

## **Teachers' Ability in Identifying Children with Low Academic Achievements in Inclusive Education**

**Eviani Damastuti, Dewi Ratih Rapisa**

University of Lambung Mangkurat  
Email: eviani.damastuti.plb@ulm.ac.id

**Abstract:** Children with low academic achievement are one of the problems that are often found in schools but, in general, children with this condition often cannot be identified by teachers. Whereas the success of educational services for children with low academic achievement is determined by the ability of teachers to identify children. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the teacher's ability to identify children with low academic achievement in schools providing inclusive education. This quantitative descriptive research was conducted at 4 elementary schools in Banjarmasin City and Banjar Regency with the number of research subjects on 28 classroom teachers. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires and interviews and then analyzed quantitatively descriptively. The results showed that the teacher's ability to identify children with low academic achievement with an average of 33.33% both in screening, referral, and classification functions. At the stage of *screening*, the process carried out is still incomplete, because identification is carried out only using identification instruments, simple tests, and inadequate supporting documents (Family Cards (KK), birth certificates, children's data). Most of the teachers have not observed children's abilities, interviewed, and completed IQ test results. At the referral stage, the teacher has not collaborated with professional staff. Most students with low academic achievement are classified by teachers as slow learners, without knowing their IQ scores. The teachers with lack of ability to understand the process of identifying children with special needs will determine the handling of children with special needs in schools providing inclusive education.

**Keywords:** *Teacher Ability, Identification, Children with Low Academic Achievement*

### **INTRODUCTION**

When a school is designated as an inclusive education provider, the various responsibilities of inclusive education are not only the duties of Special Education Teachers but also all components of education in schools, such as regular teachers. Regular teachers play an important role in educational services for all children, such as recognizing each student's characteristics and implementing learning services that adapt to the conditions of students. Class teachers generally know every student in their class, for example, students with good and

low achievement. The children with low school achievement school are often labeled as lazy, stupid, or other names so that children's participation in learning is neglected. Whereas the low learning achievement of children can be caused by having special barriers/needs and if handled properly, the child will show development and increase in learning outcomes.

The low achievement shown by students cannot be physically recognized, because it is not always caused by low intelligence. There are children with special needs who physically do not show any difference from typical children, for example, children with emotional and behavioral barriers, learning difficulties, slow learning, and gifted (Mirnawati & Eviani, 2019).

The low achievement shown by students can be seen from the inability to obtain, store, and use special skills or information widely, as well as attention and memory problems that affect academic performance (Raharjo, Kawuryan, & Ahyani, 2011). This is not often realized by regular teachers because of the diversity of characteristics of children with special needs that are not so striking in physical differences, which causing a teachers to have difficulty recognizing them (Rapisa, 2018). Generally, children with disabilities who are accepted in inclusive schools are easier to identify based on visible symptoms such as hearing impairment, autism, and Down Syndrome.

Regular teachers or classroom teachers already know the learning problems shown by students. Identification of children with low achievement can be carried out through observation, parental interviews, simple tests, analysis of studies of academic values and child development, and in more detail it is carried out by involving other experts such as psychologists through psychological tests, such as IQ tests. One in four research schools carried out the entire identification series, but this was only done at the time of admission of new students. In the other three schools, children with learning problems and low academic achievement were not comprehensively identified. Furthermore, regular teachers show confusion regarding the labels

for the types of barriers shown by students due to the lack of knowledge about children with special needs and their services. The implementation of learning services must be adapted to the needs of students through identification and assessment that can be applied by teachers and professionals (Dewantoro, Yasin, & Irvan, 2020; Fitriana & Sulthoni, 2016). Slow learner, learning disability, and intellectual disability are terms that show the similarity of symptoms so that if one recognizes the characteristics of the three classifications, it can lead to errors in handling. Based on field findings, it can be said that identification services at the four research schools were not carried out in accordance with the procedures for services for children with special needs, both at the time of acceptance of new students and when learning had taken place/mid-semester.

Slow learner is a condition that requires extra time and help in regular classes. Children with this condition are able to learn the same things as regular children, but it takes longer/slower than children in general. In other words, slow learners are people who learn slower than the average child (Vasudevan, 2017). Slow learners show problems in math, reading, writing, abstract thinking, short attention spans, exercise, low self-esteem, and other life skills (Borah, 2013).

Learning disabilities are neurological disorders that cause difficulties in reading, writing, spelling, and reasoning (Ali & Rafi, 2016). The term learning disabilities refers to several disorders that can affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding, or application of verbal and/or nonverbal information (Abdulaziz, Amna, & Watfa, 2016).

Intellectual disability is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in cognition, deficits in adaptive function, and onset during the developmental period (Marrus & Hall, 2017). Intellectual impairment appears in infancy or early childhood, although in some cases it cannot be diagnosed until the child is more than five years old (Moeschler et al., 2014).

Knowledge of the basic concepts of each classification of Children with Special Needs and the basic concepts of identification become a pedagogical competency that must be possessed by regular teachers at schools providing inclusive education. If these pedagogical competencies have been mastered, the teachers will be able to demonstrate professional competence, for example the ability and accuracy in analyzing the identification results. The accuracy in the analysis of the identification results will provide the right accessibility in educational services for Children with Special Needs in inclusive schools.

This study aims to determine the teacher's ability to identify children with low academic achievement in schools providing inclusive education. The Identification of Children with Special Needs at the 57 Banda Aceh State Elementary School which showed

that at the research school, teachers had not identified 22 students who were suspected of having more than one special need at the school level. light, moderate, and heavy since PPDB. The Implementation of Identification and Assessment of ABK at the Inclusive School SDN 003 Tebing, Karimun Regency and it was found that the school cooperates with psychologists in the identification process but still uses the child development history form and the form of the types of obstacles and their indicators (Dianasari, 2019). In contrast to the two studies, this article aims to find out about the ability of teachers to identify children with low achievement based on visible characteristics.

## METHODS

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach, namely research that uses data in the form of numbers to predict population conditions and future trends (Mukhid, 2021). Data collection was carried out at four elementary schools in Banjarmasin City and Banjar Regency, namely SDN Pasar Lama 3, SDN Banua Anyar 4, SDN Mekar and SDN Pasar Jati 3 with 28 research subjects with a purposive sample. Data collection techniques were carried out using questionnaires and interviews, then the data were analyzed descriptively. The questionnaire used was compiled by the research team to determine the ability of teachers to implement the identification of children with low achievement in inclusive schools.

Descriptive problem solving is done by describing the object of research in the current state based on the facts as they are, then analyzed and interpreted (Sofyan, 2016). The choice of approach and data analysis was based on the fact that descriptive quantitative research is a study to analyze data (questionnaires and interviews) in a descriptive way to describe the data that has been collected as it is.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This study aims to determine the ability of teachers to identify children with low academic achievement in schools providing inclusive education. This research was carried out in four schools providing inclusive education in Banjarmasin City and Banjar Regency, which schools are located on the banks of the Martapura River. The four schools are SDN Pasar Lama 3, SDN Banua Anyar 4, SDN Mekar and SDN Pasar Jati 3. Data collection techniques in this study used questionnaires and interviews.

Results showed that the ability of teachers to identify children with low academic achievement is still relatively low. It can be seen from the results of a questionnaire completed by 28 teachers from the school SDN Pasar Lama 3, SDN Banua Anyar 4, SDN Mekar and SDN Pasar Jati 3 at Table 1.

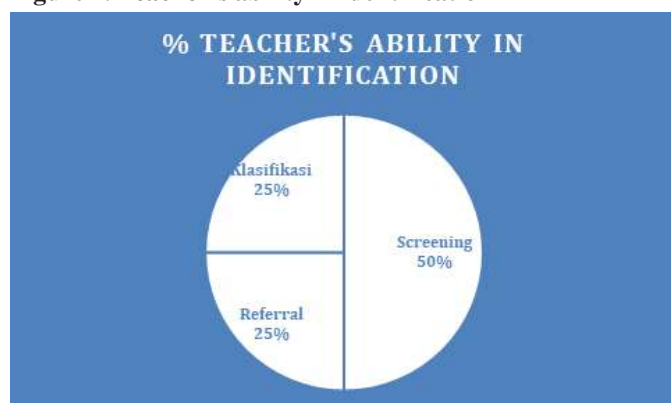
**Table 1. Ability Questionnaire Teacher in Identifying Children with Low Academic Achievement**

No.	Statement	Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%
1.	The teacher conducts screening of children with special needs based on learning outcomes or children's	14	50%	14	50%
2.	The teacher gives academic tests (reading, writing, arithmetic) to all children in order to screen Children	14	50%	14	50%
3.	The teacher conducts interviews with parents in order to screen Children with Special	28	100%	0	0%
4.	The teacher makes observations to all children in order to screen Children with Special Needs	7	25%	21	75%
5.	The teacher collects documents related to the development history of all children	7	25%	21	75%
6.	The teacher completes the IQ test results to screen Children with Special Needs	7	25%	21	75%
7.	The teacher creates a database for Children with Special Needs who are caught and need transfer	7	25%	21	75%
8.	The teacher creates a database of children who do not need to be transferred	7	25%	21	75%
9.	The teacher transfers to professionals	7	25%	21	75%
10.	The teacher classifies Children with Special Needs who need further treatment	7	25%	21	75%

**Table 2. Identification services for children with low academic achievement**

School	Screening at the time of acceptance of students	Networking form					IQ Test	Screening during mid-semester learning
		Screening through learning outcomes	Simple test for children	Observation	Interview to parents	Child's personal data document		
SDN Pasar Lama 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
SDN Banua Anyar 4	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
SDN Mekar	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-
SDN Pasar Jati 3	-	-	-	-	ü	-	-	-

**Figure 1. Teacher's ability in identification**



The results of the above questionnaire when visualized based on the identification stages in the chart (Figure 1). Based on the results of the questionnaire and the picture above, it can be seen that the ability of teachers at SDN Pasar Lama 3, SDN Banua Anyar 4, SDN Mekar and SDN Pasar Jati 3 in identifying children with low academic achievement shows an average of 33.33% both in the screening function, referral and classification. The screening function shows the average percentage of gain of 50% which is found in statement numbers 1 to 5, the referral function shows the average percentage of gain of 25% which is found in statements number 6 to 9 and the classification function of statement number 10 with the percentage of gain of 25% .

The descriptions of the services implemented by the four schools regarding the identification of children with low achievement describe on Table 2.

The results of interviews conducted at SDN Pasar Lama 3 indicate that schools have screened or screened children with special needs at the beginning of new student admissions. The SDN Pasar Lama 3 has formed a screening committee for Children with Special Needs which will later be tasked with identifying and assessing children who register at the school. Screening for children with special needs at SDN Pasar Lama 3 is in the form of a simple test for children and interviews with parents regarding the condition and development of the child, in addition the PPDB committee will also ask for documents such as the child's biodata, Family Card (KK), Birth Certificate and IQ test results. . Identification of Children with Special Needs at this school is only carried out at the beginning of the acceptance of new students so that it is not possible to label Children with Special Needs when learning is already running in the middle of the semester. The school will not carry out further identification if it is known that there are children who show learning problems and low academic achievement in the middle of the semester, because they will be categorized as slow learners. The result of interviews with teachers at SDN Banua Anyar 4 show that the identification instrument that is usually used to identify Children with Special Needs at SDN Banua Anyar 4 is an identification instrument obtained by teachers while still in college. If there are children who show learning problems and low achievement, the first thing to do is to coordinate with the parents or guardians of the child concerned. Labeling is generally done based on the observations of the teachers while the children are learning in class. SDN Banua Anyar 4 does not yet have a special instrument to identify children with academic barriers at school, especially when teachers know that there are children who show learning problems in the middle of the semester. When teachers meet children with low academic achievement and learning problems in the middle of the semester, labeling will usually be given to children based on

observations while children are studying in class, not based on in-depth identification of children's barriers, and do not yet know the results of their IQ tests. .

Interviews at SDN Pasar Jati 3 resulted in data that the teachers at this school lacked understanding and mastery of how to identify and teach children with special needs found in schools. One of the teachers stated that if there are children who have problems learning at SDN Pasar Jati 3, at the time of initial entry or in the middle of learning, generally these children will be labeled as Children with Special Needs but not classified as obstacles. Then the children who have learning problems at SDN Pasar Jati 3 will be collected in a special class for 3 hours of lessons to learn various things that are the child's weaknesses accompanied by a special teacher. The teachers at SDN Pasar Jati 3 have not been able to identify and classify the Children with Special Needs in the school.

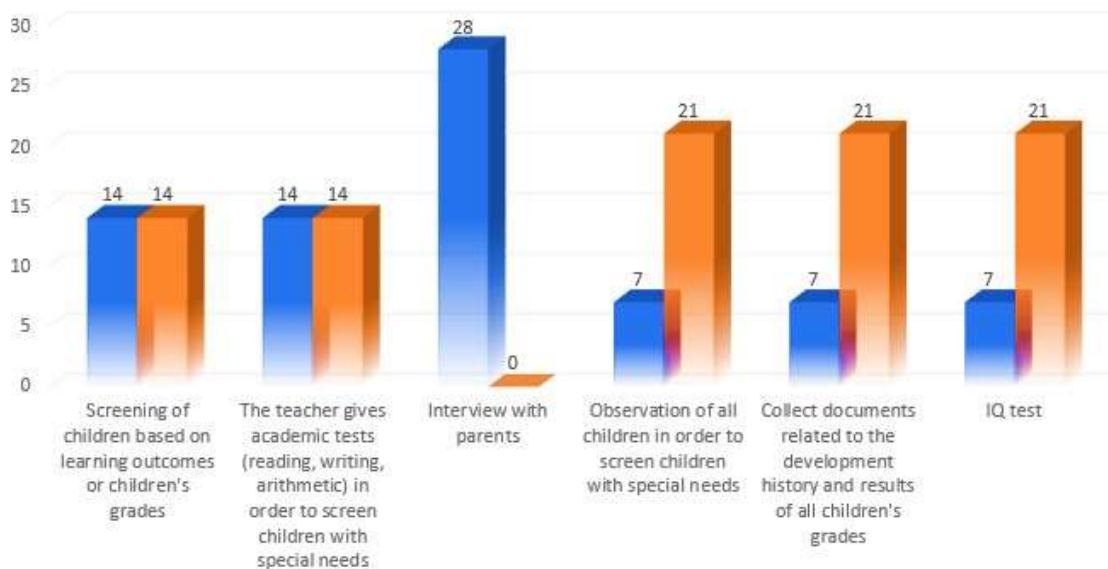
The results of interviews with a number of teachers at SDN Mekar showed that the school did not conduct screening or identification of Children with Special Needs during PPDB. The teachers who teach at SDN Mekar admit that they have never received socialization or teaching in inclusive education settings, so they do not understand how to identify or treat Children with Special Needs. The school and teachers at SDN Mekar stated that they did not identify with written instruments or collect supporting documents to identify Children with Special Needs. Observations by the teacher are carried out during learning, if later found a child who is late or has a lower achievement than his friends, then this child will be labeled as a slow learner. The labeling process at SDN Mekar will only run like that, without any further action or handling for these children.

## Discussion

One of the reasons for the successful implementation of inclusive education is the adequate knowledge and skills of teachers (Flecha & Soler, 2013; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Teacher competence in identification is reported to be important for inclusive education (Majoko, 2019). A professional teacher must have the ability to identify and recognize the abilities of his students. The ability to identify children with special needs such as children with low achievement is a provision in the learning process and subsequent services. Therefore, it is very important for elementary school teachers to be equipped with the ability to identify children with special needs, especially those with academic problems, so that they can be given appropriate treatment.

Identification is carried out to identify children in elementary schools oriented to traits or characteristics that include: physical condition, intellectual ability, communication, and social emotional (Dewantoro, S. Susilawati, & R. Pradipta, 2018).

## IDENTIFICATION TECHNIQUE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS



**Figure 2. Identification Technique Questionnaire Results**

Techniques that can be used in the implementation of identification are simple tests, psychological tests, observations, and documentation studies on the development and acquisition of students' scores during learning.

The percentage of techniques used in identifying children with low academic achievement in 28 teachers in the four research schools is described as follows:

The Figure 2 shows that the ability of teachers to identify children with low academic achievement is still relatively low because the use of identification techniques is not applied evenly. Interviews with parents were the only technique applied by all research schools.

The screening is carried out on all children in the class, at this stage identification functions to mark children who show certain symptoms, then conclude that children who have certain abnormalities/deviations are classified as Children with Special Needs (Rapisa, 2018). The results of the identification will divide the children into two groups, the first is children who do not need to be referred to other experts (professionals) and can be directly handled by the teacher themselves in the form of appropriate learning services. Second, children who need to be referred to other experts first (referrals) such as psychologists, doctors, orthopedagogues and/or therapists, are then handled by teachers.

Based on the process, identification can be done by the school at the time of acceptance of new students and in the middle of the semester if the teacher assumes that in his class there are children who show academic achievement during the learning process.

Documentation studies based on student scores during learning are one of the important techniques by teachers in inclusive schools in carrying out identification. In fact, in four schools the study stated that if there were students who showed low academic achievement in the middle of the semester, they would be considered as slow learners, labeling based on teacher observations, and not receiving the proper learning services.

Based on the process and procedure, it can be concluded that in the four research schools, not all schools implemented screening services through parent interviews, document analysis of children's learning and growth assessment documents, simple tests, observation, analysis and identification involving other experts such as psychologists to determine IQ in children. children suspected of having academic and developmental problems. This is also evidenced by the obtained average percentage of the netting function is 50% and the referral function shows the average percentage of acquisition, which is 25%.

In essence, children with special needs with conditions such as slow learners, intellectual disabilities, and learning difficulties require appropriate intervention. The intervention begins with identification so that the condition label on each student with low academic achievement can be known. The similarity of symptoms in the three classifications of children with special needs can lead to confusion so that the identification process for children with low achievement which is thought to indicate these three classifications needs to be applied by psychologists needs to be referred. Psychologists apply psychological theories in understanding, explaining, predicting, controlling, and solving the problems of children with special needs (Hanurawan, 2017).

The lack of identification services implemented by the research schools was caused by the lack of teacher knowledge about children with special needs. This indicates that teachers in the four research schools need increased knowledge to be able to implement better identification services. The success of inclusion really depends on the attitudes and knowledge of teachers about students with special needs (Dapudong, 2014). Knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers are the most important variables in the education of children with special needs (Baguisa & Ang-Manaig, 2019). Knowledge that must be possessed by teachers in inclusive schools, such as knowing how to identify learning needs and implementing learning services according to the needs and phases of child development. Inadequate initial knowledge can lead to ineffective learning for students from the very beginning of the learning process (Dewi, Tiatri, & Mularsih, 2020).

Teachers are expected to be aware of the differences between students and understand the influence of different backgrounds, abilities, and learning needs in the learning process. When associated with research, teachers need to know and be aware that each student in the class has different characteristics, abilities and needs. Enforcement of the label of learning barriers, slow learning, or intellectual barriers needs to be done by involving other experts because in fact an incorrect identification analysis can affect growth and development and the achievement of learning goals that should be achieved by students based on their potential. Therefore, in order to identify children with special needs, the Foundation emphasizes that teachers need to attend special education training (Baguisa & Ang-Manaig, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, there are three things that can be concluded regarding the ability of teachers to identify children with low academic achievement based on the identification stages, namely: (1) The ability of teachers to identify children with low academic achievement with an average of 33.33% good in screening, referral and classification functions. Meanwhile, at the screening stage that was carried out incomplete, the identification process was carried out only using identification instruments, simple tests, and inadequate supporting documents (Family Cards (KK), birth certificates, children's personal data). Most of the teachers have not conducted observations of children's abilities, interviewed children, studied documentation based on academic scores, and completed IQ test results. (2) At the referral stage, the teacher has not collaborated with professional staff. Most students with low academic achievement are classified by teachers as slow learners, without knowing their IQ

scores. The teacher's lack of ability to understand the process of identifying children with special needs will determine the handling of children with special needs in schools providing inclusive education. Therefore, it is very important to train teachers of Inclusive Education Providing Schools related to the ability to identify Children with Special Needs. (3) At the classification stage, teachers do not know and understand the classification of Children with Special Needs based on the symptoms that appear. The ability of teachers to identify children with special needs in inclusive education schools in Banjarmasin City and Banjar Regency still needs to be improved through training/workshops.

Based on the conclusions above, the implication of this research is that teachers in four schools need training in order to improve knowledge and identification skills in children with low academic achievement. In inclusive schools, principals can facilitate the implementation of in-house training with the aim that regular teachers can have knowledge and competence regarding children with special needs.

## REFERENCES

- Abdulaziz, A. M., Amna, A. F., & Watfa, A. M. (2016). *Learning disabilities: opportunities and challenges in Oman*.
- Ali, S., & Rafi, M. (2016). Learning disabilities: Characteristics and instructional approaches. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, 3(4), 111–115.
- Baguisa, L., & Ang-Manaig, K. (2019). Knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers on inclusive education and academic performance of children with special needs. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(3), 1409–1425.
- Borah, R. R. (2013). Slow learners: Role of teachers and guardians in honing their hidden skills. *International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration*, 3(2), 139–143.
- Dapudong, R. C. (2014). Teachers' knowledge and attitude towards inclusive education: Basis for an enhanced professional development program. *International Journal of Learning & Development*, 4(4), 1–24.
- Dewantoro, D. A., S. Susilawati, & R. Pradipta. (2018). *Family Environment Support in Early Intervention of Children with Cerebral Palsy*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2991/ecpe-18.2018.7>
- Dewantoro, D. A., Yasin, M. H. M., & Irvan, M. (2020). Measurement of E-Learning Readiness for Students with and without Disabilities. *2020 6th International Conference on Education and Technology (ICET)*, 152–159. IEEE.

- Dewi, T. T. U., Tiatri, S., & Mularsih, H. (2020). Peran pengetahuan awal tentang anak berkebutuhan khusus dan efikasi guru terhadap sikap guru pada pendidikan inklusif. *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, Dan Seni*, 4(2), 304–314.
- Dianasari, E. L. (2019). Implementasi Identifikasi, dan Asesmen ABK di Sekolah Inklusif SDN 003 Tebing Kabupaten Karimun. *Khazanah Ilmu Berazam*, 2(1 Maret), 107–114.
- Fitriana, D. A., & Sulthoni, S. (2016). Inclusive Education Implementation At Sdn Summersari 1 Malang. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan* .... Retrieved from <http://journal2.um.ac.id/index.php/jppplb/article/view/4341>
- Flecha, R., & Soler, M. (2013). Turning difficulties into possibilities: Engaging Roma families and students in school through dialogic learning. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 43(4), 451–465.
- Florian, L., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(5), 813–828.
- Hanurawan, Fattah. (2017). The Role of Psychology in Special Needs Education. *Journal of ICSAR*, 1(2). 180–184. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um005v1i22017p180>
- Majoko, T. (2019). Teacher key competencies for inclusive education: Tapping pragmatic realities of Zimbabwean special needs education teachers. *Sage Open*, 9(1), 2158244018823455.
- Marrus, N., & Hall, L. (2017). Intellectual disability and language disorder. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics*, 26(3), 539–554.
- Mirawati, M., & Eviani, D. (2019). *Laporan PKM: Pendampingan identifikasi anak berkebutuhan khusus di sekolah penyelenggara pendidikan inklusif (SDN Inti Teluk dalam 1 Banjarmasin)*.
- Moeschler, J. B., Shevell, M., Genetics, C. on, Moeschler, J. B., Shevell, M., Saul, R. A., ... Jones, M. C. (2014). Comprehensive evaluation of the child with intellectual disability or global developmental delays. *Pediatrics*, 134(3), e903–e918.
- Mukhid, A. (2021). *Metodologi Penelitian Pendekatan Kuantitatif*. Jakad Media Publishing.
- Raharjo, T., Kawuryan, F., & Ahyani, L. N. (2011). Identifikasi Learning Disability pada Anak Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Sosial Budaya*, 4(2), 136–142.
- Rapisa, D. R. (2018). Kemampuan Guru dalam Melakukan Identifikasi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus. *PEDAGOGIA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*.
- Sofyan, S. I. (2016). Statistika Deskriptif untuk penelitian dilengkapi Perhitungan Manual dan Aplikasi SPSS Versi 17, Ed. I. *Cet. II*.
- Vasudevan, A. (2017). Slow learners—Causes, problems and educational programmes. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(12), 308–313.