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Self-Esteem Problem on Slow Learners Students and Strategies to Solve it in Inclusive Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the problems related to the self-esteem of slow learners in inclusive schools and to find problem-solving strategies related to the self-esteem of slow learners in inclusive schools. This qualitative case study was conducted in four inclusive junior high schools in Western Indonesia (Java) with 13 participants (nine girls and four boys) who are slow learners from various classes and grades. Several semi-structured interviews collected empirical data for four months (from August to November 2021). Triangulation is used to test the validity of the data. The method of data analysis uses data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The self-esteem problem in slow learner children makes it difficult for them to get recognition, respect, care, attention, and affection from others, difficulty to comply with behavior that is not allowed, and have low abilities. for success get achievements, so they feel they do not have much to be proud of and have few excellent qualities. They also tend to think of themselves as failures. The proper intervention to increase the self-esteem of slow learner children is by using play therapy and wayang media modeling.

Keywords: self esteem, slow learners, strategy, play therapy, wayang puppet

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education contradicts the concept and practice of special education (McBrayer & Wong, 2013). Children with special needs are expected to have an excellent social adjustment when attending inclusive schools (Tunde, 2010). Inclusive schools will run as expected if the school's partners are cooperative. The principal must be able to participate in facilitating the practice of inclusive education and face obstacles that may occur (McBrayer & Wong, 2013). Lack of readiness from teachers, school management, curriculum, and infrastructure can make it difficult for normal children to accept the existence of children with special needs (Bendová & Fialová, 2015). One type of child with special needs is a slow learner. Slow learner children have one striking characteristic: they have difficulty understanding school subjects, especially the abstract ones (Yekta et al., 2011).

Slow learner children have lower than average thinking ability than their peers, usually have an IQ score between 70-90, poor memory, impaired concentration, and difficulty finding and combining words, so they cannot express ideas (Chauhan, 2011). These various characteristics make slow learner children have low learning achievement. Students should read and count at junior high school age, but it is different from slow learner children. Slow learner children are very aware of their weaknesses, so they often compare themselves with normal children (Juliana, 2021). This situation causes slow learner children to have low self-esteem due to negative self-perceptions, which will interfere with learning and cause anti-social behavior (Castle, 1994). Having low self-esteem will cause a risk of psychological disorders. A negative self-image can be a result of the lack of social feedback. Low self-esteem causes negative thoughts that constantly think other people will not like them.

Based on research conducted by El-Daw & Hammoud (2015), 73% of self-esteem can reduce a sense of students' learning disability, and 67.5% affect social skills. Another research (Ntshangase et al., 2008) states that slow learners' self-esteem is low because they experience significant difficulties in inclusive schools, both in academic achievement and peer acceptance. The results of the research by Wibowo and Nurlaila (2017) stated that getting negative stigma from their friends was responded to with negative effect/negative feelings in inclusive schools with an estimate of 0.285, CR = 2.755, p < 0.01), which means that it has a very significant influence on the Self-esteem variable. In research conducted by Candra & Asep (2018), 19.1% of students

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experience low self-esteem in special schools, while according to Candra Pratiwi's research (2015), children with special needs in inclusive schools have low self-esteem due to not getting acceptance from people around them. Based on the research results above, it shows that the self-esteem level of slow learner children in inclusive schools is lower than in special schools.

The phenomenon that occurs in Magetan shows that slow learner children in inclusive schools are often left behind by their regular peers because they take a longer time to understand the material, which will hinder the learning process. The observations made on ten slow learner children showed that three out of ten children stated that they are often ostracized and labeled as stupid and did not get any care from friends. In comparison, two children have difficulty expressing opinions during teaching and learning activities, and three children are always late in collecting assignments given by the teacher. It is in accordance with research conducted by Nambiar et al., (2020) and Davies et al., (2021), which stated that slow learner children experience harassment, intimidation, discrimination, and social exclusion problems in inclusive schools. Research by Escobar (2021) and Sansour & Bernhard (2018) show that slow learners also feel rejection, bullying or neglect, and lack of affection. Meanwhile, research conducted by Ru'iya et al., (2020) and Kasongole & Muzata (2020) shows that slow learner children also have communication problems and poor speaking skills.

According to (Borah, 2013), the strategies that have been carried out to help slow learners' self-esteem problems in inclusive schools are minimizing problems in learning, creating an interesting learning environment to increase attention, making group of students, allowing more break time, giving easy assignments, repeating the study material in various forms, making learning agreement, giving more assignments directly, asking students do their assignment by themselves, and minimizing competition among students. Meanwhile, according to (Goleniowska, 2014), the right strategy for self-esteem problems is building acceptance, creating comfortable relationships, being together, showing a positive outlook, giving praise often, giving positive models, being willing to take risks, and teaching good social skills. Based on the above conditions, the formulation of the research problem is (1) how are the problems related to the self-esteem of slow learners in inclusive schools. This research aims to describe problems related to the self-esteem of slow learners in inclusive schools and find problem-solving strategies related to the self-esteem of slow learners in inclusive schools.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is a case study conducted in four inclusive junior high schools in western Indonesia (Java). Information about these four schools was obtained from the East Java Education Office, where the schools implemented inclusive schools well. These schools meet the standards of inclusive schools in terms of implementing a curriculum that suits the different needs of students. One of them is a slow learner student. After visiting and meeting the principal, the researcher was finally introduced to thirteen students (nine girls and four boys) who are slow learners from various grades and classes. Several semi-structured interviews collected empirical data for four months (from August to November 2021). The interview guide consists of questions about self-esteem, such as acceptance of others for their presence, concern from others, compliance with regulations, and competencies possessed. Each student is assigned a code to maintain participant anonymity, S1 for Student #1, S2 for Student #2, etc.

Grade 7 8 9 Aspect **S4 S9 S7 S5 S12** S13 **S3 S6 S8 S10** S1S2**S11** 13 14 13 13 13 14 14 14 14 15 16 16 15 Age P P P P P P P P P L L Gender L L 74 75 IQ Score 65 70 59 89 64 74 64 63 80 85 84

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

All the interviews used the Indonesian language with accompanying gestures to get more in-depth information about problems related to the self-esteem of slow learners. Each interview was conducted for approximately 30 minutes. All interviews were recorded in audio recordings so the data could be played back many times.

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Triangulation is used to test the validity of the data. The data analysis used data reduction, presentation, and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This research has passed ethics by getting assignments from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education with the number 0714/N/FKIP/UNIPMA/2021.

3. RESULT

This research is conducted to examine the self-esteem of slow learners in inclusive schools in Indonesia. Based on the data from structured interviews, two main findings answer the research questions, namely (1) the self-esteem problem on slow learners in inclusive schools; and (2) problem-solving strategies related to the self-esteem problem of slow learners in inclusive schools.

Table 2. Data Analysis Sample

| Themes that emerg | ed Data | Data Source |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| the self-esteem p | roblem on My friends do | o not appreciate me in Semi-structured interviews |
| slow learners in | inclusive class. (power) | . My friends refuse to |
| schools | play with me | |
| | (meaningfulne | ss). |
| problem-solving | strategies I will stay quie | t (strategy). Semi-structured interviews |
| related to the self-esteem of | | |
| slow learners in | inclusive | |
| schools. | | |

4. Findings

a. Self-esteem Problem on Slow learner Students in Inclusive Schools

The first theme that emerged from the interview data was problems regarding self-esteem on slow learner students in inclusive schools. The sub-themes emerged based on the analysis of semi-structured interview data that described self-esteem problems experienced by slow learners in inclusive schools include: (1) acceptance of others for their presence; (2) care received from others; (3) compliance with regulations; and (4) competencies possessed.

1) Acceptance of others to their presence

Power in self-esteem is the recognition and respect received by slow learners from other individuals, usually accepting ideas and opinions submitted. The answer to the question indicates this recognition. *Do you feel there is something different about yourself when compared to friends?*

S1

I don't feel different, I'm the same with other friends (Student#1, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021)

S2

I don't feel like my friends dislike me, just normal (Student #2, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S3

I feel like my friends dislike me because I get different assignments from the teacher, so they refuse to befriend me (Student #3, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S4

I don't know why, but my friends never invite me to play together (Student #4, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S5

No, but they never ask me to play with them (Student #5, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

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I don't think my friends dislike me (Student #6, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S7

I certainly don't feel that my friends dislike me (Student #7, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S8

I think my friends don't dislike me (Student #8, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

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S9

Sometimes I feel ignored and disliked by my friends because I'm quiet in class (Student #9, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S10

No, everyone likes to play with me (Student #10, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S11

I'm similar with everyone else (Student #11, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S12

My friends like me, I feel like that (Student #12, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

S13

No ma'am, I have a lot of friends (Student #13, in-depth interview, 26 August 2021).

Based on the interview data above, it was found that the slow learners disagreed if their presence in the class was considered non-existent and unimportant. They feel the same as the others, although some feel that their presence in class is ignored. Out of thirteen students, only two felt that their friends did not appreciate their existence, one child felt that they sometimes felt left out, and the remaining ten felt that they had power so that their existence was considered the same as the others. This result is contrary to what has been stated by Candra Pratiwi, (2015). Children with special needs, especially the slow learner type, feel that the people around them still respect them. Their existence is still considered the same as other students; they continue to play and learn together without discriminating between smart and less intelligent.

2) Concern received from others

Being meaningful in self-esteem is the care, attention, and affection individuals receive from others. It is a sign of respect and interest from others and a sign of acceptance and popularity. The situation is characterized by warmth, participation, attention, and fondness. This level of significance is expressed by the slow learner's answer to the question "Do you feel that your classmates respect you?"

S1

I don't know why, maybe because I'm slow in doing my assignments so my friends left me behind (Student #1, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

S2

My friends do not appreciate me in class (Student #2, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

S3

Sometimes they invited me to go together to the canteen (Student #3, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021). S4

Yes, my friends appreciate me (Student #4, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).S5

I don't know whether my friends appreciate me or not, but they never asked me to play together (Student #5, indepth interview, 15 September 2021).

S6

Yeah, my friends appreciate me (Student #6, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).S7

Sometimes my friend appreciate me, sometimes they don't, sometimes they just ignore (Student #7, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

S8

My close friends always appreciate me well (Student #8, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

S9

Sometimes I don't feel appreciated because I'm quiet in class (Student #9, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

S10

Only my close friends appreciate me, the rest don't (Student #10, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

S11

Sometimes I feel like I'm not appreciated because I don't talk much in class (Student #11, in-depth interview,

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15 September 2021).

S12

Yes, I'm appreciated by my friends (Student #12, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

S13

Yes, I'm appreciated by my friends (Student #13, in-depth interview, 15 September 2021).

Based on the interview data above, it was found that only four of thirteen slow learner children felt that their friends appreciated them. Four children sometimes felt appreciated and sometimes felt ignored, two children felt that their close friends only appreciated them, and three children felt that their presence was not accepted and not appreciated like regular friends. Thus, the level of care, attention, and affection received by slow learner children from their classmates is low. That is because only four children feel fully appreciated, and the remaining nine do not feel fully appreciated. It does not necessarily mean that someone appreciates them with conditions like close friends. Under the result of Candra & Asep's research (2018), it states that the self-esteem level of children in special schools is low.

3) Moral obedience

Virtue is obedience or following moral and ethical standards. This situation is characterized by the obedience of slow learners to stay away from behaviors that must be avoided and carry out the behaviors allowed or required by morals, ethics, and religion. It is indicated by the answers of slow learner children when asked about the obligation to do the task.

S1

I did. During COVID-19 we don't go to school so we only submit our task, but I don't submit it if no one teaches me (Student #1, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

S2

I did it often (Student #2, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).S3

I did. If I can't do it, I don't submit my assignment (Student #3, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

S4

Oftentimes. I don't submit it if I can't do it (Student #4, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

S5

I did. If I can't do it, I don't submit (Student #5, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

S6

I did. Actually quite often, ma'am (Student #6, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).S7

I did. If I can't do my assignment then I don't submit (Student #7, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

S8

I did, it's quite often (Student #8, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).S9

Yes, often. If I can't do my assignment then I don't submit it (Student #9, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

S10

I did. If I can't do it, I don't submit my assignment (Student #10, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

S1:

I did (Student #11, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).S12

I did it, and often (Student #12, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).S13

I did (Student #13, in-depth interview, 30 September 2021).

Based on the interview data above, it was found that out of thirteen slow learners, all stated that they had and often did things that they should not have done, namely not submitting assignments from the teacher on time. All of the children admitted that they found it challenging to do the work, thus preventing them from submitting the assignments. It was reinforced by the question of whether there was any regret when they were unable to do the tasks given by the teacher, and all the children answered *no*. It means that the level of moral and ethical obedience related to student obligations in slow learner children is low.

4) Competence possessed

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Competence is the ability to achieve something successfully. It is based on individual success in doing various tasks at high levels and different ages. The question indicates this: *Have you ever felt that you have abilities that you can be proud of in front of your friends?*

S1

I don't know. (Student #1, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021).S2

None (Student #2, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021)S3

No (Student #3, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021).S4

I don't know (Student #4, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021).S5

Yes, I can draw (Student #5, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021)S6

I don't have (Student #6, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021).S7

I do. I can play soccer well (Student #7, in-depth interview, 20 October2021).

S8

I don't have any (Student #8, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021).S9

None (Student #9, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021)S10

None (Student #10, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021)S11

No (Student #11, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021)

S12

I can help my dad to repair motorcycles (Student #12, in-depth interview,20 October 2021)

S13

I can do motorcycle repairs (Student #13, in-depth interview, 20 October 2021).

Based on the interview data above, it was found that out of thirteen slow learners, four of them felt they had a special skill to be proud of even though it is not related with the academic field, while the remaining nine felt that they did not have special talents to be proud of.

b. Strategies for Solving Self-esteem Problems on Slow Learners in Inclusive Schools

Based on the literature studies, the second theme has found two strategies to solve the self-esteem problems experienced by slow learners in inclusive schools. The low self-esteem of slow learners makes it difficult for them to get the recognition and respect from others, lack of care, attention, and affection received from others, find it challenging to comply with behaviors that are not allowed, and less competent, so it is difficult for them to get an achievement. Therefore, they feel they do not have many things to be proud of and have a few good qualities. They also tend to think of themselves as a failure. These problems must be overcome, one of which is by intervening (Fajriah & Samsudi, 2021). The following are some of the research results related to interventions carried out on slow learner children.

Simon et al., (2008) stated that wayang does not function as a teacher but is considered a friend. Wayang is considered the least knowledgeable individual, so slow learner children who think they are not confident become interested in expressing their ideas. The children are more comfortable talking to the wayang that could not do much. It can ultimately improve interaction and communication in the classroom. The same thing was also expressed by Norwich et al., (2021). His research also reported that the use of wayang media could increase students' self-confidence. Wayang is considered equal to them than their classmates and even their teachers. It is easier for slow learners to talk to the wayang.

The use of puppets in early childhood has effectively created communication, increased engagement, and changed attitudes (Remer & Tzuriel, 2015). Puppets are used in the discussion process in class. When puppets represent characters and experiences for discussion, children boldly add their examples and experiences. The study results also state that *wayang* can act as a model that teaches how to ask and answer questions with explanations. Puppets can help children relax and ultimately create a fun time. It is also consistent with the result of Çağanağa's (2015) research which states that *wayang* can help develop communicative skills, especially because children feel more relaxed when they talk to puppets than to a teacher.

Maharani (2016) compared *wayang* and images media in teaching English speaking. The finding reveals that using *wayang* is more effective than using pictures in teaching speaking because *wayang* can relax the learning atmosphere.

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Puppets can also attract and inspire children, thereby facilitating communication and information transfer (Korošec, 2012). They help build interactions between teachers and students. The teachers consider those puppets are very helpful for establishing contact with children and increasing mutual communication between them. Another important finding is that *wayang* is also effectively used to help overcome the problems of shy children in communication. Puppets help children with learning and speech difficulties to participate in communication, including slow learners.

Wayang performances positively influence study participants' knowledge and attitudes toward individuals with disabilities (Dunst, 2012). Based on the significance test results and the effect size for the difference in the mean of the intervention and control groups, both support the effectiveness of wayang kulit performances. Simultaneously, the most significant number of interventions compared to the control group's mean score (14 out of 16) favored students who participated in wayang performances. These results indicate that wayang golek shows have a positive effect on the knowledge and attitudes of elementary school students.

5. DUSCUSSION

The appropriate intervention to improve the self-esteem of slow learners is by using play therapy and wayang games.

Play Therapy

Play therapy is an approach to counsel young children in which counselors use toys, art supplies, games, and other media to communicate with clients using children's "language" or play language (Arianti, 2018). The purpose of using play therapy is to help clients prevent and overcome psychological problems and help achieve growth and development by their developmental tasks optimally (Nurshobah et al., 2021).

The benefits of Play Therapy include: (a) Helping the children's development process, with minimal verbal interaction; (b) The child gets much freedom to choose, can increase their fantasy and imagination, can use simple tools, provides a safe place for children to express feelings, gains understanding and makes various changes; and (c) Facilitate counselors in building relationships with children as well as in training children's social skills (Arianti, 2018).

b. Puppet Media Modeling

In addition, to play therapy, slow learners must also use modeling with engaging media, making it easier for them to understand a lesson (Bromfield, 1995). *Wayang* is the medium used because, in Magetan, *wayang* is not a foreign performance for students due to being a popular culture. Some of the *wayang* performances are carried out in Magetan when there is a celebration of weddings, district events, village clean-ups, and even during this pandemic, socialization of the dangers of covid is also conveyed through *wayang* performances. At schools, students are given musical activities karawitan, which is also a part of *wayang* show.

Wayang means "shadow." If viewed from the philosophical meaning, wayang can be interpreted as a shadow or a reflection of the existing traits of the human soul (Kooalee et al., 2018). The characteristics in question include evil, virtue, greed, etc. Wayang stories contain local wisdom, existing values and teachings, and noble character that are relevant and can be implemented in daily life.

The modeling process for wayang emphasizes the cognitive side, as stated in Bandura's theory. It combines cognitive and affective (Rahmawanto & Rahyono, 2019). After observing and paying close attention to the life of the chosen wayang character, he then uses his affective ability to dive deeper into the character. Participants refer to the word "dirasakke" (felt) and not just "diikirakke" (thought). "Feeling" is the main key that connects the participant with the wayang characters, the use of wayang as a guide, and the expected ideals of wayang as a model. It means that wayang figures can be used as instructions for perfect behavior ranging from politeness to an ethical system (Jb., 2017). Nrimå means the attitude of accepting everything that is received and faced without any protest and rebellion. For example, accepting the ugly face became the subject of ridicule of people against oneself. The attitude of nrimå is shown by taking one's physical condition as a gift and not hesitating to use it as a joke with their colleagues.

Wayang shows held in the Magetan area can be used as a holistic model of the learning process in which humans learn, grow and develop. Wayang can be used as a medium to increase the self-esteem of slow learner children by using an experiential learning model.

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6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATION

The self-esteem problem in slow learner children makes it difficult for them to get recognition, respect, care, attention, and affection from others, difficulty to comply with behavior that is not allowed, and have low abilities. for success get achievements, so they feel they do not have much to be proud of and have few excellent qualities. They also tend to think of themselves as failures. The appropriate intervention to increase the self-esteem of slow learner children is by using play therapy and wayang media modeling. Playing with wayang can help develop the communicative skills of slow learner children because they can feel more relaxed when they talk to wayang, so it can be said that wayang has a positive effect on the knowledge and self-esteem of slow learner students.

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