

## **Identification of Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Schools**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the types and characteristics of children with special needs, especially children who experience obstacles in the academic field. This research was motivated by various cases where there were limitations of teachers in identifying children with special needs. This research method is descriptive with the technique of collecting data from a literature review of various references that are relevant to the observed symptoms. The data collected were analyzed descriptively qualitatively so that we could recognize the types and characteristics of children with special needs, especially children who experience obstacles in the academic field. The results of the literature review reveal that children with special needs, especially children who experience obstacles in the academic field, are divided into three types, which is intellectual disability, learning disability, and slow learner.

**Keywords:** Identification, Children with Special Needs, Inclusive Schools

### **INTRODUCTION**

The provision of education implemented by inclusive schools requires knowledge, understanding, and commitment as a basis for the implementation and development of better environmental-based services. The implementation of inclusive education has been supported by the existence of Undang-Undang No. 20 tahun 2003, concerning the National Education System, which in article 32 describes Special Education and Special Service Education. The implementation of these rules is then explained in Permendiknas No. 70 tahun 2009, concerning Inclusive Education, namely by providing opportunities or opportunities for children with special needs to obtain an education at the nearest regular school. Inclusiveness paradigm in education, which is then formulated into an educational unit (Rofiah, 2015). The task of understanding and serving children with special needs is not only the responsibility of special supervising teachers, but also all teachers who work in inclusive schools. In line with the opinion (Berlinda & Naryoso, 2018), Special Education Teacher collaborate with classroom teachers in determining the Minimum Learning Mastery Standard limits, discussions in analyzing children's assessments, proper handling methods, and discussing the division of tasks in class.

One of the services provided to students and prospective students with special needs is identified. Identification is the process of gathering information, whether a child is a child with special needs or not and whether the child has deviations (physical, academic, social, emotional, and/or neurological sensory) in his growth/development compared to other children his age (Rapisa, 2018). Based on this definition

of identification, identification is one proof of the professional competence that teachers in inclusive schools must possess. The reason that the ability to identify is part of professional competence is that current public schools are being prepared to become providers of inclusive education. However, it can be said that the ability to identify is still not fully mastered by teachers who work in inclusive schools.

In line with the opinion (Hapsari, 2015) which states that the sensitivity of teachers and schools is very much needed to be able to recognize the characteristics and characteristics of children with special needs, so that teachers can make early detection of the abilities, barriers, and special needs of children with special needs. Providing identification skills of these teachers includes networking; screening (classification) of the types of children with special needs which later can be taken into consideration in lesson planning (Hermanto, 2008). This is the best intervention step in learning, to maximize every talent and ability that are owned, and support to achieve a better quality of life.

Research result (Latifa, 2017) shows that the seven aspects of development affect the learning process in the classroom, including physical, cognitive, social-emotional, moral, religious, artistic, and language aspects. Therefore, it is important for teachers to monitor aspects of child development so that they can find out the problems and obstacles experienced by children. Often encountered cases of children who do not show school achievement generally get labeled as lazy or not smart (Widyorini & Van Tiel, 2017), even though there is a possibility that children who get this label are not able to show the same achievement as their classmates because they have problems or obstacles for example academic barriers.

The terms children with academic disabilities, such as mental retardation, specific learning difficulties, and slow learners, are often confused if the identifying party lacks an understanding of these terms. Teachers sometimes cannot recognize these three conditions because children with learning disabilities, intellectual barriers, and slow learners do not show significant physical differences with children who do not experience learning difficulties (Ghufron & Risnawita, 2015). So if the teacher's mistake in identifying children with academic obstacles, whether they have been accepted as students at school or not, it can result in the child getting an incorrect label or stamp and wrong handling so that the child's learning performance does not show progress.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that knowledge about identification is an important thing that teachers must have to have the ability and accuracy in analyzing the results of identification. Accuracy in the analysis of the identification results will provide proper accessibility in education services for children with special needs in inclusive schools

## **METHOD**

The literature review is literature search and research by reading various books, journals, and other publications related to research topics, to produce a single article on a particular topic or issue. (Marzali, 2017). This study is a literature review with a descriptive qualitative research with library research that attempts to describe characteristics of children with academic barriers for the development of an instrument for identifying children with academic barriers based on android applications in inclusive schools. In this literature review research the author uses various written sources such as articles, journals, and documents that are relevant to the study in this study. This study focuses on the characteristics of children with academic barriers

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

The ability to identify children with special needs of an elementary school teacher is very important. This identification ability is still simple, it is only limited to seeing visible physical symptoms. With the identification of children with special needs, it can certainly help teachers. Instruments can be compiled by the teacher concerned if they already have insight or just use existing instruments and just need to adjust their use. This instrument is structured by including a list of questions or statements containing the symptoms that appear in children for each type of disorder. With the help of observation instruments, an elementary school teacher can identify candidates or students.

Identification is finding or identifying. After identification, a person's condition can be identified, whether he is experiencing abnormalities or deviations. The teacher will classify or identify as in the group: whether to include children with mental retardation, learning disabilities, and slow learners. By knowing or identifying the child at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher will certainly be better at providing further services, especially if the child is categorized as a child with special needs.

The identification activity is still simple and the aim is more emphasis on finding roughly whether a child is a child with special needs or not. As usually identification can be done by people who are close to the child, such as their parents, caregivers, or teachers, then elementary school teachers, in this case, can identify students as learners. As for the next step, namely assessment, it is still possible for the teacher to do so provided that the teacher has adequate abilities and insights.

Identification in everyday life is often referred to as screening and assessment as a screening. In general, the purpose of identification is to collect information or data on whether a child is a child with special needs or not. The results of the identification and assessment will be the basis for the preparation of further learning programs following the circumstances and needs. As stated on the website of the special school guidance directorate that in the framework of inclusive education, the identification of children with special needs is carried out for five purposes, they are: (1) screening, (2) referral, (3) classification, (4) lesson planning, and (5) monitoring of learning progress.

In the process of reviewing literature about children with special needs who specifically experience academic obstacles, there are several types, namely: (1) intellectual disability, (2) learning disabilities, and (3) slow learner.

### *Intellectual Disability*

Children with intellectual disabilities significantly have intelligence below intelligence in general, which an IQ score equal to or lower than 70. Intelligence barriers are below the average child in general, because it will hinder all activities of daily life, such as socializing, communication, and the visible very prominent is his inability to receive academic lessons like children his age. So in general the understanding of intellectual disability is a child with special needs who has intellectual, physical, emotional, and social retardation that requires special treatment in order to develop to maximum ability (Martinus & Kesumawati, 2020).

A person will be called an intellectual disabilities if he has three indicators, namely: (1) Inability to function

intelligence in general or below average, (2) Inability in social/adaptive behavior, and (3) Barriers to social/adaptive behavior occur at the age of development, namely until with 18 years of age. The level of a person's intelligence is measured through an intelligence test whose results are called IQ (Intelligence Quotient). Based on the AAMD (American Association on Mental Deficiency) quoted from (Mangunsong, F. (2009). The level of ordinary intelligence is grouped into levels, namely (1) Mild mental retardation has an IQ of 70-55, (2) Moderate intellectual disability has an IQ of 55-40, (3) severe mental retardation has an IQ of 40-25.

Based on research (Shree & Shukla, 2016) intellectual disabilities deficits in adaptive behavior or daily life skills (eating, dressing, communicating, participating in group activities). People with intellectual disabilities learn slowly and have difficulty with abstract concepts. Low intellectual functioning ability and accompanied by the development of low adaptive behavior will have an impact on the daily life of mentally retarded children. In general, the problems that are usually faced by them are learning problems, problems with adjusting to the environment, problems with speech and language disorders, and personality problems.

The following will describe the characteristics of intellectual disabilities children, according to (Damastuti, 2020) based on the level of retardation:

#### *Mild Intellectual Disabilities*

Mild intellectual disabilities children are still able to learn to read, write, and simply count. However, at the age of 16 years or more, they are only able to learn the material with a level of difficulty equivalent to grades 3 and 5 SD. Reach maturity to learn to read at the age of 9 and 12 years, however, this depends on the severity and severity of the disorder. Limited in vocabulary, but in certain situations mastery of the language is adequate. Be able to socialize and learn jobs that require few skills.

#### *Moderate mental retardation*

Mild intellectual disabilities, children in the academic aspect are barely able to understand learning. Besides, language development is more limited than mildly intellectual disabilities children, they only communicating with a few words. They can read and write, such as their names, addresses, names of their parents, and so on. They recognize numbers without understanding. However, they still have the potential to take care of themselves. They can be trained to do something regularly, can be trained to socialize, participate in activities and respect the property rights of others. To some extent they always need the supervision, maintenance, and assistance of others. But they can distinguish between dangerous and not danger.

After adults, their intelligence is not more than normal children aged 6 years.

#### *Severe and Profound intellectual disabilities*

Children with severe and profound intellectual disabilities throughout their life will always depend on the help and assistance of others. They cannot take care of themselves (eating, dressing, going to the toilet, etc. must be helped). They cannot distinguish between danger or not. He also cannot speak, even if he is speaking, he is only able to say simple words or signs. His intelligence, even though he reaches adulthood, is like a normal child with a maximum age of 4 years. To maintain physical stability and health, they need to be given useful activities, such as sanding, moving objects, filling sacks with rice until they are full.

#### *Learning Disabilities*

Someone who is learning barriers or difficulties can of course result in failure to achieve maximum achievement. They will tend to find it difficult to learn science and skills. Difficulty learning to obey (Yeni, 2015) can be interpreted as a child's inability to complete the tasks given by the teacher. Learning disabilities are a variety of disorders in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and arithmetic due to the individual's own internal factors, namely minimal brain dysfunction (Suryani, 2010).

Learning disabilities are not caused by external factors in the form of environmental, social, cultural, learning facilities, and others. Unlike physical disabilities, learning disabilities are not obvious and are often called "hidden handicaps". Sometimes this difficulty is not realized by parents and teachers, as a result, children who have learning disabilities are often identified as underachievers, lazy, or strange. But often children with learning disabilities are considered to have a level of intelligence below average or commonly referred to as mental retardation. Even though it is not always experienced by children with low intelligence levels.

Learning disabilities cannot be equated with mental retardation (mental retardation), emotional impairment, hearing loss, visual impairment, or cultural and social poverty (Abdurrahman, 2010). Learning disabilities are conditions when a person has difficulty learning knowledge and skills so that they are unable to complete the assigned tasks, this condition is caused by neurological dysfunction or is linked to suspected neurological dysfunction. According to the opinion of (Cavendish, 2013) individuals with learning disabilities have at least one of the characteristics, including (1) Reading words are inaccurate or slow, (2) Difficulty understanding the meaning of what is read, (3) Poor spelling (for example, can add, remove, or replace vowels or consonants ), (4) Poor writing skills, (5) Difficulty remembering numbers, (6) Inaccurate

or slow arithmetic calculations, (7) Ineffective or inaccurate mathematical reasoning, (8) Avoiding activities that require reading, spelling, write, or count.

Broadly speaking, learning disabilities can be classified into two groups, (1) learning disabilities related to development. Development-related learning disabilities include motor and perceptual disorders, disabilities in learning language and communication, and learning disabilities in adapting social behavior. (2) Academic learning disabilities. Academic learning disabilities point to failures in achieving academic achievement in accordance with the expected capacity. These failures include mastery of skills in reading, writing, and/or mathematics.

Academic learning disabilities can be recognized by teachers or parents when children fail to display one or more academic abilities. Therefore, the importance of a teacher's ability to identify the abilities of their students. The explanation regarding difficulties in reading, writing, and/or mathematics is briefly as follows:

#### *Reading Disability/ Dyslexia*

Difficulty learning to read is often referred to as dyslexia. The term dyslexia is widely used in medicine and is associated with neurophysiology dysfunction. Dyslexia is a learning disorder, in which a person has difficulty reading, writing, or spelling (Irdamurni, Kasiyatil, Zulmiyetri, & Taufan, 2018). They also tend to have difficulty identifying how spoken words should be converted into letters and sentences, and vice versa.

Generally, reading disabilities has four groups of characteristics, namely: (1) reading habits, (2) mistakenly recognizing words, (3) misunderstanding, (4) various symptoms. Children who have difficulty learning to read often show unusual reading habits, such as frowning, anxiety, increased rhythm, biting their lips, refusing when asked to read can be indicated by crying or trying to fight the teacher.

#### *Writing Disability/ Dysgraphia*

The difficulty of writing by hand does not only cause problems for the child, but also for the teacher. The writing is unclear, neither the child nor the teacher can read the writing. Difficulty learning to write is usually called dysgraphia. Dysgraphia refers to the inability to remember how to make mathematical letters or symbols. Generally known at the primary school level, namely when learning to read and write at the beginning. According to Santrock JohnW quoted from (Suhartono, 2016) dysgraphia is characterized by learning disabilities that affect the writing ability shown by children in spelling, poor vocabulary, difficulty expressing thoughts to write on paper.

Difficulty learning to write is often related to the way the child holds a pencil. According to (Abdurrahman, 2010) There are four kinds of ways to

hold a pencil that are typical for children with difficulty learning to write which can be an indication that the child is having difficulty learning to write, namely (1) the angle of the pencil is too big, (2) the angle of the pencil is too small, (3) grips the pencil (like punching), (4) hooking a pencil in hand or dragging.

#### *Math/arithmetic difficulties/ Dyscalculia*

Difficulty learning mathematics is also known as dyscalculia. The term dyscalculia has a medical implication, which sees a link with central nervous system disorders. Dyscalculia is limited as a form of learning disability characterized by chaos in counting. Children with dyscalculia also usually camp in their social perception abilities, are weak in the concept of direction and time and have memory problems (Suharmini, 2005). In line with the opinion (Azhari, 2017) Children with dyscalculia are characterized by the weak use of students' immature or inefficient problem-solving strategies, so that they cannot learn arithmetic well so that their memory cannot remember them smoothly.

Common mistakes made by children with difficulty learning mathematics are that they tend to lack understanding of mathematical symbols, then they do not understand place values, use incorrect calculation processes, are unfamiliar with the concepts of counting, and write numbers that cannot be read.

#### *Slow Learners*

Slow learners or slow learner is someone who has low learning achievement (below the average of children in general) in one or all academic subjects but is not a mentally retarded child (Desiningrum, 2016). IQ test scores indicate a range of scores between 70-90. The slow learners have slower learning abilities than their peers. Students who are slow in the learning process take longer than a group of other students who have the same level of intellectual potential. Usually not only limited academic abilities but also other abilities, including coordination skills (difficulty using stationery, sports, or wearing clothes).

A slow learner in class takes longer to learn than their peers (Hadi, 2016). This is because they need a hard struggle to master what is asked for in the regular class. Not only results in low learning outcomes, but also affects other psychological aspects. As can be seen from the behavioral perspective, the slow learners tend to be quiet and shy, also find it difficult to make friends because they lack self-confidence.

The characteristics of a slow learner are having difficulty on concentrating, forgetting easily because of their weak memory, having social problems that arise from weakness in their intellectual function, and having emotional problems, especially insecurity which can lead to difficulty controlling emotions. It is possible for

slow learners to experience various kinds of obstacles during the learning process.

According to the opinion (Shaw, 2010), slow learners have several characteristics that become obstacles to learning in the classroom, namely: They can understand more easily when information is presented in a concrete manner. The more abstract a teaching concept or technique is, the more difficult it is for them to learn it. They are unable to apply or apply skills, knowledge, and strategies as their peers. They tend to learn what is taught fairly well but have difficulty applying and applying the concepts taught to new situations. They have difficulty in constructing new material cognitively and assimilating incoming information into previously acquired information. They have difficulty with long-term goals and time management. They need additional time to complete academic-related assignments. They often need extra practice and more time on assignments to develop the same level of academic skills as their peers. They tend to be less motivated academically.

## CONCLUSION

The ability to identify children with special needs for an elementary school teacher is very important. Identification is finding or identifying. After identification, a person's condition can be identified, whether he is experiencing abnormalities or deviations. Identification in everyday life is often referred to as screening and assessment as a screening. In general, the purpose of identification is to collect information or data on whether a child is a child with special needs or not. In general, the definition of mental retardation in children with special needs who have obstacles to intelligence which require special treatment so that they can develop to their maximum abilities. A person is said to be mentally retarded if he has three indicators, namely: (1) Impairment of the intelligence function in general or below average, (2) Inability in social/adaptive behavior, and (3) Barriers to social/adaptive behavior occurs at developmental age, namely up to 18 years of age. The level of a person's intelligence is measured through an intelligence test whose results are called IQ (Intelligence Quotient). Failure to achieve maximum performance is not only experienced by mentally retarded children but also children with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities can be interpreted as the inability of children to complete assignments given by the teacher independently. Development-related learning disabilities include motor and perceptual disorders, difficulties in learning language and communication, and learning disabilities in adapting social behavior. Academic learning disabilities point to failures in achieving academic achievement

following the expected capacity. Academic learning disabilities can be recognized by teachers or parents when children fail to display one or more academic abilities. Furthermore, slow learners have slower learning abilities than their peers, so they need a longer learning time than their peers. This is because they need a hard struggle to master what is asked for in the regular class. The characteristics of the slow learners are having difficulty concentrating, forgetting easily because of their weak memory, having social problems that arise from weakness in their intellectual function, and having emotional problems. Especially a sense of inferiority which can lead to difficulty controlling emotions. Teachers' skills are needed in identifying children who experience academic barriers so that the accuracy in the analysis of the identification results will provide proper accessibility in education services for children with special needs in inclusive schools.

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