?

.....
.....
11. In your experience, can you share any success stories of how occupational therapy has positively impacted social skill development of children with disabilities?

.....
.....

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. Can you describe your role in supporting social skills of your child outside therapy sessions?
.....
.....
2. Are there any concerns or challenges you have encountered regarding your child's social skills and how do you address them?
.....
.....
3. Briefly explain your child's experience with occupational therapy and how it has enhanced their social skills.
.....
.....
4. How do you collaborate with occupational therapists to reinforce interventions aimed at enhancing social skills of your child?
.....
.....
5. Are there any improvements you have noticed in your child's social interactions, self-esteem, and participation since they started occupational therapy?
.....
.....
6. What strategies or activities have you found most effective in promoting social participation and interaction of your child?
.....
.....
7. Are there any cultural, environmental, or community factors that are a barrier to your child's social skills?
.....
.....
.....
8. In your opinion, is there any additional support you think could be beneficial in further enhancement of your child's social skills?

.....
.....
.....

THE END
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. Can you describe your role in supporting children with disabilities and their families within your community?

.....
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2. Based on your experience, what are some of the challenges children with disabilities face in developing social skills and how does this affect their overall development

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3. How do you collaborate with other professionals to support social skill development of children with disabilities?

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4. Are there any strategies or interventions you have observed occupational therapists use to promote social participation and interaction of children with disabilities?

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5. What role do caregivers and parents play in supporting social skill development of their children and how do you collaborate with them?

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6. How do you address cultural or contextual factors that may influence the social integration and participation of children with disabilities within their communities?

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7. What additional support and resources do you believe are necessary to support occupational therapy services in your community or organization for children with disabilities?

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THE END
THANK YOU

APPENDIX 6: OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLIST FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

CRITERIA	CHILD & TYPE OF DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	COMMENT
Playful and interactive during group activities		
Engages well with peers and shows good sharing skills		
Expresses needs verbally or non-verbally		
Understands and responds to nonverbal cues from both peers and adults		
Demonstrates social skills across different settings. For example, classroom or playground		
Seeks help from adults when faced with a challenge or problem		
Applies learned social skills in situations or contexts		

APPENDIX 6: APPROVAL LETTER FROM AGENCY



ABIGAIL FOUNDATION
Centre for Children with Disabilities
Tel:0754921837/0760301484
Email:abigailfoundation2016@gmail.com

Bulooli Zone, Kyaliwajjala ward, Namugongo Division Kira Municipality, Wakiso District.

22nd/June/2024

TO: Coordinator Research & Fieldwork,

UCU

Re: Approval for Data Collection for Kirabo Melisa, Registration Number S21B15/ 118

Greetings,

This letter serves to inform you that Abigail Foundation has granted permission for Kirabo Melisa to conduct data collection on the topic: "The Role of Occupational Therapy in Promoting Social Skills of Children with Disabilities at Abigail Foundation."

We are pleased to support this initiative and share our expert insights.

Yours sincerely,

