

Virtual Music Concert as a Transformation of Autistic Individual Art Performance during the Covid-19 Pandemic

<http://dx.doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v7i2.720>

Chrisdina^{1*}, Yolanda Stellarosa¹, Greta Ariati Mulyosantoso¹,
Nurul Hidayah¹, Kimberly Gavril Haranata¹

¹Institut Komunikasi dan Bisnis LSPR

Jl. KH Mas Mansyur Kav. 35, Jakarta 10220 - Indonesia

*Corresponding author: chrisdina@lspr.edu

Submitted: September 23, 2022, Revised: December 09, 2022, Accepted: December 16, 2022
Accredited by Kemristekdikti No. 28/E/KPT/2019

Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic, changes in the platform for expressing themselves through art performance are also faced by autistic individuals. This is certainly a challenge because music is a way that is used by autistic individuals to express themselves. Supporting by social media like YouTube; platform transformation brings ideas for art performance organizers so that autistic individuals can continue to perform, one of which is through the Autism Awareness Festival. Through computer-mediated communication models and diffusion of innovation theory, this study aims to dissect how the adaptation process that occurs in autistic individuals conveys self-expression through performance and digital art performance models in the form of virtual concerts, and how the concept of virtual art performance communicates the big message from the AAF. This study uses a qualitative method. Data collection techniques through FGDs were divided into two groups of AAF participants; and one group of participating parents. In-depth interviews were conducted with the organizers and accompanying teachers. The result shows that the concept of virtual concert can be applied to autistic individuals. The process that occurs in these conditions looks unique at the stages of the period in which there are adaptations and rejections. At the stage of the social system that must be targeted first are parents and aides; as a support system that becomes a bridge to explain a new concept. Autistic individuals have a very small and close environment, so input from parents and guardians is the most trusted source of information for them.

Keywords: art Performance; autistic individuals; transformation; adaptation; virtual concert.

Introduction

It has been more than a year since the Covid-19 pandemic occurs in our lives. The coronavirus or known as Covid-19 which first broke out in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019; has quickly spread to almost all corners of the world. The existence of this Covid-19 case certainly has an impact not only on the government but also on all levels of society

affected by the limited space for prevention efforts implemented by the government. Various kinds of ideas to adapt also appear in many activities to keep life going as usual.

Various kinds of activity restrictions were implemented to prevent a higher spread of the virus. Restrictions start from learning and office activities, commercial activities, to restrictions in creative fields related to art. For

artists, of course, this is a challenge in itself to keep being creative. Creative fields include a work of art, a form of products (goods), and other forms such as dance, music, drama, poetry, and others. As written in an article on *pikiran-rakyat.com*, according to the Directorate General of Culture of the Ministry of Education and Culture, there were 40,081 art workers whose businesses were affected by Covid-19 as of April 7, 2020 (Ashari, 2020). This is a very large number and is likely to continue to grow.

Art performance as a product of the arts is also affected. So many shows were delayed due to activity restrictions imposed by the government. As explained by online media that the Art Coalition on March 25, 2020, stated that the number of art events that were cancelled or postponed due to the Corona effect in Indonesia was quite significant. This happened not only in Jakarta but also in all regions of the country. It lists ten delayed film productions and releases, as well as 40 concerts, tours, and music festivals; eight exhibitions at the fine arts museum; three dance performances; and nine theatrical, mime, and puppet show (Safriana, 2020). This is the multiplier effect of the public activity restriction (PPKM) policy that forbids crowd gathering.

The Covid-19 restrictions that are still in effect have also had a good impact, by triggering art workers to be able to look for various alternative formats in staging a performance. We see that during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a change in behavior and culture. Previously, connoisseurs of art performances or concerts and others watched it live, now we are all invited to enter a new stage in enjoying art performances, through online or digitally. The internet platform has become an option in various shows because it is felt that it is most capable of reaching the audience at home. The habit of using various internet-based applications in their activities makes it easier for art workers to try out performing art virtually.

Art performance can also become a means of self-expression as well as a medium of communication. Opinions, thoughts, or feelings can be expressed through various elements of music, motion, and so on. Various messages can be conveyed through performance entertainingly, while for the communicant it becomes a satisfaction for them to fulfil communication needs and to be able to

represent themselves. Per its function, this performing art functions as an aesthetic which is used as an expression of an artist in showing his work; besides serving as a medium of entertainment, education, and health, for example with music therapy; economic, and social functions in this case the art performance carries certain social messages as well as religious functions (Saputra, 2021). Changes in expressing themselves through art performance are also faced by autistic individuals. This is certainly a challenge for them.

Music is a way used by individuals with special needs to express themselves. The limitations they have when expressing themselves can be mediated through music, not only that but music can also improve the quality of life. As written by Alhakiki & Desyandri, (2019), music education has an important role for children with special needs or people with disabilities. The art of music can be used as a means of entertainment, provide fun for children, facilitate children's ability to explore themselves, train motor skills, increase concentration, foster self-confidence, increase gratitude and faith, and foster social attitudes. Seeing this function, it is not uncommon for parents who have children with special needs to try to find opportunities to learn music and perform it.

One of the individuals with special needs who can make music is on the autism spectrum. Autism is a disorder in children who experience abnormal development, especially in terms of relationships with other humans (Winarno, 2013). This developmental disorder affects the ability to communicate, the ability to interact socially, and the behavior in which people live in their world (Pamoedji, 2010). In Indonesia, based on data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, it is estimated that there are around 2.4 million people with autism, with the addition of about 500 new people per year (Ekaputri & Afriansyah, 2020).

The process of adapting to the new self-expression model during the Covid-19 pandemic, of course, must also be carried out by autistic individuals. A very distinctive characteristic is the comfort of a routine activity that is repetitive. This condition is a challenge for parents and music training institutions or educational institutions for children with special needs. Originally, autistic individuals who expressed themselves through a musical

performance were also affected by the pandemic. Of course, this is what makes families and educational institutions try to find the best way so that activities that are usually carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic can continue to run well so that the function of music as self-expression can be materialized.

Performing musical arts in the form of performances is helped by the development of internet technology, so there is an opportunity to perform virtually. This is also supported by social media platforms that continue to grow such as YouTube, Instagram, and so on without the limits of space and time. Referring to research conducted by (Hasfi & Rahardjo, 2019), it is also stated that the internet, especially social media, is a virtual public sphere or forum potential that provides a space for individuals with special needs or disabilities to convey self-expression and voice their opinion.

The platform transformation brings ideas to art performance organizers so that autistic individuals can continue to perform. The difficulty of accepting a new concept for a show is certainly interesting and important to study further. Through this research, it will be seen how the preparation of parents and coaches in explaining a new art performance technique for autistic individuals. Adaptation, creativity, and innovation of the art performance are certainly interesting and have a novelty. In addition, of course, adaptation, creativity, and innovation in the art performance are enrichments of the creative industry art, which can be a place to show off the musical abilities of autistic individuals, so that they can provide opportunities to enter the creative industry.

In previous research from *Virtual Choir: A Form of Choir Presentation in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period*, it was revealed that virtual choir concerts are now a trend, and have succeeded in maintaining the existence of choral art amid the Covid-19 pandemic. This condition can be interpreted as a change in the shape of the choir, which was originally full of direct interaction between choir members, now it is done virtually without meeting face to face (Setiawan et al., 2021). It can be seen that there are indeed changes in the form of art performance interactions during the pandemic. Meanwhile, the impact on participants was positive, as revealed in (Kusuma, 2020) that virtual children's concerts had a positive impact on them as a form of activity at home during

Covid-19. Another impact was felt by the organizers, who were also enthusiastic about holding virtual shows regularly.

Autism Awareness Festival (AAF) is an annual music concert specially made for autistic individuals to build awareness and understanding about autism. The implementation of activities in 2020 and 2021 is very different because it was held online; such as virtual seminars, music competitions, and food photo competitions, and ends with art performances, music concerts, and announcements of competitions (Purwadi, 2021). At AAF 2020, it was the first time that an individual autistic music concert was held virtually. In the preparation process, of course, there are many different things, such as independent preparation by parents, education for autistic individuals, understanding of certain supporting technologies, and various other things.

It is interesting to study AAF more deeply because until 2020 there has been no virtual music concert for autistic individuals. Using the YouTube platform, the audience for this concert reached 2,700 viewers in 2020 and 504 viewers in 2021. This number shows that an art performance in a virtual form for autistic individuals is possible. This concert was attended by 43 participants in 2020 and 39 participants in 2021.

The transformation and adaptation of a virtual music concert performed by autistic individuals is an interesting matter for further research. Through the computer-mediated communication model and the diffusion of innovation theory, it will be seen how the adaptation process happens in autistic individuals in conveying self-expression through performance.

This study aims to describe 1) how the adaptation process of AAF Art Performance participants in utilizing the YouTube platform as a virtual stage; 2) to model the transformation and adaptation of digital art performance in the form of virtual music concerts that can be applied to art performances involving autistic individuals and 3) to describe how the concept of virtual art performance can help convey the big message of AAF. The final result of this research is expected to provide an alternative model for art performance featuring autistic individuals.

Theoretical Framework

Art performance is a branch of art that can be considered a communication medium used by certain individuals. According to Sakti, art is a visual medium of communication from messages to others, and communication becomes a daily activity in society (Sakti, 2019). The same thing was also stated by (Widodo, 2011) that art in the broadest sense is a communication process, and communication in the narrowest sense is art. How inspiration comes, ideas are explored and developed, models and forms are created, works are honed through practice, polished and perfected, costumes are designed, make-up is chosen, stage settings are worked out, and accompaniment is synergized with motion and lighting. In addition, how work is performed, the audience is invited, the audience applauds, evaluations are carried out, criticisms are written, news of art events are read, and commented on until the presence of the next work, is something that communication science is very likely to reach.

One of the forms of art performance is a music concert. Music is often interpreted as a medium for self-expression. It is closely related to its function as a universal communication medium that can break the various kinds of differences that exist. Media performances in the form of music concerts often become a means of self-expression for their communication partners. According to Miller in (Djohan, 2009) complex musical behavior in a musical performance is the same as a manifestation of the inherited capacity since primate ancestors show their "protean", which is a predictable behavior to attract the attention of their partner. For Miller in (Djohan, 2009), musicality is a behavior that is genetically conditioned. Meanwhile, 13 levels of musicality expression were obtained from different genetic traits in protean behavior.

Virtual Music Concert

According to The Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), virtual means real. So it can be seen that a virtual music concert is a show that is real. Another opinion wrote; a performance in which a virtual avatar's likeness is projected onto a virtual stage within virtual reality, synced to pre-recorded music. Not to be confused with a hologram concert (Virtual Humans, 2021). It is explained that a virtual music concert is when the entire performance is

performed through a virtual stage accompanied by synchronized virtual reality from the prepared recordings. But virtual is a different thing with music concerts that are performed in holograms. (Indra & Nuraryo, 2020) explained that this virtual concert was held through digital media that uses internet access to reach it so that the virtual concert connoisseur or audience can access the event anytime and anywhere.

Associated with this research, AAF is a music concert that is held virtually through the YouTube platform. AAF is a form of transformation and innovation due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation which was held in 2020 and 2021; so autistic individuals can still express themselves. Autism is a severe neurobiological developmental disorder that occurs in children, causing problems to communicate and relating to their environment (Sutadi et al., 2003). The term Autism was first introduced by Leo Kanner in 1943. He found 11 children who had the same characteristics, namely being unable to communicate and interact with other people, and seemingly very indifferent to the outside world so that their behavior appeared to live in their world (Pradipta et al., 2020). Based on the DSM-V, the identification of the characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can be seen from two domains, namely communication and social interaction disorders and restricted and repetitive interest behavior disorders (Gensler, 2012).

Diffusion of Innovation

Rogers defines the diffusion of innovation as a communication process through certain channels within a definite time. In (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010) innovation is communicated through certain channels within a defined time among members of a social system. Diffusion can also be considered a type of social change. Rogers divides the diffusion of innovation into four main elements that reflect the process of penetrating a concept starting from the beginning to the result to be obtained.

The main elements proposed by (Rogers, 2003) are as follows: (1) Innovation: this is a new idea presented. The results of innovation can also be measured in its application; (2) Communication channel: is a tool to convey a novelty to certain social groups; (3) Duration: a decision process made by the recipient of the message whether to accept or reject the new

idea offered; (4) Social system: a group of units to which the innovation is implemented.

The diffusion of innovation related to this research is to see how art performances in virtual form as a new idea. The social groups that are expected to change their behavior patterns are autistic individuals who initially participated in AAF through face-to-face to join it via digital media. Of course, every innovation development goes through various processes. (Rogers, 2003) stated that the innovation development process starts from: (1) Identification or recognition of problems or needs; (2) research conducted in the process of solving the problem to meet the desired needs; (3) developments that have been carried out, for example when it is related to the pandemic period, maximizing the use of digital platforms or social media as alternative media for art performance; (4) commercialization of the innovations carried out; (5) through the

adoption of the innovation by the user, which in this case is the AAF participant and the implementation team; and (6) comprehend the consequences or impacts that can arise from the existence of these innovations.

To see how the innovation-decision process is carried out (Rogers, 2003) divides it into five levels: (1) Knowledge related to how a person, namely an autistic individual, faces changes in channelling his artistic expression through virtual music concerts; (2) Persuasion, related to how the attitude or form of acceptance of existing innovations; (3) Decision, related to the decision to accept the changes or innovations made; (4) Implementation; and (5) Confirmation, related to strengthening the implemented innovations. In the context of this study, the use of the YouTube platform is for AAF music concerts for autistic individual

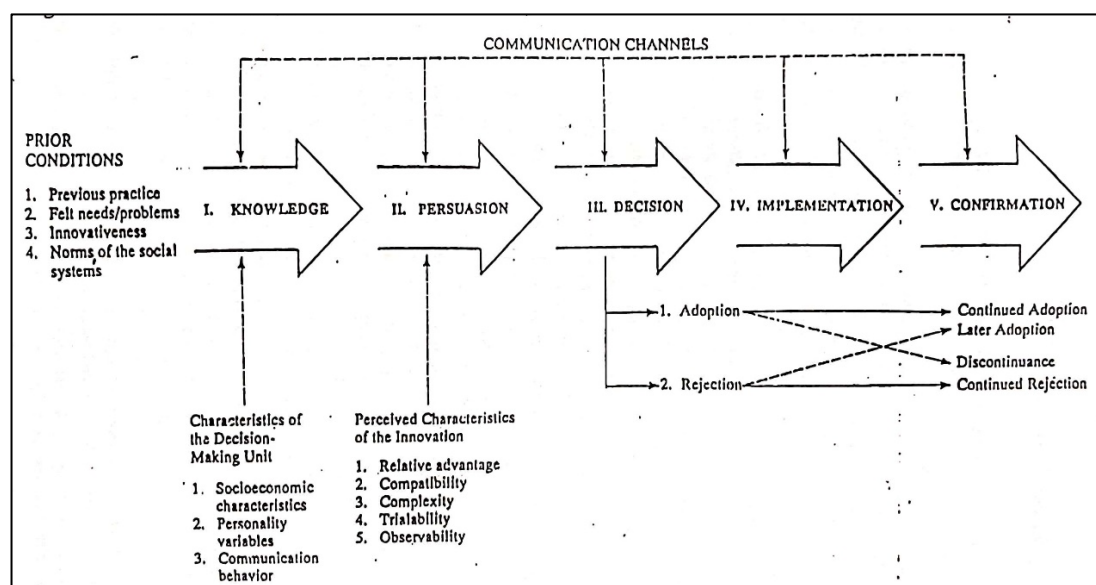


Figure 1. Model of the Innovation Decision Process
Source: Rogers, 2003

Computer-Mediated Communication

Computer mediated communication or communicating through computer media is communication mediated by digital technology and emerged along with the very rapid development of communication technology and the internet (Littlejohn & Foss, 2016). It is common when someone communicates with other people using a computer. The form of communication no longer only revolves around interpersonal, intrapersonal, group, and mass communication, but can also communicate via

a computer or digitally. It can be said that there is a change in communication patterns where public communication no longer has to be done face-to-face but can be done through digital media or social networking media. Similarly, this is what happened to mass communication with the existence of social media or online news sites, and traditional mass media such as newspapers and television were gradually abandoned.

Sending and receiving emails, downloading or uploading songs, pictures, and

videos, and interacting through social media can also be categorized as forms of computer-mediated communication. With social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, we can connect and reach many people in various places (Berger et al., 2014).

The delivery of messages, feelings, and self-expression through virtual music concerts which are the objects of this research are also included in the scope of computer-mediated communication. In line with the research conducted by (Baym, 1995) that computer-mediated communication is not only a transmitter of information but also serves to increase the effectiveness of communication within an organization or communication between one person and another; though, computer-mediated communication can also be used as a medium for delivering messages in a performance; particularly in research conducted by Baym is the show of humor. Referring to the research conducted by (Robertson & Despa, 2002) which states that digital media and the virtual environment through the characters displayed are also very helpful for being able to play roles, and explore characters in a story.

Associated with the object in this study, the virtual music concert will see how the models and adaptation processes displayed by autistic individuals in the AAF art performances were originally held face-to-face, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic which required activity restrictions, they had to adapt by utilizing digital media as a medium of communication and expression.

Material and Methodology

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research method. The qualitative

research method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, used to examine the condition of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument. Data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation, data analysis is inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2016).

Data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews. The FGDs were divided into 3 groups. Each of the two FGD groups comprises five autistic individuals participating in the 2020 and 2021 AAF; and the other group contains the parents of autistic individuals participating in the 2020 and 2021 AAF. From the results of the FGD, interviews were also conducted with expert speakers, who are art performance experts and organizers. Data collection is also carried out through literature studies such as YouTube accounts of AAF art performances, journals, and so on.

The data obtained were analyzed using the qualitative analysis technique of the Miles and Huberman model. Data analysis was carried out interactively in the form of (1) data reduction, where at this stage the process of reducing all information obtained was carried out to focus on certain problems; (2) data presentation, which can be done in the form of a short description, chart, or narrative text; and (3) concluding, it is expected that new findings can be in the form of a description or description of an object (Sugiyono, 2016). The data will be grouped based on the concepts contained in the diffusion of innovation theory and equipped with the concept of CMC. The research focuses are as follows:

Table 1. Research Focuses

Research focus	Element	Evidence	Data collection technique
AAF Art Performance via Virtual (YouTube channel)	Innovation	1. Virtual music concert ideas for autistic individuals.	Interview with the organizers of the AAF Art Performance.
	Communication channel	1. Introducing virtual concert preparation 2. Introducing how to do self-recording 3. Introducing another feature of the YouTube channel	Interview with AAF Art Performance organizer

	Period	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The process of accepting new ideas for both autistic individuals and their parents/guardians 2. Process of rejecting new ideas 3. Learning new technical stuff 4. Explain to autistic individuals the concept of a virtual concert 5. Behavioral adaptation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interview of the organizers AAF Art Performance. -FGD of Art Performance participants AAF -Parent's FGD / coach/aide participant -Observation of AAF Art Performance recording on YouTube
	Social system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An autistic individual when making music 2. The function of music for autistic individuals 3. The function of a musical concert for autistic individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interview of the organizers AAF Art Performance. -Parent Interview / coach/aide -Expert interview

Source: Researcher's Organic Data, 2022

Results and Discussion

A virtual music concert as a place for children with special needs to express themselves is a new idea or innovation carried out by the London School Beyond Academy during the pandemic, through the Autism Awareness Festival. When referring to the research focus taken from the four main elements of the diffusion of innovation; then the results of the data that have been collected are as follows:

Innovation

Organizing art performances with virtual concepts is a new thing for parents, music teachers, and AAF Performing Arts participants. In the beginning, various questions arise, especially from parents and guardians, about how technology will function as a medium for performances. The majority of parents who do not understand the use of technology in presenting music through digital platforms seem to be a major concern. Moreover, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the restrictions on meetings and gatherings were very limited. Parents are faced with the condition that it takes a strong desire to accept something new. This is following the statement of the majority of parents participating in the AAF Performing Arts who felt that certain difficulties arise when they have to deal with new technology.

The process of preparing a virtual art performance, which requires recording the performance first, then transferring the recording to be broadcast via YouTube, is one of the difficulties they encounter. Referring to the research of (Rochyadi-Reetz et al., 2020), social media, one as YouTube, is a medium that Indonesian people widely use during the pandemic to find information other than private television and public television.

At the beginning of the process, certain problems arise because those children feel a little panicked and tense. This happens because there are adjustments that must be made by autistic children who will appear. Rigid characteristics that are very thick in autistic children trigger this condition. It takes time for them to slowly understand and accept something new.

“The difficulty is because they don't know the technology to prepare online concerts. In the beginning, the difficulty was in the learning process, then started by entering videos of the results of the exercises or the results of the instruments that had been made on YouTube Children feel panic Technically, there must be a special person to take care of it.”

The implementation of a new idea is strongly influenced by the previous experience of the individual who implements it. In this

case, parents and aides are actors who in fact do not have previous experience (previous practice). Parents and guardians seem to need time to learn the concept of implementing a virtual music concert, as well as to explain these changes to children. This is consistent with the statement of the majority of parents who said that at first there were difficulties but after repeating several times the results became good and the process was going smoother.

Difficult because they don't know the technology to prepare concerts online, but keep trying because there are also people who help. At the beginning of the difficulty in the learning process, then start by entering videos of the results of exercises or the results of instruments that have been made to YouTube, and getting used to collecting assignments online as well, then in the end children take part in online competitions and concerts. Still need help from someone who understands better, just find it difficult at first but will get used to it.

Norms of the social systems which are customary in musical performances also contribute to the initial conditions of parents and guardians. This can be seen from the explanation of the committee that not all participants who register in the end want to perform virtually. Most of the reasons that arise are difficulties in operating or preparing from a technical point of view. The idea of choosing the YouTube platform is a possible alternative. This is similar to the results of research conducted by (Saputra, 2021) that performing arts are direct interactions between players and audiences that are momentary; However, in this study, the researcher assumes that performing arts do not have to interact directly. When related to this research, it is possible to use YouTube as a performing arts medium and not be limited to a certain time in watching it.

Communication Channel

In the process of delivering a new idea, it is important to pay attention to the communication aspect. The AAF Performing Arts Committee has approached parents and guardians from the start. An explanation of the form of a virtual music concert and how the technical implementation is carried out repeatedly to provide a clear picture. Communication is carried out through telephone lines and messages interspersed with

implementation briefings. It can be seen that the various communication media used by the committee can overcome the problem of understanding, the formation of which is very dependent on the socio-economic and communication behavior of a person. Parents and guardians feel that they still need intense communication to be able to prepare for the virtual concert that will be held. This is supported by ER's statement as the AAF Performing Arts committee that they contacted and announced information through social media owned by LSCAA. The message is then spread widely through parents and guardians.

So far, we have contacted and announced through social media as well as through WhatsApp. Then, for example, parents get a broadcast from us, and they will share it again with their friends, there is this event or for example, it turns out that there are teachers who can share our broadcasts or see our social media which is shared with their students. They finally signed up.

Problems in receiving messages online, of course, can arise, this also happens to parents and aides. According to a study (Prasanti & Indriani, 2017), physical barriers are related to the environment in which these communicators are communicating, situation, conditions, and atmosphere. Physiological barriers are related to the physical condition of the communicators, whether because they cannot hear well or not. Are they able to concentrate on exchanging messages, or is there something bothering their mind?

The AAF Performing Arts Committee also did a pretty good job of persuading. This can be seen from how parents and aides are given the convenience of asking questions and being guided, especially in preparation. Like when they have to record their children's performance while playing a musical instrument. The recording process was also started by explaining to the children that there was a change in the way the concert was performed compared to usual. Another technique that also has its challenges is explaining the features of the YouTube application. Parents and aides are taught to understand how to upload and see audience reactions through the comment's column and the number of viewers.

Period

Of course, the process of accepting parents and aides is different for autistic individuals. The process of accepting a new idea can produce two outcomes, namely adoption and rejection. At the adoption stage at the AAF Performing Arts, it appears that parents and guardians can gradually accept the concept of performing arts. This means that introduction, which is a decision process carried out by the recipient of the message, is not immediately accepted from the start, whether to accept or reject the new idea offered.

Acceptance becomes a process of consideration that includes elements of the characteristics of autistic individuals, meaning that decisions are made not based on their abilities but on the child's ability to accept. The next adoption is for autistic individuals who will take part in virtual art performances. The delivery of messages given by parents determines whether there is acceptance or rejection of a new idea. The form of the message conveyed by the parents must have passed the adjustment phase, both in sentence structure, intonation, and simplification of meaning. This happens so that the acceptance process can run well.

The concept of virtual performing arts did not experience rejection from parents and aides because the desire to be able to display children's musical abilities was one of the reasons they wanted to consider the form of virtual musical performances. Submissions from parents and aides to their children also did not show rejection so during the preparation there were no significant problems. The desire to perform for children also appears so that during virtual art performances there are no problems, although the repeated recording

process sometimes makes children a bit confused.

Although there was no rejection from autistic individuals who took part, there was a different kind of excitement. As the results of a study (Umam et al., 2021) stated that social distancing enforcement led to their choice to fall into a virtual show concept. The adaptation to virtual form could not indeed meet all the art performers' satisfaction. There were several missing elements, from the live audience's reactions to the stuttering of the actors, especially the traditional artists, in the virtual show concept. These differences do not pose a significant problem but become an element that participants are looking for.

Social System

The selection of various communication channels is an advantage in the process of forming acceptance of a new idea. The acceptance process that occurs is the result of determining certain social groups as targets. The committee targets parents and aides as an entrance when introducing a new idea. The social system seems to be an important consideration so it narrows the possibility of the rejection phase of the target. The AAF Committee selects parents and aides who would be invited to attend the event. Without realizing it, the selection of participants who consider their immediate environment facilitates changes in the way autistic individuals think related to musical performances. The closeness of a certain environment makes children feel that new things are not a significant problem.

Based on the process that occurs when autistic individuals adapt to the transformation of the virtual art stage, the models formed are:

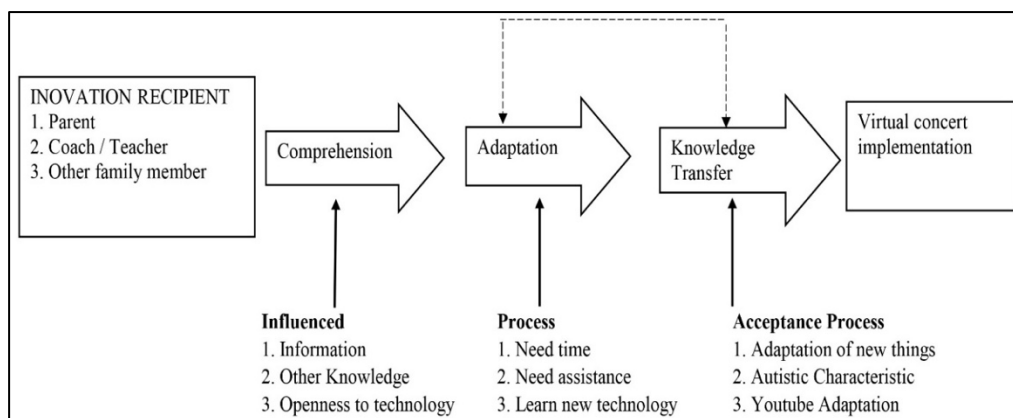


Figure 2. Model of Virtual Concert Implementation for Autistic Children
Source: Researcher processed, 2022

Adaptation becomes important because there is new knowledge related to technology. (Doggett et al., 2021) stated: we learned that numerous pieces of equipment go into producing virtual musical content, including microphones, cameras, mixers, lighting, soundproofing, and other elements. Experts identified equipment and techniques that worked well in their own experiences across a range of applications. Equipment is not only the main element, but the ability to use it is the most important thing.

Conclusions

Based on the phenomena raised from this research and the research objectives above, it can be concluded that the concept of virtual art performances can be applied to autistic individuals as an alternative form. The process that occurs in these conditions looks unique at the time stages in which there are adoption and rejection. In regular individual conditions, stages are decisions taken based on experience as a particular consideration. Meanwhile, when the stages of the diffusion of innovation are applied to autistic individuals who have aides, both parents and others, some differences arise when the adoption process is first experienced by parents and aides. Those who act as a stimulus that helps determine a change must first understand and process adaptation. This means that when this stage fails, the introduction of a new idea or concept to autistic children cannot go well.

Another thing found was that at the stage of the social system, parents and aides must be targeted first because they are the support system that serves as a bridge to explain a new concept. Autistic individuals who have difficulty in social interaction have a very small and close environment, so input from parents and aides is the most trusted source of information for them. Similarly, the introduction of the concept of virtual music performances is a new thing for autistic children. A well-formed understanding of parents and aides makes AAF's art performances run well; although the participants felt an important moment was missing. Participants said that when there was a direct reaction from the audience, either in the form of applause or singing together, it could be an encouragement. However, this cannot be found with virtual art performances.

Based on these conditions, the application of a new concept, that is virtual art performances, can be applied to autistic individuals who have aides. Although there was no rejection from the autistic children who participated, there was a different kind of excitement, in the form of direct applause after the performance. However, even though these differences do not cause significant problems, they are still an element that participants are looking for. The process of transformation and adaptation went well at the virtual AAF Performance Art. The concept of virtual art performances can be an alternative that can be held when a pandemic happens.

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to thank the AAF committee for providing information and accompanying the interview process with autistic children. We are also grateful to the parents and aides of the AAF participants who took the time to share the whole process of adaptation that occurred during the preparation of the virtual art performance. Our thank also goes to the Merdeka Campus Competition Program through the LSPR Communication and Business Institute therefore this research can be completed.

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