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CONSTRUCTION MODEL FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AT THE STATE SPECIAL SCHOOL IN BULUROKENG DISTRICT, BIRINGKANAYA SUB-DISTRICT, MAKASSAR CITY

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Abstract

Children with special needs have different characteristics compared to other children in general due to physical, mental, and social activity limitations. Nevertheless, they have the right to receive education tailored to their conditions so that they can lead their lives on an equal footing with other children. Teachers, along with parents, play a crucial role in the growth and development of children in obtaining education. This analysis focuses on the coaching model for children with special needs in the State Special School of Makassar. The analysis focuses on the learning patterns of students in the State Special School of Makassar and the role of teachers in supporting students with special needs in facing the social environment. The research specifically looks into children with special needs who attend the State Special School of Makassar. This is a qualitative research study that uses a phenomenological approach. Informants for the study were purposefully selected. Data collection techniques involved observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research findings indicate that: 1) teachers and parents share responsibility for the education of their children. Effective communication between teachers, parents, and school staff is essential; 2) the role of teachers is vital in educating and guiding their students in adapting to the community environment, starting from the school environment to the broader community.

Keywords: *Children; Disabilities; Holistic Approach.*

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INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs, also known as disabled children, exceptional children, or children with disabilities, have unique characteristics that differ from other children in general due to their mental, physical, and social limitations and disabilities. There should be policies regulating special education for those with special needs, with clear goals in realizing the programs to be implemented (Francisco Marian, et al., 2020). Children with special needs have the right to receive education, as stated in the National Education System Law, which guarantees that citizens with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and social differences have the right to special education. Children with special needs should receive specialized education as part of their learning process in school.

The treatment of children with special needs is continually evolving as society's understanding of their issues changes from various perspectives. Although they have limitations, society now views them as having the same capabilities as everyone else, albeit with different ways of achieving their goals. Schools for children with special needs should be led by teachers who understand the conditions of their students and know the steps to address the challenges their students face, emphasizing open communication, motivation, and recognition of their achievements (Meirinhos Galvao, et al., 2023). While they may have previously felt marginalized due to their differences from others, this perception is gradually changing as children with special needs have the right to pursue their aspirations in ways that are adapted to their conditions.

Children with special needs who are born with disabilities typically have lower levels of education, making them less competitive in society, especially in economic activities. It is necessary to conduct studies that meet standards and have clear objectives regarding children with special needs involved in community activities, such as economic activities, in accordance with the Education Law for children with special needs (Francisco Marian, et al., 2020). While some of them may have strengths beyond those of typical individuals, many lack the skills to support their future. Therefore, efforts need to be made to address the challenges faced by children with special needs from an early age. Consequently, the research questions in this study are: 1) What is the learning pattern of students in the State Special School (SLB) in Makassar?; 2) What is the role of teachers in the State Special School in Makassar in supporting students with special needs in their social environment?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Children with special needs are those who possess abilities different from those of typical children. There are several terms for children with special needs, such as individuals with disabilities, disabled individuals, or those with impairments. These children have specific characteristics, including physical, mental, and intellectual limitations that hinder their activities. They greatly rely on the support of others, especially the community, which provides opportunities for them to interact with anyone who is welcoming, ensuring they do not feel isolated from social life (Heister Noemi, et al., 2023). Despite facing obstacles in their activities, they are placed alongside typical individuals as capable individuals who perform activities in their unique ways.

Children with special needs may have weaknesses in terms of physical disabilities, mental disabilities, or both physical and mental disabilities. Teachers for children with special needs should have guidelines to ensure that they become professionals in

educating their students (Zulkifli Hafizhah, et al., 2022). Physical disabilities result from impairments in bodily functions, while mental disabilities typically manifest in a person's behavior. Physical and mental disabilities can occur simultaneously or together.

Guidance is an activity carried out by teachers to help students with special needs lead their lives in a manner adjusted to their conditions, similar to the lives of typical individuals. The capabilities of a typical child and a child with special needs are equal, albeit achieved differently based on their respective conditions. Policymakers must understand the needs of children with special needs whose conditions differ from those of typical children, thus requiring treatment tailored to their unique conditions, especially for their future (Francisco Marian, et al., 2020). Teacher guidance aims to shape the personality of students, contributing to the creation of high-quality human resources. Teacher guidance is a planned activity that encompasses the planning, implementation, development, and evaluation of student learning activities. Guidance for students is also aimed at building their potential to adapt to their social environment. It is not just about improving their education but also about enhancing their behavior as students and as members of society.

Many children with special needs still do not receive the services or treatment they should, lack adequate facilities, and often experience discriminatory treatment. Policymakers should contribute to the implementation of rules specifically for children with special needs so that their issues can be detected and promptly addressed (Francisco Marian, et al., 2020). The wider community should be aware that children with special needs require support from others to boost their morale and prevent social isolation. Children with special needs often face social challenges, fearing new social environments, experiencing low self-esteem, and being influenced by excessive fear and shame. They frequently feel disappointment when they are rejected, mocked, or not recognized as humans. Thus, children with special needs require serious attention, especially from those with authority. They should receive appropriate education to empower them to be accepted in the broader community.

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research design

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach using a phenomenological strategy. The data obtained are findings in the field in the form of observations at the research location, data obtained through in-depth interviews, and written data in the form of documentation.

3.2. Research sites

The research is conducted at the State Special School in Makassar, located in Bulurokeng Village, Biringkanaya Sub-district, Makassar City. The selection of the research location was intentional, based on the consideration that the State Special School in Makassar has a permanent and well-established location, qualified teachers in their respective fields, supporting staff to facilitate the teaching and learning process, and a diverse student body with various physical and mental disabilities that they have had since birth.

3.3. Method of collecting data

The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The researcher uses interview guidelines to obtain data from the informants. The interview guidelines were prepared before the research commenced. These guidelines contain questions that will be asked to the informants without them having to know the questions in advance. The researcher is allowed to ask questions out of the order listed in the interview guidelines.

3.3.1. Observation

The data collection technique carried out through observation is an effort by the researcher to directly observe the informants at the research location with the aim of understanding the informants' attitudes and behaviors. The researcher observes all events taking place at the research location while taking notes, recording, and photographing things related to the research.

3.3.2. Deep interview

In-depth interviews are conducted with the aim of obtaining comprehensive and in-depth information about the learning patterns at the State Special School in Makassar and the role of teachers in supporting students with special needs in their social environment. The interview process takes place naturally and is not scheduled, and the questions asked are unstructured. All data obtained during the interview are immediately interpreted.

3.3.3. Documentation

Documentation techniques were carried out to obtain data through the South Sulawesi Central Bureau of Statistics and the Makassar State Special School. Data collection was carried out using recording devices, as well as using cameras.

3.4. Research Instrument

The researcher themselves serve as the instrument in the research, directly immersing themselves in the research location to collect the necessary data in the form of symbols, words, signs, or actions related to the research being conducted. After the data has been obtained, the next step is to conduct analysis and write the research report or findings.

3.5. Research Informant

The informants in this research consist of teachers who have been teaching at the State Special School in Makassar for a minimum of the last 3 years and have experience in dealing with children with special needs at the school. This also includes the Principal and two staff members who are designated as key informants.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Student Learning Patterns at Makassar State Special Schools

Based on the results of the interview with teacher A, it was explained that:

"I have been serving at this school for approximately 5 (five) years, starting in 2018. I have experienced a lot while teaching here. However, I am always

aware of my role as a teacher, which involves serving the community, especially in the place where I work." (Interview excerpt, May 7, 2023).

The results of the interview with teacher B explained that:

"I hope that all parents of the students are willing to cooperate with us, the teachers at the school, especially in building effective communication for the progress and development of their children's education here." (Interview excerpt, May 7, 2023).

The results of the interview with teacher C obtained an explanation that:

We are always open to being asked to collaborate with students' parents. Even outside of working hours, we are always willing to be asked to help parents with their children. This is a common occurrence and often happens during the holidays, parents of students contact us via WA asking how to deal with their children when they face problems at home. We do all this because the role of teachers should also be to provide education to their students even outside school hours, especially for children with special needs. (Interview results, 7 May 2023).

The school is where students come together to acquire education as a foundation for their lives. School is a place for social interaction; students attending school are members of the school community who interact with each other in the school environment. Continuous interaction among students is usually based on suggestions, sympathy, giving and receiving help, and imitation.

A teacher is expected to serve as a role model for their students because students easily imitate those who are close to them, both physically from frequent encounters and emotionally due to the sense of closeness to certain figures. To achieve an effective teaching and learning process, it is crucial to have educational interaction between teachers and students. Teachers set an example for their students, as if they were dealing with their own children, and students are encouraged to respect and appreciate their teachers, similar to the respect they have for their parents.

A school can fulfill its functions properly if all its components, including teachers, staff, students, learning facilities, and the school's cultural norms, support each other in achieving the school's success. The involvement of parents has a significant impact on the future of children. No matter how busy parents may be, they are responsible for their children's education. Teachers only assist when children are at school. The role of parents remains paramount. In the family, parents play a significant role in providing their children with proper, effective, and systematic education. The family is the primary and most important place where children receive good, effective, and structured education.

Lack of knowledge among parents in nurturing children with special needs often leads to these children not receiving the education they deserve. Therefore, the school's role is essential in educating these students. Many parents entrust their children's education entirely to the school, even though the role of parents at home is crucial. On any given day, students spend only about 6 (six) hours at school, while they spend more time at home. Parents' lack of knowledge in raising their children often results in them paying less attention to their child's education. The role of teachers in school is significant for the progress of education, especially for children with special needs. Although different from typical children, children with special needs require proper education.

Every child has a unique character, and teachers must be sensitive to the characteristics of each student. Dealing with students may vary, as long as it does not create jealousy among students. Often, they desire more attention than their peers. Therefore, teachers must be skilled in handling students to calm them and make them feel comfortable. Effective communication between teachers and parents about the educational progress of their children is essential. The lessons learned at school should be reinforced at home so that parents know the extent to which their child has understood the material.

According to the informant, patience combined with sincerity is essential when dealing with students with special needs. Boundless dedication is the spirit of the teachers at the State Special School in Makassar as they carry out their duties. They always encourage students to do things that are also done by typically developing children, allowing them to be on par, even though they do things differently. Providing a sense of safety and comfort to students is crucial so that students can participate in all school activities calmly. The teaching materials should not be monotonous to prevent students from becoming bored during lessons. Teachers should conduct study guidance as often as possible by revisiting the material to ensure it is well-remembered by students.

During break time, teachers continue to monitor students, even though it may not be the same as during class. Students with special needs also need to socialize, especially with the people around them, such as school friends, teachers, school staff, and the parents or families of the students who typically accompany their children to school. Typically, students play with their friends during break time while having their packed lunch or snacks brought from home. Some may prefer to be alone due to their specific conditions. It is not easy for teachers to carry out their tasks at a special school. Students with special needs require special attention. Sometimes, teachers do not have time to rest while at school, especially at the beginning of the school year. New students usually do not want to attend school, and various approaches must be used to encourage them to attend. Typically, it takes a long time, sometimes up to a month, to persuade new students to be interested in attending school, which requires patience from the teachers to guide their students to follow the school rules and lessons.

4.2. The Role of Teachers for Students with Special Needs in Facing Their Social Environment

According to the principal of Makassar State Special School that:

Every month, activities are held outside of school that are not far from the school. Typically, students participate in community service according to their abilities to familiarize themselves with the general community. A more significant event is the celebration of Indonesia's Independence Day. Almost all students are involved in the school's internal competitions. If there are events in or around the school, students typically attend and observe those activities. This is done so that the broader community becomes accustomed to the presence of children with special needs, with the hope that society will accept them and allow them to develop based on their potential for their future. (Interview excerpt, May 8, 2023)

According to administrative staff A who works at the Makassar State Special School explained that:

Whenever there is an invitation from the environment around the special school, such as from the local community to participate in social activities or competitions

between institutions, we will accept the invitation and involve our students in these activities or competitions. The goal is to help our students become accustomed to mingling with the community, which will be highly beneficial for their personal development in the future. (Interview excerpt, May 8, 2023).

Furthermore, according to Administrative Staff B:

The students at the State Special School in Makassar have a great enthusiasm for participating in activities outside of school because they have been accustomed to not feeling inferior due to their physical limitations. Participating in extracurricular activities at times helps reduce the monotony of school and trains students to excel in specific fields. They learn to compete, acknowledge the achievements of others, and interact more widely in the community.

Learning is a process that individuals go through to become more humane beings who can interact with others to achieve better things. Education is the transformation of values, skills, and knowledge that shape an individual's character and intelligence. It occurs within the family, at school, and also within society. Education can change thought patterns, debunk myths that exist in society, correct misconceptions, and shed light on things unknown to the public. Education is an effort made by those who know more about something to guide children in developing physically and spiritually toward maturity. Education serves as a guide for humanity in facing life and is a determinant of human civilization. Education has the power to change lives. The level of civilization of a society is heavily influenced by the education its members have received. Through education, a person's behavior can improve.

Society serves as a cultural vessel and a place where the education process takes place to pass on culture from one generation to the next. Education for children with special needs needs to prioritize a sense of security and comfort. They require an environment that supports their activities, encourages innovation, even if it's still basic, fosters undeveloped creativity, instills self-confidence to be on par with normal children, and encourages self-empowerment.

One important consideration for policymakers in special needs schools is their location. They should be situated near residential areas so that the students can easily integrate with their normal peers. Conversely, the broader community needs to get used to the presence of children with special needs who should not be treated differently from normal children in pursuing their educational goals. Children with special needs can be engaged in social activities. Those who excel due to their special abilities should be provided with opportunities to further develop their talents.

CONCLUSION

The learning pattern for students at the State Special School in Makassar is the method used by the teachers in the school during the teaching and learning process. Children with special needs should receive an education that is as suitable as what normal children receive. Teachers need to establish effective communication with the parents of their students to provide the best education. A teacher's role as an instructor and educator is not limited to the school or classroom but extends to accompanying their students in activities outside of school. In particular, they help students integrate into society without feeling inferior, making them feel safe and comfortable in the community.

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