

Analysis of Caregiver-Selected Goal Domains for their Children with Autism within Caregiver-Support Services across Texas

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ABSTRACT

Social validity assess if an intervention’s goals, procedures and effects are meaningful to clients and stakeholders. Incorporating caregiver-selected goals into interventions will increase social and ecological validity. The purpose of this study was to systematically categorize and analyze caregiver-identified goals for caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) receiving parent-implemented services. A content analysis of caregiver-selected goal domains was conducted to determine socially significant goals and their social validity. Findings laid emphasis on the prioritized goals selected by caregivers.

METHODS

Participants:

- One hundred and eight caregivers receiving parent-implemented applied behavior analytic services.

Variables:

- Goals identified by caregiver.
- Family’s geographic classification.
- Frequency of goals in each domain.
- Frequency of caregivers that identified goals in each domain.

PROCEDURES

Initial extraction:

- Goals were extracted from FBA interviews, treatment action plans, and treatment summaries.

Coding:

- We establish credibility by having the research team review and come to an agreement of the domains that emerged from the data set.
- Goals were categorized using a thematic analysis approach, with domain definitions established by the research team.

Intercoder reliability:

- Inter coder reliability was conducted for 30% of data and calculated at 91%.

RESULTS

- Overall, caregivers more frequently identified goals that fall into the emotional regulation/coping skills domain.
- Caregivers in urban locations more frequently identified goals in the emotional regulation/coping skills domain than any other domain.
- Caregivers in rural locations identified goals in the social skills domain more frequently than any other domain.
- Overall, parental skill development was the domain with the least amount of caregiver-identified goals and least amount of caregivers interested in that domain.

DISCUSSION

- Interdisciplinary collaboration with professionals who are more equipped to dealing with emotions and coping skills (e.g., counselors, psychologists)
- Since many caregivers value emotional regulation and coping skills, parent training can focus on reinforcing coping strategies at home, modeling emotional language, and supporting consistency across environments.

IMPLICATIONS

- Interdisciplinary collaboration to create interventions to teach emotional regulation and coping strategies to children with ASD.
- Socially valid goals are selected by practitioners to generalize interventions in clinic to home setting.

Caregivers report emotional regulation and coping skills as most important goals during intake process.

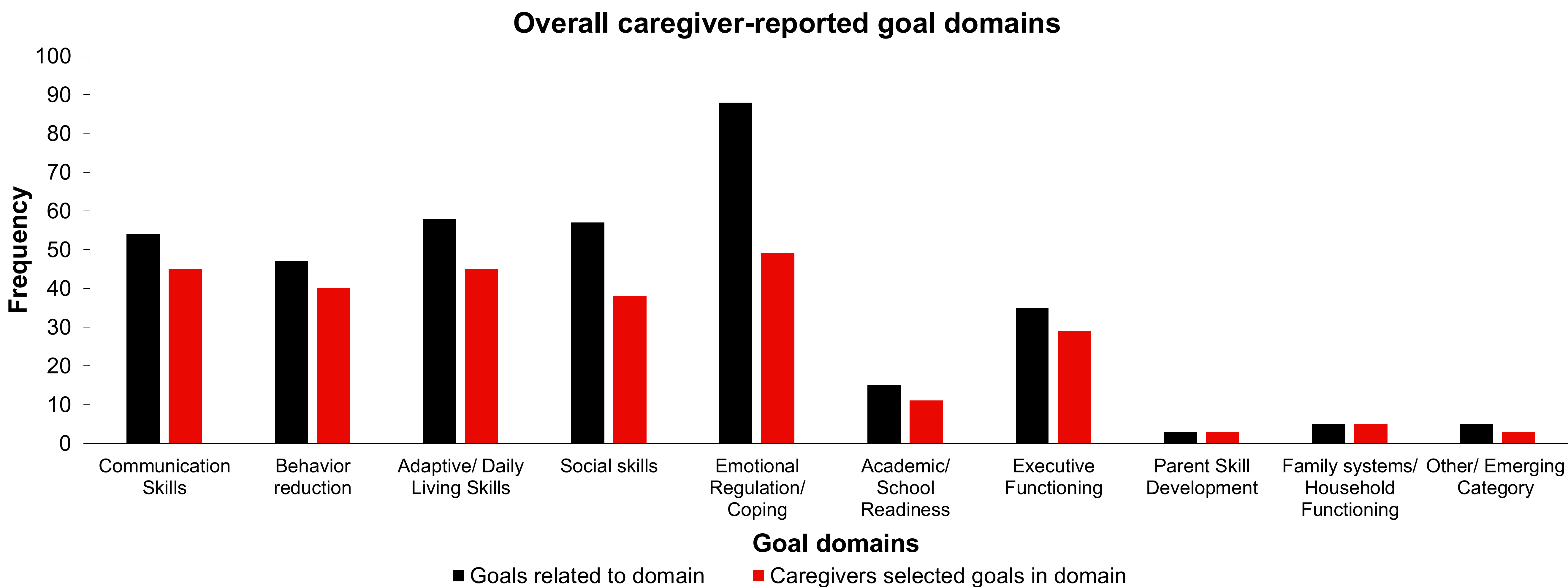


Figure 1. Frequency of individual caregiver-selected in each domain and frequency of caregivers in which selected goals within each domain.

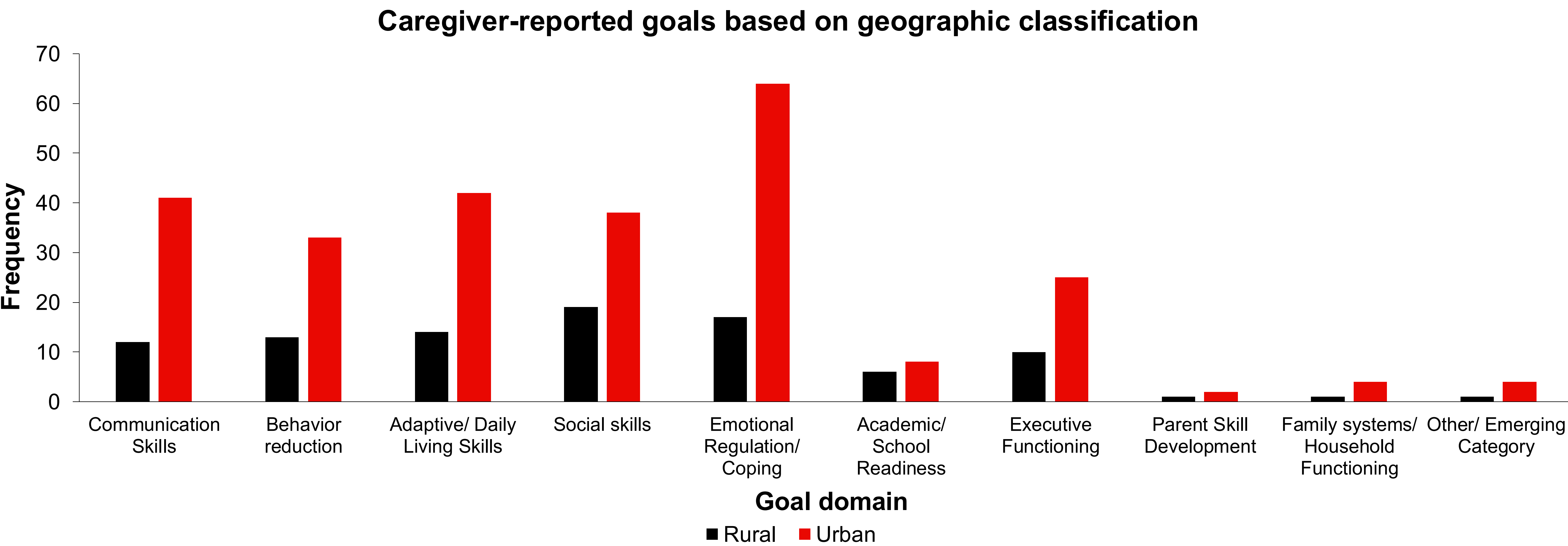


Figure 2. Frequency of domain related to goals selected by caregivers based off geographic classification.

