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Implementation strategies in creating social acceptance for slow learners children in included schools: Teacher's perspective guidance and counseling

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Abstract---The purpose of this study was to identify the social acceptance of slow learners from the perspective of guidance and counseling teachers and the strategies used in inclusive schools. This research is a qualitative research with case study method which was conducted in 4 inclusive junior high schools in western Indonesia (Java). Empirical data were collected from August to November 2021 through several semi-structured interviews. using data reduction, data presentation and conclusions. The low social acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools causes feelings of discomfort, pressure and is not sure that they are accepted by the environment so they do not want to be involved and hang out with friends. Based on the problems experienced, it requires the help of guidance and counseling teachers in schools. The strategy given by the guidance and counseling teacher to increase the social acceptance of slow learners is by conducting observations, interviews, diagnostic tests to explore the potential of slow learners, and documentation to detect problems that occur.

Keywords---social acceptance, slow learners, teacher's perspective, guidance counseling, strategy.

Introduction

The existence of slow learners in society still has a negative stigma. Only by looking at the physical condition and behavior can spontaneously give a certain label to the individual (Sunardi et al., 2011). The high level of social exclusion associated with academic achievement is still experienced by slow learners in inclusive schools (Devries et al., 2021). As a result of negative stigma from the environment, it causes low social acceptance (Trani et al., 2020; Sansour &

Bernhard, 2018). In fact, with the inclusion of schools, it is hoped that students with special needs will have good social adjustments, so that they can affect the psychological condition of students (Tunde, 2010). Inclusive schools must be able to create a child-friendly environment to get protection from discrimination. and can provide understanding so as not to be afraid of being labeled as having inappropriate behavior like normal children because the consequences will become new problems, especially for slow learners (Manful et al., 2020).

Based on research conducted by Raji & Sidhu (2020) Slow learners have higher rates of peer victimization which can be verbal, physical, social manipulation, or assault. Slow learners have low concentration, low self-confidence, so it is difficult to convey what they have learned (Ruhela, 2014). With the limitations of slow learners, inclusive schools should be able to accommodate the learning needs of all children, including slow learners. This is an effort to improve student learning outcomes in achieving academic achievement, social skills and personal development (Ainscow, 1995).

The realization of all the statements mentioned above will be successful if there is good cooperation in schools by providing training to teachers, providing socialization to parents, principals can participate in facilitating inclusive education practices, and are able to face the challenges that occur (McBrayer & Wong, 2013). The availability of psychological services that deal with social problems, emotional behavior, and learning in schools is the task of guidance and counseling teachers in schools.

One strategy to create social acceptance for slow learners is by increasing the competence of guidance and counseling teachers in inclusive schools. The competencies that must be possessed by guidance and counseling teachers are: a) empathy and understanding of how children, parents, and special companion teachers feel and experience, b) the ability to relate to children and adults in a directed way, c) the ability to withstand the negative emotions of slow learners and give them "a caring environment", d) sensitivity to the needs of children, parents and teachers for support and solution of specific problems e) the ability to recognize and acknowledge their limitations, difficulties, and resistances regarding children's problems and the application of suggested strategies , f) understanding of group dynamics and their impact on school organization and staff attitudes towards implementation of interventions, g) ability to build relationships characterized by mutual trust and respect recognizing the importance of alliances in counseling/therapy work, h) ability to define the necessary conditions and sufficient for helpful relationships, i) ability to inspire leadership around the world number of levels and to work with education staff as a system, j) ability to understand and deal with problems of the education system (group conflict, stereotyped conceptions of children's difficulties, resistance to collaboration, etc.), k) ability to combine sensitivity to relationships and display a firm, dynamic and explicit attitude when necessary in working with all stakeholders (Kourkoutas & Xavier, 2010).

Research on strategies for handling social acceptance associated with children with special needs has generally been carried out, but strategies for slow learners are still rarely done so this research needs to be carried out with the aim of

identifying how the perspective of guidance and counseling teachers on the social acceptance of slow learners in schools inclusion and what strategies to implement.

Method

The research was conducted between August and November 2021. The research used a qualitative approach. Collecting data through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. Respondents in this study were guidance and counseling teachers at the inclusive junior high school in Magetan Regency as many as 4 people. The interview guide consisted of questions that included things about the perception of guidance and counseling teachers on the social acceptance of slow learners, such as the perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the safety of slow learners at school, the perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the acceptance they received. felt by slow learners, the perception of guidance and counseling teachers about feeling safe, not pressured and confident that their friends accept themselves, the perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the involvement of slow learners in socializing. To maintain teacher anonymity, a code is assigned, G1 for teacher #1, G2 for teacher #2, G3 for teacher #3, G4 for teacher #4.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants

Aspect	BK Teacher at School			
	G1	G2	G3	G4
Educational background	Bachelor of Guidance and Counseling	Bachelor of Guidance and Counseling	Bachelor of Guidance and Counseling	Bachelor of Guidance and Counseling
Age (Years)	59	43	56	50
Working Period (Years)	31	21	29	23

In-depth interviews were conducted on October 9, 2021 and October 25, 2021. The duration of the interview was about 40 minutes per teacher. Interview activities are documented in the form of voice recordings. To test the validity of the data using triangulation. Data analysis using data reduction, data presentation and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results

This research was conducted to examine the acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools through the perception of guidance and counseling teachers. The focus of the research is 1) Perception of social acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools 2) strategies for guidance and counseling services provided for slow learners in inclusive schools.

Table 2. Sample data analysis

Research focus	Data	Data source
Perceptions of guidance	Yes, sometimes they get	Semi-structured

and counseling teachers regarding the social acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools	interview
Guidance and counseling service strategies provided for slow learners in inclusive schools	Semi-structured interview
annoyed but they can also tell me if it's okay if they have a few friends who are important in school (Feeling safe in the middle of the environment). How come there is no attempt to play or chat with all of my friends in class? At the very least, if his friend is on the same bench, that's his friend (more often involved and hanging out with the environment). Looks like why not. But I don't know what it really feels like. Only when I called them they said that there was no problem (Feeling safe in the middle of the environment). For that adjustment, they are only friends with a limited circle. If they have two friends, that's all they want to play. They tend to limit themselves as well (more often involved and get along with the environment).	

- Perceptions of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the social acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools

The focus of the first research is on the perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the social acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools. The indicators that will be seen are a. the perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the safety of slow learners at school, b. the perception of the guidance and counseling teacher regarding the acceptance felt by the slow learners, c. the perception of the guidance and counseling teacher regarding the feeling of security, not being pressured and confident that his friends accept him, d. the perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the involvement of slow learners in socializing.

- The perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the safety of slow learners in inclusive schools is how the guidance teachers perceive that

slow learners feel comfortable being in the middle of the school environment without feeling any rejection of their existence. This recognition is shown by the answer to the question *"Is the negative view that other people give to slow learners a big problem for him?"*

G1

Not. Slow learners tend to be receptive and don't think too much about it (Teacher #1, in-depth interview, 09 October 2021)

G2

Not really. A slow learner, maybe with all his limitations it actually makes him not too bothered by the taunts of his friends (Teacher #2, in-depth interview, 09 October 2021)

G3

No. They feel fine (Teacher #3, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

G4

Yes, sometimes yes. Because some of them are afraid of going to school on their own. I sometimes accompany her in class (Teacher #4, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

Based on the interview data above, it was found that the perceptions of 4 guidance and counseling teachers regarding the safety of slow learners in inclusive schools were 3 teachers stated that slow learners were comfortable in inclusive schools and 1 teacher said no. This is contrary to research Paterson et al., (2012) which states that negative views can have a negative impact on the psychological well-being of slow learners.

- The perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the sense of acceptance felt by slow learners is how guidance and counseling teachers view themselves as slow learners who receive acceptance from normal children in inclusive schools. This acknowledgment is shown by the answer to the question *"How do you think normal children perceive the presence of slow learners in their class?"*

G1

Yes, because they are still children, sometimes they see the difference between themselves and slow learners. It can't be denied that they have negative views, such as saying that "you're already in middle school, how come you don't read well" (Teacher #1, in-depth interview, 09 October 2021)

G2

If their friends just want to accept them, but yes there are only a few children who are naughty and have the view that they are stupid (Teacher #2, in-depth interview, 09 October 2021)

G3

Yes, there are those who think they are okay, there are those who judge them negatively and label them as stupid (Teacher #3, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

G4

Yes, because I have given an understanding about the existence of their friends who are crew members and they already understand that they are different (Teacher #4, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

Based on the interview data above, it was found that the perceptions of 4 guidance and counseling teachers regarding the acceptance felt by slow learners in inclusive schools were 4 teachers stated that slow learners received acceptance from normal children but 2 teachers stated that there were some who still give negative assessments to slow learners, they even label them stupid. This is in accordance with research Manful et al., (2020) which states that inclusive schools must be able to provide understanding to normal students not to give a stamp if slow learners show inappropriate behavior so as not to cause new problems.

- The guidance and counseling teacher's perception of feeling safe, not pressured and confident that their friends accept themselves is how the guidance and counseling teacher sees how slow learners feel about feeling safe, not pressured and confident that their friends accept them. This acknowledgment is shown by the answer to the question "*Are slow learners bothered by criticism and rejection by others against them?*"

G1

Yes, it seems disturbed, that's why I often call to the BK room, when I take a break, let me give you work to draw or just help me at the office (Teacher #1, in-depth interview, 09 October 2021)

G2

Yes, sometimes they get annoyed but they can also tell me if it's okay if they have a few friends who are important in school (Teacher #2, 09 October 2021)

G3

Looks like why not. But I don't know what it really feels like. Only when I called them they said that there was no problem (Teacher #3, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

G4

Not. They tend to be indifferent (Teacher #4, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

Based on the interview data above, it was found that the perceptions of 4 guidance and counseling teachers regarding feeling safe, not being pressured and confident that their friends accept slow learners in inclusive schools are 2 teachers stating that their slow learners are disturbed and feel insecure because their friends do not accept their presence in inclusive schools but 2 teachers say that they tend to be indifferent and fine even though there are some friends who refuse to be in inclusive schools. This is in accordance with research

conducted by Goleniowska (2014) and Vantieghem et al., (2020) who stated that they were not motivated to join and hang out with normal children because they were afraid of being considered a failure if they did things that were not in line with their friends' expectations.

- The perception of guidance and counseling teachers regarding the involvement of slow learners in socializing is how the guidance and counseling teacher views that slow learners want to socialize with normal children in a good school environment. This recognition is shown from the answer to the question *"How do slow learners adjust to their friends at school?"*

G1

If you look at it when I go to class, slow learners tend to be quiet and don't want to join normal friends (Teacher #1, in-depth interview, 09 October 2021)

G2

For that adjustment, they are only friends with a limited circle. If they have two friends, that's all they want to play. They tend to limit themselves too (Teacher #2, 09 October 2021)

G3

They usually go to the canteen together, but in class it is still difficult to ask their friends (Teacher #3, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

G4

How come there is no attempt to play or chat with all of my friends in class? At least if you have a friend on the same bench, that's your friend (Teacher #4, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

Based on the interview data above, it was found that the perceptions of 4 guidance and counseling teachers regarding the involvement of slow learners in socializing in inclusive schools were 4 teachers said that slow learners tend to limit themselves and remain silent so they do not have the effort to play with normal children in inclusive school. This is in accordance with research conducted by (Dewanti & Novitasari, 2020) who said that self-confidence or self-esteem was the main factor in the success of making social adjustments for slow learners in inclusive schools.

- Guidance and counseling teacher strategies in overcoming the social acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools

The focus of the second problem is to find out how the strategy of guidance and counseling services is given to slow learners in inclusive schools. With the characteristics of the slow learners, it shows that there is no social acceptance from the surrounding environment, so it requires the right strategy to help with these problems. There are several services provided by guidance and counseling teachers in inclusive schools to help slow learners get social acceptance from the surrounding environment.

- There is already a counseling guidance service in inclusive schools

Based on in-depth interviews, there is an acknowledgment from guidance and counseling teachers at 4 Inclusive Junior High Schools through the answers to the question *"Do counselors provide guidance and counseling services for slow learners in schools?"*

G1

Yes, the BK teacher provides individual counseling and learning services for slow learners, 09 October 2021)

G2

Yes We often provide services for them (Teacher #2, 09 October 2021)

G3

Yes, we provide services to all children with special needs including slow learners, October 25, 2021)

G4

Yes As much as possible, we provide assistance to them because it's a pity, ma'am, they mostly don't get the attention of their parents (Teacher #4, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

Based on the interview data above, it was found that guidance and counseling services had been provided in 4 inclusive junior high schools. It can be found that 4 teachers said they had provided services to all children with special needs, including slow learners.

- Guidance and counseling teacher strategies in overcoming the problem of social acceptance of slow learners in inclusive schools

Based on in-depth interviews, there was an acknowledgment from the guidance and counseling teachers at 4 Inclusive Junior High Schools through the answers to the question *"What strategies do the guidance and counseling teachers provide so that slow learners get social acceptance from the environment?"*

G1

So far, it's only been with individual counseling but not in formal situations, when I played in the bk room while I was looking for information about learning and social developments at this school, 09 October 2021)

G2

So far, the strategy given by the BK teacher at this school is that we continue to try to explore the talents of his interests first so that later he has talents that he can be proud of for his future (Teacher #2, 09 October 2021)

G3

Because there is no GPK here, the BK teacher also doubles as a GPK. Not only providing counseling services, but if they have learning problems, sometimes we also accompany them, October 25, 2021)

G4

I provide special services by often calling him to the teacher's room, exploring his talents and interests and often asking him to make work while I dig up information about his activities at home (Teacher #4, in-depth interview, October 25, 2021)

Based on the interview data above, it was found that the guidance and counseling teacher had several strategies in helping the social acceptance of slow learners, namely with 2 teachers saying they provided an understanding of their own condition while 2 teachers had strategies to explore their talents and interests to foster self-confidence through their talents and interests. can be proud of so that it gets acceptance from the surrounding environment.

This is in accordance with research conducted by Nugroho, (2020) the role of guidance and counseling teachers is to implement guidance and counseling services by providing direction and motivation to children with special needs and normal children to continue to be active in school, providing information services related to gender roles, inviting students to understand the social roles of men and women, guiding students including children with special needs to be able to choose a future career. Furthermore, the implementation of the role of guidance and counseling teachers on inclusive education for students is to be able to carry out the process of identification, preparation of service instruments, implementation and monitoring.

Discussion

Social acceptance in inclusive schools is a very important topic because of its relationship not only to learning outcomes, but also to the socio-emotional development and well-being of students. Social acceptance by peer groups is essential for the healthy socio-emotional development of children. Positive peer relationships provide an important source of social support and a context in which students learn to manage social relationships, peer relationships are not at risk of developing positive social activities (Wullschleger et al., 2020; Zweers et al., 2021). Social rejection affects the learning conditions of children in school. children will do poorly in learning because they are not comfortable in class (Huber et al., 2018). In the research of Vetoniemi & Kärnä (2021) Social acceptance of slow learners in public schools requires good handling from school management, especially from teachers. Teachers hold the key to building a socially good environment. In-service training and efficient cooperation between all teachers including guidance and counseling teachers are required. Slow Learners feel welcome when they experience positive interactions with other people. Where they perceive themselves to be respected and treated in the same way as their peers, they are more likely to feel that they are accepted as part of a group and belong to the same environment as others who thrive in this situation.

Students who have a diagnosis of special needs need the help of professionals at the school. Professional staff who can provide assistance to get good social acceptance are guidance and counseling teachers. In addition to support from peers, children with special needs need guidance and counseling teachers who are able to bridge these conditions (Rose, 2017). School counselors can be very

helpful in getting to know the school environment, classmates and help build good relations with students in class (Taub, 2006).

Based on Simons (2017) The counselor is in charge of helping all students including minority group students. However, guidance and counseling teachers must be able to facilitate students with special needs, and increase their optimism and confidence in their abilities and create a positive atmosphere at school, feel safe and provide understanding to classmates so that they can help overcome conflicts that occur (Budnyk & Sydoriv, 2019). Slow learners experience problems ranging from anxiety, fear, inferiority to difficulty in trying to establish relationships with other people at school. Guidance and Counseling services help students who have difficulty realizing their potential to the fullest, counseling services are very important for slow learners (Kasongole & Muzata, 2020). School counselors describe the loss of social acceptance for slow learners because they do not get support from some people, either their peer group or teachers or parents (Brown, 2020).

In providing services for people with special needs, one must look at the service objectives, individual problems, the service programs provided and how the implementation of these services is provided (Badiah, 2017). According to research Lattu (2018) teacher guidance and counseling strategies that can be given to help slow learners' social acceptance in inclusive schools are 1) Observing, namely to get direct data from slow learners. The purpose of this study was to record the symptoms experienced by children with special needs, how the attitude of children with special needs in class, and to see the completeness of notes during class. 2) Interview is a method of collecting data by directly interviewing slow learners or other parties who can provide information about the condition of children with special needs (teachers, parents, peers). 3) Diagnostic Test is a method of collecting data for students with special needs to identify students with special needs. So that slow learners can explore their potential so that their talents can be developed 4) Documentation is a way to detect problems by checking the notes and notes of children with special needs (CV, attendance, personal lists, report cards). Social acceptance of slow learner children will be obtained if their talents can be developed and make advantages that can be accepted by others.

Conclusion

The low social acceptance received by slow learners from the environment makes them feel uncomfortable, depressed and causes feelings of uncertainty to be accepted so that children find it difficult to get involved and get along with friends. The school environment is an important place to meet children's needs for good social relationships. Therefore, slow learners need help in order to gain social acceptance in school. Counseling guidance teachers are professionals in schools who have strategies in dealing with the problems of slow learners by conducting observations, interviews, conducting diagnostic tests and documentation to detect problems that occur.

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