

KNOWLEDGE OF REGULAR CHILDREN ON SOCIAL INTERACTION OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to determine the degree of regular children's knowledge on social interaction of children with autism found in inclusive school. This research used quantitative descriptive method. The data collected through questionnaire. The subject of this research is 5 regular students from one inclusive private school in Surakarta City. The results of the questionnaire were processed by using a scoring system that has been validated by expert in the form of scale and percentage of knowledge. The conclusion of this study is that 40% of regular children have fair knowledge to the social interaction of children with autism and 60% still have slight knowledge.*

Keywords: *Knowledge of Regular Children, Social Interaction, Children with Autism, Inclusive School*

Introduction

Parents who own children with special needs, especially children with autism, now have several school options to enroll their children in school other than Special School (SLB). One solution that parents can take is to include their children with autism in a public school that also accepts children with special needs, or so-called inclusive schools. Inclusive school is school that consists of both children with special needs and regular children, diversity in culture and language backgrounds, socioeconomic status differences, and various religion (Mangunsong, 2009). *The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture* (2015) stated that inclusive school is an open and learning-friendly education by promoting respect and embracing differences.

There are various kind of children with special needs in inclusive school including children with autism. Marlina (2009) explains: "autism is a term used to describe a kind of pervasive developmental disorder in children". Most children with autism will show some symptoms such as, lack of response to others, experience severe constraints in communicating, and create

strange responses from various aspects of the environment around them, and all of these signs develop in the first 30 months of his/her birth (Widiastuti, 2007).

By including children with autism in inclusive schools, social interaction of children with autism is expected to be established although it is still in minimum level. This is intended to support the development of communication and social interaction between children with autism and regular children or between children with autism and other school residents. A logical consequence of the principle of inclusive education is to notice the rights of every child to receive education that does not discriminate it with disability, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, and ability (Tarmansyah, 2007). Enrolling children with autism into inclusive schools can help these children to be self-directed and to develop their ability to communicate since at inclusive school, they can interact and play with their normally developed peers (Asiyah, 2015). In addition, inclusive school can provide hospitality and acceptance for children with special needs with supervision from special teachers and all residents in inclusive schools (Hermanto, 2010).

However, one of the important problems is that regular children in inclusive schools do not understand the characteristics of children with autism and how they interact with children with autism. In fact, children with autism need interaction with regular children. Interaction is a relationship between individuals with each other. Individuals can influence other individuals or vice versa, in the other words, there is a mutual relationship. The relationship can be between individuals with other individuals, individuals with groups or groups with groups. The general form of social processes is social interaction, whereas the particular form is social activities, and social interaction is a relationship between two or more individuals, in which the behavior affects, change, or improve the behavior of other individuals or otherwise (Mery, 2013).

The characteristics of social interaction on children with autism is that they have low interest to play with their peers, prefer to be alone, and limited eye contact or avoid to gaze (Ormord, 2009). The social interaction skills of children with autism in general is very minimum, such as limited social approach, passive communication, less communicative language, and others (Peeters, 2009).

As stated by Sukinah (2005), children with autism living their own life. People with autism seem to live in their own world and it is believed to be a lifelong condition. These believe has changes as the era emerges and so does the treatment for autism. Qualitative impairments experienced by children with autism in social interaction are: 1. Failure to initiate or respond to social interaction, deficit in eye contact and facial expression, unfocused movement, 2. Difficult in making friends, 3. Low empathy, 4. Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity (Maulana, 2007).

Based on the afore-mentioned opinion, it is concluded that the knowledge of regular students is important to maintain social interaction with students with autism. The knowledge in social interaction is a basic thing regular students in inclusive school should have. Therefore, researchers conduct research on the knowledge of regular children in understanding the social interaction of children with autism in inclusive schools. Beside direct observation, the researcher also created an assessment instrument in the form of questionnaire for regular children about the social interactions of children with autism in inclusive schools.

Research Method

This research used quantitative descriptive method. Quantitative descriptive research is conducted to explain, examine the relationship between variables, test theories and determine generalizations that have predictive value (Dharma, 2008). After obtaining the numerical data gained from the sample population of the study, it was then interpreted or described by using good and correct sentences.

Technique used to collect data in this research was questionnaire. The questionnaire include 3 aspects of Social Interaction, they are: communication, cooperation, and behavior. The instrument was adapted from the meaning of social interaction of children with autism that was developed by Soekanto (2005).

Below is the outline used to develop regular children's knowledge assessment instrument in the preliminary study.

Table 1 - Guidance of knowledge instruments of regular children

Theory	Aspect	Operational Definition	Scope	Technique Chosen
Social interaction is a set of skills that used to interact with each other in everyday life whether within the family, school, or community. (Septyasih, 2014) The forms of social interaction can be in the form of communication, cooperation, and behavior (Soekanto, 2005)	Communication	Ability to have a clear conversation or reciprocal relationship between children with autism and regular children	Knowledge of regular children to the communication of children with autism	Questionnaire
	Cooperation	Ability to make friends and do activities together	Knowledge of regular children in making friends and playing with children with autism	Questionnaire
	Behavior	The ability of children with autism who behave politely and not interfere with regular children	Regular children's knowledge of the autistic children's particular behavior	Questionnaire

Regular knowledge assessment is questionnaire. As shown in Table 2, the questionnaire below has several statements. Fill it with a check mark (√) on the column. One questionnaire is for one regular children.

Table 2 – Questionnaire Items

Aspect	Statement	Score			
		4 (Always)	3 (Sometimes)	2 (Seldom)	1 (Never)
Communication	1. Understand what child with autism said				
	2. Willingness in physical contact with autism				
Cooperation	3. Play with children with autism				
Behavior	4. Discuss with children with autism				
	5. Maintain positive behavior while belong in the same classroom with children with autism				
	6. Shows acceptance when children with autism hurt another child				

Scoring system for above instrument was obtained by summing up the score of every aspects from the questionnaire filled by regular students. Students' final score was concluded based on the following formula: Total score x 4. The percentage of final score then classified into interval scale as follows:

Table 3 – Interval Scale

Final score	Classification
82 - 96	Good knowledge
67 - 81	Fair knowledge
52 - 66	Slight knowledge
<51	Poor knowledge

The subject included in this research is 5 regular students from an elementary inclusive school in Surakarta City, each subjects were chosen from 1st to 5th grade.

Table 4– Research Subjects

No	Initial of regular children	Asal Sekolah
1	LH	SD Al Firdaus Surakarta
2	RY	SD Al Firdaus Surakarta
3	KZ	SD Al Firdaus Surakarta
4	DD	SD Al Firdaus Surakarta
5	TR	SD Al Firdaus Surakarta

Result and Discussion

The questionnaire for regular children's knowledge was filled by 5 regular children from inclusive schools in Surakarta. Results of the questionnaire was measured by 3 raters with high understanding of social interaction of children with autism. The average results by 3 raters is as follows.

Table 5 - Average Result of Questionnaire

No	Initial of regular children	Total Score	Final Score Total Score x 4
1	LH	16	64
2	RY	16	64
3	KZ	16	64
4	DD	20	80
5	TR	20	80

The data above shows that there are only 2 regular children with score more than 66 and 3 others have score below 66. If we use the percentage of regular child knowledge, it can be concluded that: $\frac{\text{regular children with score} < 66}{\text{total regular children}} \times 100\%$,

Then $\frac{3}{5} \times 100\% = 60\%$. It means that 60% of regular children have slight knowledge of the social interactions of children with autism, while 40% have fair knowledge of the social interactions of children with autism in inclusive schools.

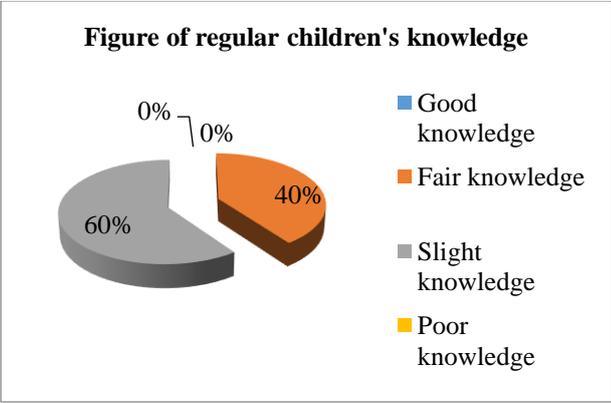


Figure 1
Regular Children's Knowledge

Knowledge of attitudes arising from regular children generates from what they saw and what they felt to the limitations of children with autism physically, socially-emotionally and intelligently. In this case, a regular child can show a positive attitude as well as a negative attitude. Positive attitudes that exist in regular children tend to accept the presence of children with autism. Therefore, when children with autism have difficulty, regular children will always be willing to help and care about the need of children with autism. A regular children's negative attitude toward a child with autism is shown when regular children reject and cannot accept children with autism due to the inability to behave, communicate, and cooperate normally. The negative attitudes of regular children allow children with autism to get bullying either physically, verbally, body or group gestures (Uswatun, 2015).

Conclusion and Suggestion

The conclusion is that there are 40% of regular children who fair knowledge about the social interaction of children with autism while 60% other slight knowledge about the social interaction of children with autism in inclusive schools. There are several aspects that affect the knowledge of regular children. The aspects are the need knowledge of regular children about the physical, social, and emotional condition of children with autism and the tendency to follow normal children his age.

There are some suggestions if that researchers can recommend. The first one is that inclusive schools are expected to provide counseling and knowledge of regular children in inclusive schools about the existence of children with special needs, especially children with autism. Second is recommend counseling and guidebooks for regular children to knowledge interaction with children with special needs, especially children with autism, thus reducing the occurrence of bullying from regular children to children with autism.

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