

EFFECTS OF SOCIETAL STEREOTYPE AGAINST CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to advocate society not to stereotype against children with disabilities, such as those with autism and blindness, and how parents and teachers take significant roles in educating and undergoing a therapy so that the children grow and develop properly. Parents and teachers take these actions, so society receive these children with special needs, and thus are able to participate in society. The research was conducted at the village of Lingkok Busu, Pidie Regency of Aceh by using the qualitative study, in that it typically employs a study case approach focusing on a specific unique locus. The researchers gathered data by means of observations and interviews. The participants are two children each with autism and blindness, three teachers, at Special Primary School Rapana, who accompany the students in developing their abilities. Of these two teachers, one serves as a parent. Results show that there should be a mutual teacher-parent cooperation to address the societal stereotypes against the children, who are considered unfortunate in society. Therefore, it is necessary to have a religious and cross-cultural counseling so that we all live together peacefully with the slogan of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) regardless of the country's myriad cultures, ethnicities, languages, religions, or political affiliations, and so Indonesians have a true sense of unity. The researchers conclude that the children with autism and blindness should participate in society, and the roles of parents and teachers are to augment their potential; thus, they will grow and function well in society.

Keywords: children with special needs; negative effects; societal stereotype

INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs require specific education and services to develop their potential. In addition to fulfilling their life necessities, they need help to access services such as education, social relationship, guidance, counseling, and other specific services.¹ Providing educational services for children with special needs and disabilities must be based on planned programs, including analysis, identification, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up programs. Every child with disabilities has their unique talents and gifts, and to train their skills, a school can create an environment that enables them to adapt correctly.² Hence, a special school is an institution intended for providing better

¹ Irdamurni, *Pendidikan Inklusif Solusi Dalam Mendidik Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus*, *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, 6, no. 11, (2015): 951–952.

² Wisnu Sulisty Nugroho, "Pemetaan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Pada Sekolah Inklusi Melalui Program Identifikasi Dan Asesmen," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Flobamorata* 2, no. 1 (2021), <https://E-Journal.Unmuhkupang.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Jpdf>.



education for children with special needs, and has an essential contribution in establishing equality of rights for them to attain such better education.³

Act of National Education System, Number 2003, Article 5, Paragraph 1 states that education for children with disabilities is an education for exceptional students who have difficulties in following the learning processes due to physical, emotional, mental, social disabilities. However, they have exceptional talents and intelligence.⁴ The Act further explains that all types of children with disabilities are entitled to education, including character building. But not all people are fortunate in this world as some possess physical impairments or live with disabilities. Nevertheless, they are entitled to the same rights as their peers do in general to obtain an education. Children who are born with Cerebral Palsy since their birth, for example, have difficulties in activating their sensory and memory. Their behavior does not prove the same condition as their peers do because of having lower skills. They are considered as retarded children with special needs.⁵

Every person does not want to be born into this world with a disability or a physical impairment, as there are no parents want their children to be disabled. Unfortunately, the birth of a child with a disability could happen to anyone, any wealthy family, any educated family, any low-income family, or religious and obedient family. They could not refuse or choose the appearance of children with special needs in their family.⁶ Every parent wants to be the best for their children and they honestly expect to have a perfect child without any flaws. However, there is no perfect human and people are strikingly different from one to the other. Whatever the condition they are in, God creates humans with their uniqueness (QS Ali Imran: 191).⁷

In *Exceptional Children and Youth*, William Cruickshank and Gram Orville Johnson reported that naming children with special needs was basically the form of disability, such as intellectual, physical, social, or emotional limitations, if they were

³ K Dimitrios et al., "Parental Attitudes Regarding Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Greek Education Settings," *Number 3 Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education* 2, no. 3 (2008), <https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/ejie>.

⁴ Wela Oktari, Hendra Harmi, and Deri Wanto, "Strategi Guru Dalam Pembelajaran Pai Pada Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus," *TA'DIBUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 1 (2020): 13, <https://doi.org/10.30659/jpai.3.1.13-28>.

⁵ Dinie Ratrie Desningrum, *Psikologi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus*, Depdiknas, 2007.

⁶ Khairunisa Rani, Ana Rafikayati, and Muhammad Nurrohman Jauhari, "Keterlibatan Orangtua Dalam Penanganan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus," *ABADIMAS ADI BUANA* 02. no. 1 (JULI 2018): 55–64, <https://doi.org/10.36456/abadimas.v2.i1.a1636>.

⁷ Aibah Khan, "Best Essays In Iqra Essay Competitions," 2015.

compared to children with normal growth and development.⁸ Scholars define exceptional children as those who are different from normal children in terms of their identity, sensory skill, communication ability, social behavior, or physical identity. Additionally, other scholars also define that exceptional children are those who have extraordinary capacities beyond general people that distinguish them from other children of the same age. Children with special needs are categorized into several types: visually impaired, deaf, mentally retarded, physical disability, or emotional and social disorders.⁹ As humans, children with special needs have the rights to grow up in their family, school, community, and society. Like other children, they have the rights to receive education, play with peer, and have achievement. This is because Allah has noble intentions that parents who have children with disabilities are special children who deserve to get protection and affection like other children, while we, as human, never know what Allah has planned for us, and we should believe to this principle with obedience to Allah because He says that your wealth and your children are only a test for you (QS at-Taghabun: 15).¹⁰

Children with special needs include those with mental retardation and deficiency. The deficiency and disability would be an excuse as to why they are constantly being subject of bullying in society. However, it does not mean everyone can humiliate yet laugh at them.¹¹ Research has revealed that children who are bullied can suffer a mental pressure, anxiety, lonely feeling, and sadness. Types of the stereotype can include unintelligent and nuisance, which have negative consequences. These may significantly increase due to perpetuated bullying.¹² As a result, some are not able to manage the changing of sleeping patterns and eating habits and the absence of focused attention to daily activities. These bully-victims can suffer psychosomatic symptoms when they are

⁸ Muhammad Nurrohman Jauhari, "Pengetahuan Mahasiswa PG-Paud Unipa Surabaya Tentang Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus," *Jurnal Buana Pendidikan*, no. 24 (2017): 165-177.

⁹ Khairunisa Rani, Rafikayati, and Jauhari, "Keterlibatan Orangtua Dalam Penanganan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus."

¹⁰ Aibah Khan, "Best Essays In Iqra Essay Competitions."

¹¹ Saskia Putri Rahayu and Eddy Marheni, "Perilaku Masyarakat Terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Sekolah Luar Biasa Perwari Padang," *Jurnal Performa Olahraga* 5, no. 1 (2020): 54–58, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jpo140019>.

¹² Jaap Van Weeghel & Petri J.C.M Embregts Hannah A. Pelleboer-Gunnik, "Public Stigmatisation of People with Intellectual Disabilities: A Mixed-Method Population Survey into Stereotypes and Their Relationship with Familiarity and Discrimination," *Disability and Rehabilitation* 43, no. 4 (2021): 489–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2019.1630678>.

socializing with other people. In addition, they feel worthless, helpless, alienated, stressed, and suicidal imagination.¹³

Mufidah, in Rahayu and Marheni, asserted that physical or non-physical violence in a planned way would only cause pain and hurt to the target victims. These effects would happen until they were old. Furthermore, bullying has a great impact on those with mental or physical disabilities, especially children with special needs.¹⁴ Meanwhile, to overcome the stigma and societal stereotype against children with special needs, we propose a concept of cross-cultural and religious counseling approach to minimize the problems. This type of counseling ties up participants with different ethnicities, religions, or minority groups.¹⁵ This cross-cultural and religious counseling also can accommodate the counselors and clients with different cultural or religious backgrounds. This cross-cultural and religious counseling approach meets counselors and mothers of children with special needs or local people. This type of counseling also has the objective of stimulating people to accept children with disabilities so they will not perpetuate stigma, including bullying because Allah has created every being with its strength and weakness. Suppose this understanding is created, life between people and children with special needs can go side by side; thus, there is no stigma against children with disabilities.

Given introduction and brief review of literature, the researchers conducted this study and formulated a cross-cultural and religious counseling concept to overcome societal stereotypes against children with special needs. This study was conducted with the following questions: (1) how are societal and parents' perceptions towards children with disabilities? (2) What roles do teachers embrace in responding to issues around disabilities?

Definitions of Children with Special Needs

The term special needs explicitly refer to children with uniqueness compared to the average 'normal' children in terms of physics, mental, behavior, and social

¹³ Mireille Krischler, Ineke M. Pit-ten Cate, and Sabine Krolak-Schwerdt, "Mixed Stereotype Content and Attitudes toward Students with Special Educational Needs and Their Inclusion in Regular Schools in Luxembourg," *Research in Developmental Disabilities* 75, no. February (2018): 59–67, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2018.02.007>.

¹⁴ Rahayu and Marheni, "Perilaku Masyarakat Terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Sekolah Luar Biasa Perwari Padang."

¹⁵ Syahril, "Kata Kunci :Konseling Lintas Budaya Dalam Perspektif Budaya Indonesia Syahril," *Jurnal Al-Taujih : Bingkai Bimbingan Dan Konseling Islami* 4, no 1 (2018): 76–86.

interaction. Based on this description, children are categorized into special needs in terms of the physical aspect including visual and hearing impairments, speech disorders, and physical disabilities. Children with mental disabilities are those with supernormal abilities, known as talented children or superior children, while those who have low mental abilities are recognized as mentally disabled children or mental retardation. A child with lack of social skills is the one who has difficulties with behavior in interacting with the environment. Such a child is well-known as the one with social and emotional disorder.¹⁶ According to the types of disability, a child with special needs is categorized into physical, mental, and social difficulties.¹⁷

Physical Disability

Physical disability is a physical incapacity occurring to a particular organ or more. Because of the weakness, the physical function of their body state cannot work as it should be. This disability refers to the lack of physical function such as hearing and visual impairments, speech disorders, and the impairment of motoric functions including the poliomyelitis and nervous systems in the brain, which results in Cerebral Palsy and the slow of growth of the parts of the body as well. The motor disabilities are usually called physical disabilities.¹⁸

Mental Disability

Children with mental disorders are described as disruption in the way that they think critically and logically in interacting with the world around them. This mental disability falls into two broad categories: supernormal mentality and subnormal mentality. The children with supernormal mentality include (1) rapid learner, (2) the gifted, and (3) the extremely gifted. Those who are able to learn fast can be identified with intelligent index at 110-120. The range for gifted and extremely gifted children makes up 120-140 and 140 and above. Generally, in addition to having a high intelligence

¹⁶ Fengqing Zhao et al., "Does Stereotype Threat Deteriorate Academic Performance of High School Students With Learning Disabilities? The Buffering Role of Psychological Disengagement," *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 52, no. 4 (2019): 312–23, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219419849107>.

¹⁷ Samantha G. Daley and Gabrielle Rappolt-Schlichtmann, "Stigma Consciousness Among Adolescents With Learning Disabilities: Considering Individual Experiences of Being Stereotyped," *Learning Disability Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2018): 200–212, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948718785565>.

¹⁸ J B Ritchie and P Thompson, "Organization and People: Readings, Exercises, and Cases in Organizational Behaviour," *Null*, 1988.

and achievement, children with higher mentality indicates the high ability in some areas, such as (1) general intellectual ability, (2) specific intellectual ability, (3) creative or productive thinking ability, (4) artistic ability, psycho-motor ability, and (6) psychosocial leadership ability.¹⁹

Social and Emotional Disfunction

Dysfunctional behavior persons (social and emotional disorders) are those who have difficulties adjusting to their surroundings, rules, social norms, social-related relations. The manifestation of social disability is an extreme compensation, conflicting with environment repeatedly, law-breaking or breaking politeness norms. It is revealed that children with social disability are those who do not behave in accordance with customs practiced at home, school, and society. The most important is that the implications of their attitudes can jeopardize themselves or other people.²⁰

Classifications of children with social disorders consist of those with psychotic and neurotic, emotional, and delinquent children. According to the cause of social disorder, they are divided into two groups: (1) emotional disorder which refers to social deviance as the form of emotional disturbance, and (2) social disorder which refers to social deviance as the form of functional adaptation.²¹ For example, the development of social interaction in the case of AM (11 years), a student, which will be explained later, can be seen in his communication development, his interaction progress in the community, and also his behavior development so that it would not create bias between society and children with special needs, as in the societal stereotypes against children with disabilities. The stereotypes in society were caused by the lack of understanding of autism and other similar cases.²²

¹⁹ Eric P Hoffman and D Ph, "Genomics, Intellectual Disability, and Autism," 2012, 733–43.

²⁰ Ritchie and Thompson, "Organization and People: Readings, Exercises, and Cases in Organizational Behaviour."

²¹ Irmo Marini, Noreen M. Graf and Michael J. Millington, *Psychosocial Aspects of Disability: Insider Perspectives and Strategies for Counselors, Second Edition, Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 49, 2018.

²² Amy Jayne McKnight et al., "Resequencing of the Characterised CTGF Gene to Identify Novel or Known Variants, and Analysis of Their Association with Diabetic Nephropathy," *Journal of Human Genetics* 51, no. 4 (2006): 383–86, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10038-006-0368-7>.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach in which the descriptive-analysis types of data were gathered and analyzed from respondents' voices and attitudes. This method aims to describe a social setting to clarify a phenomenon in the social environment.

Case Study

The case study approach focuses on one unit, whether it is an individual, a group of people, a group or a setting, can be employed to generate rich thoughts and conversation by seeking depth rather than breath in establishing context-dependent knowledge.²³ Accordingly, Creamer states that, in a case study, the researcher explores a single or multiple cases to observe about how participants address certain issues and cases.²⁴ The use of a single case study provides the opportunity for the researcher to see how the focus of the study unfolds in an insightful and detailed manner. The researcher, hence, has an intrinsic interest in the case or intrinsic case study.²⁵ Thus, this enables the researcher to work in a justified way that aims at getting meanings from the data.²⁶ Furthermore, the case study approach provides proper detail of how the researcher proceeds that gives the research the opportunity for an in-depth exploration, which is built on a more trusting relationship between the researcher and the participant.²⁷ By employing the case study approach, the researcher can specify certain types of participants that he or she explores their thoughts, feelings, motivations, ideas that are unique. This is conducted in order to propose a solution towards a problem encountered by children with special needs in this particular community. By the approach, the researcher tries to describe the research subject thoroughly, either in the data presentation or data interpretation.²⁸

²³ McKnight et al.

²⁴ Elizabeth G. Creamer, *An Introduction to Fullyintegrated Mixed Methods Research*, 2018.

²⁵ Jean Mercer And Margaret Drew, *Challenging Parental Alienation New Directions for Professionals and Parents, Paper Knowledge . Toward a Media History of Documents*, 2014.

²⁶ David L. Gast and Jennifer R. Ledford. "Research Approaches in Applied Settings," In Jennifer R. Ledford and David L. Gast (eds.), *Single Case Research Methodology: Applications in Special Education and Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 1-26). (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018).

²⁷ Leedy, P. D., & J. E. Ormrod, *Practical Research. Planning and Design* (11th Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

²⁸ Judy L. Krysik and Jerry Finn, *Research For Effective Social Work Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.

Participant

The participants of this research were three children with disabilities. They were AM (11 years), AB (10 years), and AZ (7 years); three parents (RM, 37 years), (CT, 30 years) and (LS, 28 years), and two teachers RA (36 years) and RS (42 years) in the Rapana Special Primary School. So, three children with special needs were participants and were the main focus the research, and thus became key related-information. However, there were also three teachers who were asked about their opinions, thoughts, feelings, and knowledge of the children. As many people in the community talked more about them in terms of their physical disabilities and behaviors, and how they interacted with society, the parent informants were included, and one of them was a mother who is also a teacher in the Rapana Special Primary School. She is a figure who monitors the progress continuously since her baby was born.

Data Collection

We also explored information regarding the teachers' treatment and development during teaching practice in the school. Data collection was conducted through observation towards the children with disabilities and the school environment, as well as towards their family. The most important is we interviewed three teachers and two parents, as one of the latter was mother of a child participant. Through the interviews we learned about the key issues of the study.²⁹ Data collection was conducted twice with one participant received one and half-hour-interview. After interviews were done, we transcribed the data in verbatim by eliminating those were not relevant with the objectives and the questions of the research because we brought data into being; we made them. In making this, we invented, imagined, encountered, and embraced lived experienced and material documentation as methodological praxis.³⁰ We wrote the verbatim or verbal description directly after each unstructured interview in order to keep our memory fresh and the congruence between one question and the other. Verbatim is structured systematically according the structure of research questions.³¹

²⁹ Anthony Joseph Arduengo and Till Opatz, "Editorial Overview: Bioresources and Biochemicals Section," *Current Opinion in Green and Sustainable Chemistry* 14 (2018): A1–3, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogsc.2018.09.008>.

³⁰ Patty Sotirin Laura L. Ellingson, *Making Data in Qualitative Research Engagements*, London: Routledge, 2020.

³¹ Craig A. Mertler C. M. Charles, *Introduction to Educational Research* (the University of Michigan: Pearson/A & B, 2005, 2002).

Data Analysis

Results in terms of data in the verbatim were yielded from the interviews and observations that were analyzed by identifying similarities and differences from conversations (coding), and this included data reduction.³² There were steps we made in this context. First and the foremost was that we read thoroughly the verbatim and colored words, phrases, and sentences that had the same characters and similarities of meaning. Additionally, we wrote our comments in the margins of the texts which would allow us to find similarities of findings that determined research themes.³³ The data coding was conducted manually to ascertain accuracy. The data coding was applied to the frequency of words, repetitions, and identification of categories.³⁴ Conclusions were made based on interpreting the data and comparing the sameness and difference of words, phrases, and sentences. Such a method was also applied by making triangulation.³⁵

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Parent Responses towards Children's Symptom

The first respondent is RM (37 years), a household mother who has a grocery store. She has four children: the first children, RE (18 years), second ZA (16 years), third US (14 years), and AM (10 years). Of these four children, only AM suffers from a disability in which the symptom of his disability started to appear when he was a baby, such as he could speak and laugh. Moreover, when a child at his age could already speak up, AM did not show any progress in speaking what to tell.

When RM (37 years) knew that AM was a child with a disability for the first time, she denied the fact that her baby was living with a disability. Nevertheless, she finally consulted her child's disability problem to the psychiatric hospital in Banda Aceh. At first, the psychiatry had succeeded to observe and diagnose AM, and AM suffered from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Not long after, AM was declared a hearing impairment. RM felt very sad and did not accept the condition of AM because no

³² Glynis Cousin, *Researching Learning in Higher Education: An Introduction to Contemporary Methods and Approaches (SEDA Series)* (Routledge (Taylor & Francis), 2009).

³³ David L Gast, "In Behavioral Sciences," n.d.

³⁴ Graham R Williamson, "BOOK REVIEW Edited by Graham R. Williamson," *Nursing*, 2007, 2007.

³⁵ Anselm Strauss and Uliet M. Corbin, "Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory," *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 11, no. 3 (2011): 277–78, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895811401979>.

one had ever had such condition in her family and her husband's family. Nevertheless, RM gained the advocacy and empowerment by relatives and her children that educating a child, AM, to become an adult was an attempt to do or it was incredibly challenging to a mother as a child was a precious gift from Allah, and we need to give them the best protection and affection in family.

To develop AM's potential, as stated at the interview with RM, she sends AM to a Special Primary School (SDLB) for children with disabilities to receive a good education. RM Stated:

After discussing with family members, we think AM should get a decent education. Similar to his older siblings, we sent him to a school which educates children at the same level. If a normal child can do, children with disabilities can also do so, and that AM can learn and imitate the normal child's behavior.

Furthermore, regarding this education, AM receives a good education as his peers; RM described her son's education as follows:

In this SDLB, AM is handled by an expert teacher, in which AM always gets guidance from her. The school also offers a therapy for children with special needs in accordance with their disabilities. The therapy opens on Wednesday and Thursday from 14:00 to 15:40 o'clock, and the tuition for each child is 850,000 Rupiah per month.

This SDLB is a public school that accepts everyone with the various cultural background, faith, economy, and social status. Accordingly, the teacher provides an extra care on the students' physical and psychological development, including verbal disturbance and attitudes disruptions, such as stigma and bullying. Relating to the issue, RM said:

There are hardly any children with disabilities as AM in the village of Busu Lingkok. They often named my child as an unfortunate child, a jinx, and so on. If I knew it, personally as a mother, I would not accept it, but it is what it is. We cannot reject that; a child is a gift from Allah, we must take care, protect, and love like any other kid.

After finishing school, RM always greets the teachers and asks about AM's progress because RM and her family always committed to optimize AM's development by providing him therapy twice a week. Additionally, we obtain information that AM makes a little progress in interactions with several teachers and his peers at the early time in school. AM is very interested with posters in the class and handy crafts of the school teachers in SDLB. He always sees and touches several handicrafts above him, and it

shows that he likes all this artwork. AM's interaction skills are pretty good, such as eye contact with his friends and teachers. AM always follows the latest development that he sees and likes.

Afterward, RM stated that the teachers always accompanied AM when he encountered difficulty adjusting to the class.

AM is accompanied by the class teacher and class assistance in the learning process in the daily life. Accordingly, there is a teacher who teaches and accompanies the special children in the learning. Every week, AM receives an individual service provided by special assistants, such as monitoring physical, motor, cognitive, or social progress.

The second respondent is CT (30 years), a single-parent woman. She has two children, AB (10 years) and AY (6 years). AB is a child with a disability. Since he was infant, AB grew up like other normal children, and he had perfect physical specimen. AB went to the primary school, but he responded very slowly when learning-teaching processes were going on.

The school principal and the class teachers informed AB's parents that he had difficulties to catch up with the lesson, such as difficult to understand, passive, unresponsive, and unwilling of study. However, he only liked to play. Then, the principal and the class teacher suggested AB transferred to the special school for children with special needs. The discussion result between CT, the principal, and the teacher recommended that AB moved to the special primary school to grow up well with adequate facilities for people with intellectual disability.

In response to the issue about moving to another school, CT expressed her feelings:

I felt despondent that eventually when he was an infant and then grew up like other kids. Nevertheless, I did not deny that AB had disabilities, such as, slows to respond, is unable to adapt, and is very emotional. Previously, I did not realize that my child was categorized into children with disabilities. Then, I registered him to a public primary school.

Shortly after, AB's parent, teachers, and the principal had compromised about transferring AB to a special primary school (SDLB) for mentally impaired children. CT responded to this change positively, as she said:

In maintaining AB's education, I still facilitate him and provide the same education with other disabled children. The previous principal and teachers had recommended the right school for AB to get the same education like other kids, and in order that he did not experience social isolation.

Nevertheless, as stated by CT that stereotypes against people with disabilities basically exist in rural areas in which they view differences as weirdness, as CT maintained:

People mostly isolated AB and many compared him with the other kids and told common words. Whereas, for this reason, AB needed support and affection from the community. In fact, AB constantly received bullying, insulting, and verbal abuse.

Then, CT continued to say:

They pushed and pinched him, to bring him down because AB has a slow response. So, people tended to harass him. I regretted what they did to AB. Nevertheless, I understand because they are not well-informed yet educated on how to interact with mentally impaired children. They are supposed to be more careful and affectionate to the child because AB has a mental disability, unlike any ordinary kids.

The third respondent is LS (28 years), is a mother of AZ (7 years), a child with disabilities. LC has a son, AZ, who is a blind. When he was born, the doctor who handled AZ said that my child suffers from a total visual impairment. Since the doctor told me, I was very upset about the unhappy fate that befell him. However, I did not deny that my child is a gift that must be accepted with gratefulness.

Since he was an infant, we gave AZ our complete affection and facilities like any other normal children, and the same education like other children at the same age. AZ suffers from visual impairment, but he has skills in education, such as memorizing the Qur'an. He can see anything, but as parents, we always make him to listen *Murattal* (Qur'anic recitation) every day, and then AZ memorizes the Quran. As a parent, we are proud to AZ. Children like this should be a role model for anyone.

LS also explained that not all children with disabilities bring bad luck to the community. It actually relies on their parents to educate and understand them and gives affection. LS adds:

We provide education, like any other kids, the difference is that he studies at the special school. Visually impaired children go to school with the same kids at the same condition. They get loving and caring sufficiently, and teachers teach them

practical things. At the house, I always make him to listen *Murattal* to memorize with hearing.

In relation to AZ's education, LS remarked:

Education we gave to AZ started from his 7 years old until now. At this age, I registered him to the Special Primary School, and I hope he can continue to high school (SMALB). In school, he also learns to sing, read, and write with Braille alphabets.

Furthermore, with the concern of societal stereotypes addressed to AZ, as a mother, LS commented:

Commonly, people talk about AZ behind me, such as he is a blind, a jinx, and so forth. However, since AZ can memorize the Qur'an, the community appreciate and praise his ability. Some people praise, while some humiliate. As Indonesian citizens, we might not be biased because we all have weaknesses and strengths.

Teacher's Responses towards Children with Disabilities

Education is a basic need for every human to ensure continuity of their life in order to be beneficial. All this time, children with disabilities were provided with specific education facilities, Special Primary School (SLB). Children with disabilities are a community which was eliminated in the social dynamics of community. People in the community are not familiar with the life of children with impairments or disabilities. While parents of the children with special needs feel that their children are not an integral part of life within the communities surrounding them.³⁶ For that, a special school can provide the best service and develop the children's potential. With the ability to identify and know their students, it becomes the main asset for teachers to provide specific programs or services for children with disabilities in order that with their skills, children with disabilities would be received within the community.

Based on the observation, teachers' role as educators is to shape attitude and behavior and obey the rules in the school and norms within communities. To educate students, a teacher must make his or her students become people of good character and it was emphasized by the result of interview with the teacher respondent (RS, 42 years) regarding the methods of teaching for children with disabilities to generate valuable children in a community.

³⁶ Tyas Martika Anggriana and Rischa Pramudia Trisnani, "Kompetensi Guru Pendamping Siswa Abk Di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Konseling Gusjigang* 2, no. 2 (2016): 157-64, <https://doi.org/10.24176/jkg.v2i2.702>.

The specific method to provide education for children with disabilities is that we must first know the student, then facilitate a direct interaction, give explanation and understanding. Also, we can explore the children's potential such as painting, singing, drawing, or any things that children love.

Furthermore, another teacher (RA, 36 years) asserted:

Children should focus on information given by the teacher at school and parents' assistance at home to explore the students' potential. The teacher should encourage children to socialize or interact with the community, and give them freedom.

Effects of Societal Stereotypes Against Children with Special Needs

A stereotype which is labelled against a certain people or group can harm them and lead to injustice. Stereotype tends to present a false idea which implies a negative judgment or demeans another person. The stereotype has many aspects such as work stereotypes, education stereotypes, inter-ethnic stereotypes, and gender stereotypes. The stereotypes are actually based on the interpretation as a result of their perspectives and cultural backgrounds which is eventually produced by the communication with other parties and no original source has been confirmed.³⁷

In reality, however, children with disabilities are often linked to a discriminatory attitude or reinforcing a stereotype, which is often not true. There is a belief among people in society that people with disability have negative characteristics. For example, they are weak and passive, have a low individual status as well. Automatically, the double stereotypes of the community existed regarding weakness, deficiencies, and lack of support for their life. Interestingly, when space limitations for them to do activities because of people's functional limitations or impairments lead to society's negative views and perspectives. This certainly has a substantial impact on life in the midst of society.

The forms of stereotype received by children with special needs are very much being dependent, weak and helpless, freak, and showing lack of interest. First, children with disabilities were considered as dependent children because they were incapable of acting to do anything freely by themselves or still relied on other people. Their dependence was viewed as their incapability to take care of themselves, and they could

³⁷ Dian Lestari and Wirdanengsih Wirdanengsih, "Stereotipe Terhadap Perempuan Penyandang Disabilitas Di Kota Padang (Studi Pada Perempuan Penyandang Disabilitas Daksa Di DPC PPDI Kota Padang) Dian," *Jurnal Perspektif: Jurnal Kajian Sosiologi Dan Pendidikan* 3 no. 2 (2020): 262-271. <http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.24036/Perspektif.V3i2.249>.

not work and study without others' help. Second, they are weak and helpless. The patriarchal culture in society creates bias and generates double stereotypes on their weakness and helplessness to live their life decently. Third, they are considered as a freak. The striking differences in their physical body in children with disabilities were viewed as a weirdness.³⁸ Eventually, some people did not directly show their response towards this weirdness. When they see it repeatedly and look at them, it implies that they have been seen as a freak. Fourth, they are not interesting. Therefore, it is admitted that what is presented by people with their bodies is what they are. However, in reality, people's perspectives differ from those who are regarded unattractive or even disproportionate.

Thus, cross-cultural and religious counseling also contribute significantly to overcome the problems in society on disability stereotypes against children with autism in particular for as much as the Indonesian nation consists of various cultures and religions. The cultural diversity is inevitable and undeniable in Indonesia and bound to be one nation and strength in this country.³⁹ Basically, it is important to know the meaning of culture. The definition of the culture here is still unclear in that there is no fixed standard to determine a culture. However, in this sense, a culture can be a socio-psychological construct, a similarity within a group of people in a psychological phenomenon, such as values, attitude, belief, and behavior, and the individual psychology as a macro-social construction.⁴⁰

Religion is a life bond form that acknowledges a being beyond the human and influences their actions so that it emerges an acknowledgement of obligations and duties to perform. Cultural and religious diversities in society certainly have an impact on the pattern of social balance which leads to diverse values, point of views, the understanding towards self-concept that influences behaviors.⁴¹

Cross-cultural and religious counseling is a process of counseling that involves counselor and counselee which have a different culture and religion and this process really

³⁸ Sugihartatik, "Upaya Pengembangan Budaya Inklusif Untuk Meningkatkan Rasa Percaya Diri Pada Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus," *Journal Education Research and Development* 2, no. 2 (2018): 35–45.

³⁹ Joyce Simon et al., *Ethnicity and Family Therapy, Family Relations*, 32 (1983), <https://doi.org/10.2307/583699>.

⁴⁰ Fatrida Anugrah Syafri and Muhamad Rifa'i Subhi Rifa, "Pemantapan Psychological Self Concept Peserta Didik Minoritas Melalui Konseling Lintas Budaya dan Agama," *Journal of Innovative Counseling : Theory, Practice & Research* 1 no. (2017): 24-30 .

⁴¹ M. R. Subhi, "Implementasi Konseling Lintas Budaya dan Agama Di Sekolah," *Jurnal Madaniyah* 1, no. 12 (2017): 75–96.

concerns on the diverse culture and religion of counselee.⁴² In this cross-cultural and religious counseling, counselor and counselee have their foundation of religions and cultures, and these differences can show the bias towards the culture and religion in their counseling's process, which can hamper the ongoing counseling process. To overcome this bias, the counselor needs to detach themselves from religion and cultural bias, and they should appreciate and respect the counselee's culture and religion⁴³. According to an expert, Atkinson, cross-cultural and religious counseling can occur if the counselor and counselee are different in ethnicity or have the same ethnicity. It can be observed from other variables, such as sexual orientation, social conditions, economy, and age.⁴⁴

Cross-cultural and religious counseling is designed to help clients develop themselves or overcome the problems they faced using the culture and religion they believed in. The reason is that every problem of clients cannot be handled with a scientific approach and it is possible to provide alternatives to overcome the problems through culture and religion.⁴⁵ In addition, through the cross-cultural and religious counseling approach, the clients can better understand their culture and religion and know the culture and customs that other groups believe and practice and the individuals were expected to use cultural aspects to solve their lives' problems.⁴⁶

As one of the countries with diverse cultures and religions, Indonesia can be a model in the implementation of cross-cultural and religious counseling. Each of the ethnicities with different cultures would also have various points of view in facing a problem. Like culture, religion provides people with a different lens through which to view the world. As the basis of counseling, religion is a way to deal with such problems according to the rules and religious norms they believed in.⁴⁷ Therefore, the approach of cross-cultural and religious counseling is the way for counselors and clients who have

⁴² Syahril, "Kata Kunci: Konseling Lintas Budaya Dalam Perspektif Budaya Indonesia Syahril."

⁴³ Suwarni Suwarni, "Memahami Perbedaan Budaya Sebagai Sarana Konseling Lintas Budaya," *KONSELING RELIGI Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam* 7, no. 1 (2016): 119, <https://doi.org/10.21043/kr.v7i1.1697>.

⁴⁴ Masturi Masturi, "Counselor Encapsulation: Sebuah Tantangan Dalam Pelayanan Konseling Lintas Budaya," *Jurnal Konseling Gusjigang* 1, no. 2 (2015): 6, <https://doi.org/10.24176/jkg.v1i2.407>.

⁴⁵ Suci Prasasti, "Konseling Lintas Budaya," *Jurnal Ilmiah Konseling* 18, no. 2 (2018): 12.

⁴⁶ Bc Denisa Oslejšová, "Diplomová Práce," 2016.

⁴⁷ Masturi, "Counselor Encapsulation: Sebuah Tantangan Dalam Pelayanan Konseling Lintas Budaya."

diverse background, cultures and religious beliefs in seeking alternatives to solve the problems with the cultural and religious approach of the client.⁴⁸

Furthermore, as early mentioned, we can solve the issue with a role-playing technique in counseling. It is a learning method that studies interpersonal attraction and social groups and help individuals to find personal meaning relating to their social conditions with the help of community and children with special needs. This is mainly due to the limits of intellectual reason that trouble them to follow the social norms. In this case, a disability to the understanding of social norms have an enormous impact on the social conformity. This is a remarkably effective to facilitate them in respecting the social behavior and values in society. After all, it is based on the assumption that (1) a real-world can be presented and seen as an analogy for the role-playing scenario, (2) role-playing is illustrated as a feeling of authenticity for children with special needs which either they think or express, (3) emotions and ideas for role-playing is significantly to increase an awareness, and then make a change, and (4) the invisibility in the psychological process in relation to attitudes, values, and belief system can bring into awareness through spontaneous role-playing.

Technically, the cross-cultural and religious counseling uses an approach of role-playing with which the counsellor and community people who perform acts of bullying children with special needs, play roles together. This is actually done owing to a lack of understanding to the children with special needs in society. No children want to be born with such condition but the power of God gives a special child in the family. In this case, role-playing heavily contributes to the stigma within society. If they were gifted or born with such condition, what would they do? Obviously, we can only leave it to God and change ways of thinking to be more optimistic about what has occurred. The counselor becomes the mediator in the role-playing between communities and children with disabilities to undergo the counseling according to the counseling concept in general. Thus, the approach of cross-cultural and religious counseling is an impressive attempt to find a workable solution to the issue on societal stereotypes of children with special needs.

Many research studies mentioned early are very much concerned with the negative effects suffered by children with disabilities. Jauhari confirmed the work *Exceptional Children and Youth* which is written by William Cruickshank and Gram

⁴⁸ Masturi.

Orville Johnson that stigmatizing children with special needs will jeopardize their education, and social and private life, yet their opportunity as citizens with equal rights.⁴⁹ Stereotypes not only occurs in the school environment, but also at home and in society. Even when children with special needs and disabilities grow up and have a better educational degree, they encounter discrimination before employers when applying a job.⁵⁰ Therefore, any forms of stereotypes subjected to children with disabilities and special needs are kinds of humiliation and thus will harm their intellectual, physical, social, or emotional state. Another effect is that stigma and stereotypes against children with disabilities and special needs will only impede their normal growth and development as human being. The case in Aceh is unique to be highlighted. Religious and spiritual material can be added to the course of counseling and therapeutic treatments, so they will be compatible with the context.

CONCLUSION

Children with special needs are those who require special education and necessarily need extra help for mental, emotional, and physical problems. Categories of special needs include visual impairment including blindness, deafness, mentally retarded, physical disabilities, emotional and social disorders, learning disabilities, oppositional defiant disorders, gifted and talented, health impairment, and autism spectrum disorder. Studies have shown that stereotypes against children with disabilities have impacted their psychological states, and this research confirmed that same findings. This research revealed that children participants felt and suffered mental pressure, anxiety, feeling of loneliness, helplessness, and sadness. However, due to parental and teacher support, they could cope with the pressing situations. In addition to such support, cultural and religious elements also played significant roles as their resilience.

A standard school for the children with special needs has been built by government as stated in the Article 1, the Regulation of Ministry of National Education Number 70 of 2009 regarding inclusive education for students who have abnormalities,

⁴⁹ Muhammad Nurrohman Jauhari, "Pengetahuan Mahasiswa PG-Paud Unipa Surabaya Tentang Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus."

⁵⁰ Zulkipli Lessy, Najib Kailani, and Asep Jahidin, "Barriers to Employment as Experienced by Disabled University Graduates in Yogyakarta, Indonesia," *Asian Social Work and Policy Review* 15, no. 2 (2021): 133–44, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aswp.12226>.

special intelligence or extraordinary talent. On top of that, in term of special education and education with special service, the government enacted the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, Article 32, of which states that special education is provided for learners who have difficulties in following the learning process because of physical, emotional, mental, and social deficiencies, and also for those with proven intelligence and especially gifted. In a daily life, people bully children with special needs due to having disabilities and stereotypes that make potentially damaging assumptions about other people. In other words, it is essential to overcome problems as the negative effects of societal stereotypes against children with special needs. The intervention of cross-cultural and religious counseling with an approach of role playing would be an appropriate way to change individuals from negative to positive thoughts towards the social stigma against children with special needs. It is a significant problem; however, they are a precious gift from Allah, and we need to give them the best protection and affection.

Prejudice, stigma and stereotype against anyone yet people with disabilities are against human rights. The case in Pidie of Aceh as it became a case study in this research is only one case of the iceberg anywhere in Indonesia. There are millions of Indonesian children with disabilities of any types do not receive proper attention and treatment from their family, community, and the state. Many of them are being abandoned yet neglected with no education. Some of them graduated only primary school but having no proper education and training their schooling. This, therefore, should embolden the third parties to campaign against any stereotypes against children with disabilities. As the family is the foregate for their education, these children with disabilities must gain proper education first and foremost from the family includes literacy, numeracy, hygiene, spirituality, and social-cultural skills in order to encounter challenges in their now and future life.

The limitation of this research is that the number of sampling is small and so the research cannot make a generalization of the finding because the context was only in a certain location. Hence, it is a specification for this particular case and justification of the theories of disability. Future studies, thus, should focus on investigating larger populations in several special primary schools for researchers to make a better

generalization for refining the practice of inclusion in special primary schools in Indonesia.

Given aforementioned findings, the research recommends the school stakeholders to facilitate accommodations for children with special needs, as well the government needs to pay attention for the state-run special schools to promote inclusive programs for students with special needs via class curricular and extracurricular activities in order to mitigate the perpetuation of stereotypes against children with special needs in school. Thus, there is a necessary effort to provide more inclusive classes than building special schools intended only for students with special needs. By such an effort, the students with disabilities are comfortable and adjustable to the environments as they can learn from their colleagues and peers who also learn about becoming inclusive to others. Mutual relationship and reciprocal help are needed to establish in the school environments where accepting attitudes can increase the levels of confidence and positive attitudes of the students to learn and collaborate in learning. It is concluded that this effort will yield better achievements.

As findings show that many children with disabilities need close attention from parents, teachers, and the government, the researchers highlighted that this research implies that there is a necessity to run anti-stereotype campaigns regarding people with special needs or disabilities, and the campaigns are in the forms of interventions that benefit practices of discrimination in school as well as inequalities experienced by students with special needs or disabilities. Further implications of this research are that administrative staff must be well informed about anticipated stereotype of the students while they oppose the stereotype and empower the students by conducting strategies to disclose their disabilities. Lastly, students with disabilities and special needs are encouraged to challenge stereotype by learning to tell positive narratives about their life using their strengths and coping with their limitations.

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