

## HOW STUDENTS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES INTERACT WITH PEERS AT SLB NEGERI SURAKARTA

Revanka Yoga Prakosa\*, Muhammad Khoirul Hadi, Silas Bayu Frans Gennova, Suparmi

[revanka2960@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:revanka2960@student.uns.ac.id)\*, [muhkhoirulh23@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:muhkhoirulh23@student.uns.ac.id), [sempptrevera@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:sempptrevera@student.uns.ac.id),  
[suparmip@gmail.com](mailto:suparmip@gmail.com)

### *Abstract*

*Children with multiple disabilities have more than two kinds of restrictions that make it hard for them to control themselves and communicate in their surroundings. The objective of this study is to determine how children with multiple disabilities interact with their classmates in school. Descriptive qualitative research with a purpose sampling technique for data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation is used. The researcher himself is the research instrument. Students from SLB Negeri 1 Surakarta were the subjects of the research, with sources from teachers, principals, and deputy school coconuts. Data were tested for validity using triangulation flow of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study showed that there were 2 children with multiple disabilities out of 244 students. 1) blind and emotional and behavioral disorder 2) deaf and mental reterdation. The way of communicating with children with multiple disabilities will adjust to their classification, therefore they often behave differently than they should, due to physical and motor developmental barriers*

**Keywords:** Education, Children with Multiple Disabilities, Social Interaction

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Constitution Number 8 Year 2016 Article 10 states that students with special needs are entitled to quality education services in all types, channels, and levels of education. Inclusive education for children with special needs in Indonesia can be obtained at Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB). In special schools, the shortcomings of students do not become an obstacle. In accordance with the rights of all children, all children must receive education. Inclusive education offers a curriculum that is appropriate to the age and needs of each student no matter what the circumstances are like other children. Sekolah Luar Biasa is a school specifically intended for children with special needs with the aim of providing opportunities for children to obtain education (Pramartha, 2015). Special schools provide education that suits children with special needs such as deafness, blindness, disability, delay in thinking, difficulty in communicating, and many more.

The role of special education teachers is a very important factor in the success of learning in inclusive schools. The presence of special education teachers is important because ordinary teachers experience many difficulties when dealing with children with special needs, where they require more love, attention, and energy than other friends. Therefore, ordinary teachers need special education assistance in handling the learning of children with special needs in their classrooms. Special education teachers have a special education background or have received training in special education and are assigned to inclusive schools. (Amalia, 2021).

In Indonesia, there are many special schools, one of which is located in the city of Surakarta, namely Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri 1 Surakarta (SLBN 1 Surakarta). Surakarta State Special School has the vision to realize human resources for children with special needs who excel and can compete in the global world by having independent, honest, and creative characters. With the mission 1) Providing opportunities for all children with special needs (ABK) to obtain special education (PLB) in accordance with their potential and basic abilities. 2) Forming graduates who have character and are able to develop themselves, so that they have adequate faith, knowledge, and skills in entering social life. 3) Expanding the network in an effort to socialize special education.

Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri 1 Surakarta accommodates all students with special needs. In accordance with the legal basis of inclusive education, all children have the right to education. The special needs of each student must be different, so it will be very complicated to apply learning to children with disabilities. When they attend school and receive education, of course, there are many differences from other normal students. Starting from the learning experience, how to learn, to how to interact with peers while at school.

Children with multiple disorders are children who have two or more different disorders such as physical, emotional, mental problems, or a combination of several problems, so they require more and even special educational treatment. How to communicate with children with multiple disorders requires extra and not easy ways depending on the disorder experienced, for example, if the child has deafness and speech impairment then how to communicate with sign language and a gradual approach. Based on some of these research results, we can find out what factors encourage children with multiple disabilities to interact with their peers in the social environment. As well as how children with disabilities interact with their peers in their environment. In addition, the purpose of this research is to find out how students with hearing impairments interact with peers at SLB Negeri Surakarta.

## **METHODS**

This research was conducted at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri 1 Surakarta using qualitative methods. Data collection techniques with data triangulation are used for data validity, and researchers are data collection tools. Data were collected through documentation, observation, and interviews with research subjects of students of Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB) Negeri 1 Surakarta. The data collection technique:

2. Documentation, is carried out by collecting all information about the object of research such as reports or archives of a research object.

- 3. Observation, this technique is carried out by coming and directly observing the objects, places, and phenomena to be studied.
- 4. Interviews are conducted by taking data from direct interaction and two-way communication or more between researchers and interviewees.

The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling technique, namely by selecting several data sources from sources who understand the problem to be studied in detail, such as teachers, principals, and homeroom teachers. The analysis in this research is inductive and based on the data obtained. The evaluation process consists of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. (Miles dan Huberman, 1992).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri 1 Surakarta (SLBN 1 Surakarta) is a school for children with special needs that has the status of a public school, located on Jalan Cocak X, Mangkubumen Village, Banjarsari District, Surakarta City. SLB Negeri Surakarta has 4 levels of education, namely TKLB, SDLB, SMPLB, SMALB and Vocational. The results of observations and interviews obtained data from students of SLB N 1 Surakarta, Central Java as follows:

Table 1.1. number of special education students

Level	Amount
Kindergarten and Primary School	100
Middle School	69
High School & Vocational	55
Total	224

Source: SLB Negeri Surakarta

SLB Negeri 1 Surakarta has differences with schools in general ranging from building design, facilities, and talent interest spaces tailored to the needs of its students. Of the 244 students multiple children are classified as 1.) blind and Emotional and behavioral disorders 2) deaf and mental reterdation as described in the following table.

Table 2.1. Number of studens wth multiple disabilities

<b>Level</b>	<b>Students with multiple disabilities</b>	<b>Number of student</b>
<b>Kindergarten and Primary School</b>	1	1001
<b>Junior High School</b>	0	69
<b>senior high school/vocational school</b>	1	55
<b>Amount</b>	2	224

Source: SLB Negeri Surakarta

On March 1, 2024, we conducted observations related to Inclusive Education at SLBN Surakarta, which has 4 levels, namely kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, high school in the same place. Special Schools have many differences compared to schools in general. Starting from the design of the school building, the facilities available, to the layout of the classroom. The building of SLB Negeri Surakarta does not have many stairs, because there are children with special needs who cannot climb stairs. This special school also only has two gates and no other exits. This is so that students do not easily leave the school.

The learning system here is almost the same as other schools in general, here has also implemented P5, so students can also express themselves through the projects they make. Even here there are also activities other than learning like in other schools, in the form of morning exercises and community service. When we made observations, it happened that healthy Friday activities were being carried out in the form of morning exercises. The students seemed enthusiastic about participating in morning exercises. The subjects obtained are also the same as in other schools, but in this special school there is a special program. The special program applied here is an achievement that children with special needs must be able to have after studying here. The special program here is divided based on the disability category of students.

**Specialization at SLB Negeri Surakarta:**

- The visually impaired have special programs for mobility orientation, communication, and braille letters.
- The hearing impaired have a special program BKPBI (Sound and Rhythm Communication)
- Mental reterdation has a special program for self-help (ADL)
- Physical Disability has a special self-development and movement program
- Autism has a special program PIKP (Interaction and Behavior Development Program)

224 students with special needs are studying at SLBN Surakarta. One elementary school student with multiple disabilities, namely blind and emotional and behavioral disorders, and one junior high school student with multiple disabilities, namely deaf and mentally retarded. We observed how one of them interacted, with the blind and the deaf. When he traveled or moved, he always had to be accompanied. We also found that when he was alone in class, he kept shouting and getting angry when there was no one in the room. When we observed a student with multiple disabilities who was at the senior high school level, he was eating. We observed from outside the classroom and saw that he was eating alone, we tried to attract his attention by making a sound, but he did not respond and did not care about the sound. As we walked to the door of the classroom where he was eating, he began to respond to us with a gesture of greeting.

Table 3.1. Number of students with multiple disabilities by level in SLBN Surakarta

Level	students with multiple disabilities	Number of Studens
Kindergarten/Primary School	1	100
Junior High School	0	69
High School/Vocational	1	55
Amount	2	224

Source: SLB Negeri Surakarta

## **Discussion**

The research was conducted out of curiosity about how children with special needs communicate, especially those with multiple disabilities. In addition, this research was also conducted to find out what difficulties there are when people with disabilities communicate with each other. This research was conducted based on the purpose of this research, which is to find out how students with multiple disabilities interact with peers at SLB Negeri Surakarta.

### **1. Characteristics of children with disabilities**

#### **a. Children with Multiple Disabilities**

Multiple impairments is a term for children who have more than two kinds of limitations, both mentally and physically (Alawia, 2014). Children with multiple disabilities have similar characteristics such as difficulties in communication and social interaction, delays in cognitive, psychomotor and physical development, often behaving strangely and aimlessly, inability to meet their basic needs, tendency to forget acquired skills and difficulties in forming perceptions and difficulties in understanding and responding to a stimulus. So the characteristics of multiple disabilities cannot be seen only physically, such as children who have speech and hearing impairments will look like normal people in general, but children who have multiple disabilities and blindness will look different from people in general because of striking physical differences. Multiple disabilities are divided into several types that are interconnected. Some types of multiple impairments are: blind - speech impairment, deaf - speech impairment, blind - deafness, blind - disabled, blind - mental retardation, blind - emotional and behavioral disorders, and others. One interesting type of dual disability is deaf - speech impaired. This type of dual disability is interesting because the interaction process is fairly unique. This happens because this type of dual disability cannot hear optimally and cannot express what they want to convey verbally properly. So, to interact, they need to use sign language, where sign language is a non-verbal language in the form of structured finger gestures and has a meaning just like the letters of the alphabet. After identifying by interacting directly, the results of observations where 2 children with multiple disabilities were found out of 244 SLB N SURAKARTA students who were classified: 1. visually impaired and emotional and behavioral disorders 2. deaf and Mental retardation.

## **Visual Impairment**

According to Soemantri (2007), blindness is not reserved for those who are blind, but includes the term blindness also includes those who still have the ability to see but are limited and less to be utilized in the interests of daily life, especially in learning. Children who have emotional and

behavioral disorders obstacles will be difficult or even unable to see clearly, making it difficult for them to communicate and require extra help in carrying out learning activities. How to communicate with blind children can be through stimulation/touch, hearing, and speech, they will be comfortable when communication is done in two directions and clearly.

### **Emotional and behavioral disorders**

emotional and behavioral disorders is a term for children who have limitations in the form of behavioral disorders or children who experience emotional and behavioral disorders/obstacles so that they do not / do not adjust well in all their environments (Efendi 2008). Children who have mental disorders will be difficult or even unable to see clearly, making it difficult for them to communicate and require extra help in carrying out learning activities. Children who have emotional and behavioral disorder obstacles have obstacles in controlling emotions, behavior, and adjusting to the surrounding environment.

### **Hearing Impairment**

Tin Suharmini argues that hearing impairment is a condition in which a person has impairment or damage to their hearing so that they cannot hear various sounds or other signals through their hearing. (Laila, 2013: 10). Deaf children need hearing aid to optimize their sense of hearing, making it easier to communicate with their interlocutors.

### **Mental reterdation**

Rachmayana, D. (2016) says that mental reterdation is a condition that appears before the age of 18 and has a general intelligence function that is less than average. Mental reterdation children have below-average intellectual and cognitive abilities so communication requires clarity and repetition of words, because they tend to forget easily or have short memories.

#### **b. Interaction Ability**

The lack of vision and ability to control emotions in elementary school students at SLBN Surakarta makes the child an individual who must continue to be accompanied when he wants to move places. During the researcher's observation, the child who was at the elementary school level had experienced a disturbance where the child became emotional when he was alone in the classroom. The form of social interaction between students with multiple disabilities and normal students can be seen in every activity carried out by the students. The blind and emotional and behavioral disorder student is never alone, he always does every activity together with normal students. However, if the blind student is

left alone he will tantrum as well as the blind and emotional and behavioral disorder students at SLB Negeri 1 Surakarta.

The shortcomings experienced are not an obstacle for them to interact with the surrounding environment. Environmental factors and surrounding peers who are kind and do not differentiate from other normal students will certainly change the paradigm of children who have limitations to still feel accepted in society. According to Meadow (Budiyanto, 2018) states that the social development of children in the surrounding environment has a big influence on a person. Another way students with special needs communicate is by using non-verbal language. Of course, this non-verbal language will be very useful when meeting with children who have limited speech. The use of non-verbal language such as with fingerspelling media will certainly make it very easy. Sometimes children with speech impairment try to say something but cannot be understood by others and vice versa, children with speech impairment cannot understand what is said by others.

#### c. Learning process for children with disabilities

Based on the results of observations, researchers observed at a school level at SLBN 1 Surakarta where students were gathered in a small field and lined up to take part in learning activities outside the classroom. Children with special needs are seen to be well organized and do not resist when given orders. However, some are naughty but once warned they immediately return to the correct starting position. The learning process did not occur during our observation, but was replaced by morning exercises together. Morning exercises with teachers and staff showed us that children with special needs behave like normal children in general. Children with special needs who take part in the gymnastics, look at a significant difference. Because there are children with special needs who are very excited about gymnastics, so they try to be an instructor in front of directing other friends. However, there are also those who still look shy in moving their limbs. Some are just silent, some do gymnastic movements like dance movements.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Seeing from the results of observations at SLBN Surakarta there are 2 children with multiple disorders out of 244 students who are classified as blind and emotional and behavioral disorders as well as deaf and mental retardation. Children with multiple disabilities need special attention in terms of education and social interaction so that they need proper and complete facilities to facilitate education and social interaction. SLBN Surakarta is a special school that has provided a variety of very complete facilities so that children with multiple disabilities will feel free in this regard. Based on observations and interviews, it was found that students with multiple disabilities, namely students



classified as blind-emotional and behavioral disorder and deaf-mental disorder, have ways of communicating and interacting that are strongly influenced by their physical and mental conditions. The social interaction of students with multiple disabilities is different from other students, depending on the type of disorder they experience. They often require special assistance, especially when in social settings, such as in class or in school activities. The use of non-verbal communication and support from peers and teachers are very helpful in interacting with them.

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