



Jurnal Eduscience (JES)

Volume 11, No. 3

December, Year 2024

Submit : 30 November 2024

Accepted : 2 December 2024

OVERCOMING SLOW LEARNERS' CHALLENGES: THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Slow learners (SL) often face difficulties in academic achievement and social adaptation, requiring structured psychosocial support. This study aims to analyze the implementation of psychosocial support for SL at SDN Pisangan Timur 11, East Jakarta. Using a mixed-method approach and case study method, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews and classroom observations, while quantitative data were gathered using questionnaires distributed to teachers and parents. The results show that psychosocial support at SDN Pisangan Timur 11 is implemented through three main dimensions: emotional support, instructional support, and social support. Emotional support, such as motivation and praise, significantly boosts SL's self-confidence. Instructional support, such as adjusting instructions, repetition, and strategic seating arrangements, enhances comprehension. Social support is effectively carried out through peer learning, which improves academic performance and social interaction. Challenges faced include limited attention span, high dependency on assistance, and a lack of teacher training. An important finding from this study is the strategic role of peers in supporting SL's academic and social development in the context of inclusive education.

Keywords: slow learners, psychosocial support, inclusive education, peer learning, instructional strategies

Abstrak

Anak lamban belajar (slow learners, SL) sering menghadapi kesulitan dalam pencapaian akademik dan adaptasi sosial, sehingga memerlukan dukungan psikososial yang terstruktur. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi dukungan psikososial bagi SL di SDN Pisangan Timur 11, Jakarta Timur. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan mix method dan metode studi kasus, data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi kelas, sedangkan data kuantitatif dikumpulkan dengan mengisi kuesioner yang diberikan pada guru dan orang tua. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dukungan psikososial di SDN Pisangan Timur 11 dilaksanakan melalui tiga dimensi utama: dukungan emosional, dukungan instruksional, dan dukungan sosial. Dukungan emosional, seperti motivasi dan pujian, secara signifikan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri SL. Dukungan instruksional, seperti penyesuaian instruksi, pengulangan, dan pengaturan tempat duduk strategis, meningkatkan pemahaman. Dukungan sosial dilakukan secara efektif melalui pembelajaran teman sebaya, yang meningkatkan kinerja akademik dan interaksi sosial. Tantangan yang dihadapi mencakup keterbatasan rentang perhatian, ketergantungan tinggi pada bantuan, dan kurangnya pelatihan guru. Temuan penting dari penelitian ini adalah peran strategis teman sebaya dalam mendukung perkembangan akademik dan sosial SL dalam konteks pendidikan inklusif.

Kata kunci: anak lamban belajar, dukungan psikososial, pendidikan inklusif, pembelajaran teman sebaya, strategi instruksional



INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a global focus to ensure that all children, regardless of ability or background, have equal access to quality education. This approach accommodates student diversity by creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment (Medina-García et al., 2020). Inclusive education is not only for children with special needs (CSN), such as physical disabilities but also for those facing intellectual challenges, including slow learners (SL), who are often overlooked in traditional education systems (Luo et al., 2024). International organizations such as UNESCO have emphasized the importance of inclusion in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims for inclusive and quality education for all children without discrimination (Geleta, 2019).

Indonesia has adopted inclusive education as part of its national education system. The government strives to ensure that children with special needs, including slow learners, have equal access to quality education. Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology shows that the number of children with special needs, including slow learners, continues to increase each year, and about 15% of identified CSN students in Indonesia fall under the category of SL (Husna et al., 2019). Inclusive education in Indonesia aims to provide opportunities for all children, including those with special needs, to learn in the same environment as their peers (Bedha Tamela et al., 2020). However, there are still various challenges in implementing inclusive education in Indonesia, such as a lack of understanding among teachers about inclusive education and limited resources available in schools (Angreni and Sari, 2020; Irawati and Winario, 2020). The biggest challenge is ensuring they receive relevant and quality education in regular schools with adequate support (Bedha Tamela et al., 2020).

Slow learners have an intelligence level ranging from an IQ of 70 to 84/85 or within 1 to 2 standard deviations below the average IQ, which causes them to learn at a slower pace than their peers (Anggraeni, 2022). These children often face challenges in understanding academic material and adapting socially. In addition, they require more time and specialized teaching methods to participate effectively in the educational process (Sarvani, 2020; Asri and Nuroh, 2023). The challenges faced by slow learners not only include academic aspects but also emotional aspects, such as anxiety and low self-confidence, which hinder their academic and psychological development (Martin and Borup, 2022; Selvarajan and Vasanthagumar, 2022).

Psychosocial support is crucial in helping children with special needs, including slow learners, in a dynamic educational environment. Research shows that slow learners who receive psychosocial support tend to show higher self-confidence, better social skills, and a significant reduction in anxiety compared to



those who do not receive similar support (Roksa and Kinsley, 2019). Psychosocial support typically involves interventions focusing on students' mental and emotional well-being, such as counseling, social skills training, and curriculum modifications tailored to the individual needs of slow learners.

The psychosocial approach also includes strategies like the Individualized Education Program (IEP), designed to meet each student's unique needs. According to Dibia and Ajoku (2018), IEP-based programs can significantly improve adaptive skills and communication in slow learners. Anggraeni (2022) reported that IEPs are implemented with full support from teachers and parents, allowing slow learners to learn through a more personalized and targeted approach. IEPs focused on cognitive aspects have proven to increase students' self-confidence and motivation (Adawiyah and Daulay, 2022). IEPs help slow learners progress at their own learning pace and capacity, boosting their confidence and motivation.

One of the schools focused on in this study is SDN Pisangan Timur 11, East Jakarta. This school is one of the inclusive schools that accepts students with various special needs, including slow learners. The school has developed a psychosocial support-based approach to assist slow learners, but further evaluation is needed to assess the effectiveness of this approach in improving students' psychosocial well-being and learning outcomes.

Numerous studies have been conducted on inclusive schools related to slow learners in Indonesia. Mukhlis et al. (2023) investigated the use of various teaching strategies for slow learners, Supriyani et al., (2022) studied schools with a focus on inclusive and adaptive approaches, and Syaputri & Sumiati (2020) examined psychoeducation programs aimed at improving regular students' acceptance of slow learners. All these research findings showed improvements in learning outcomes, active engagement, and social interactions for slow learners. Research on psychosocial support for slow learners by Hartadi et al. (2019) and emotional support from teachers and parents by Minkos and Gelbar (2021) helped slow learners navigate psychological pressures. Meanwhile, the findings of Shin and Hickey (2020) indicated increased motivation to learn and academic outcomes for slow learners, and Grigorenko et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of positive interactions between teachers and students in helping slow learners develop social adaptation skills. Unfortunately, most previous research has not paid adequate attention to the ongoing collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school community.

This study aims to fill the gap by exploring how structured psychosocial approaches can be effectively applied in inclusive schools, particularly at SDN Pisangan Timur 11. This research focuses on strategies that can improve slow learners' emotional, social, and academic well-being through collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school community.



The urgency of this research is based on several important aspects. First, although inclusive education has become a global and national priority, its implementation for slow learners is often not optimal. This study aims to bridge the gap between policy and actual practice in the local context. Second, the lack of research on psychosocial support for slow learners in Indonesia allows this study to address this gap.

The primary objective of this research is to identify effective forms of psychosocial support and analyze how these interventions can be applied sustainably to enhance the psychosocial well-being of slow learners. With this approach, the study is expected to provide practical insights for educators and policymakers in designing strategies that support the holistic development of slow learners.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach with a case study method to analyze psychosocial support for slow learners at SDN Pisangan Timur 11, East Jakarta. The mixed-methods approach was chosen because it allows the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more holistic picture of how psychosocial support is applied and perceived by slow learners, as well as how this support influences their social and academic adaptation. The case study method was chosen because this research focuses on a specific location, SDN Pisangan Timur 11, where the school implements an inclusive approach for students with special needs (Cresswell, 2018).

The qualitative approach is used to explore the experiences and perceptions of slow learners, teachers, and parents regarding the support provided. This aims to deeply understand how psychosocial support plays a role in students' social and emotional development. This study's subjects (population) consist of slow learners, teachers, and parents at SDN Pisangan Timur 11. Slow learners were chosen as the main focus because they require special attention in teaching and psychosocial support. The selection of informants was done through purposive sampling to ensure the depth of information regarding the psychosocial support provided. The primary informants consist of 1) one third-grade teacher who has taught slow learners for at least three years in an inclusive class. 2) Three parents of third-grade students who have children with learning difficulties were selected through volunteer sampling. ,

The qualitative data collection techniques include in-depth interviews and observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and parents to explore the emotional, instructional, and social support given to slow learners. Semi-structured interviews were held for 45-60 minutes per informant and conducted once for each selected parent and teacher. Non-participant observation was carried out to monitor social interactions between slow learners, teachers, and their peers in the classroom. Observations



were conducted over four weeks, with one observation session per week lasting approximately 60 minutes. Data was recorded through field notes and video recordings (with informants' consent).

Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires distributed to 12 teachers and 27 parents. These questionnaires measure their perceptions of the effectiveness of psychosocial support in helping students adapt socially and academically. Slovin's formula was used to determine the sample size for parents, with a margin of error of 10%. Due to the limited number of teachers, all class teachers at SDN Pisangan Timur 11 were included as respondents.

The qualitative data analysis technique was carried out using thematic analysis based on the model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of four main steps: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The quantitative data from the questionnaires will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe teachers' and parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of psychosocial support given to slow learners. These results will be compared with findings from the qualitative analysis to provide a deeper understanding.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study first tested the instrument and used several techniques: 1) Triangulation: Data obtained from various sources (interviews, observations, questionnaires) will be cross-checked to verify the consistency of findings. 2) Member Checking: Findings will be confirmed with informants to ensure they align with their experiences. 3) Prolonged Engagement: The researcher will conduct observations over an extended period to capture dynamics that might be missed in shorter observations.

This study adheres to strict ethical procedures, obtaining informed consent from all informants (teachers and parents). Each informant is fully informed about the purpose of the study, data collection methods, and their rights as participants. Data collected will be kept confidential by anonymizing names and using codes for each participant.

Several limitations in this study should be noted: 1) Limited Generalizability: Findings from a single school may only be generalized to some schools with different contexts. 2) Limited Sample Size: A small sample size may limit the diversity of experiences represented. 3) Short Observation Duration: Observations conducted within a limited time frame may only partially capture long-term dynamics. 4) Dependence on Researcher Interpretation: Researcher bias may influence data interpretation, although mitigation efforts have been made through triangulation and member checking.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the implementation of psychosocial support for slow learners (SL) at SDN Pisangan Timur 11, East Jakarta. The results focus on three main dimensions of psychosocial support: emotional, instructional, and social, and their impact on SL in an inclusive school environment. Data was collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers and parents.

Context and Setting of SDN Pisangan Timur 11

SDN Pisangan Timur 11 is an inclusive school that accommodates students with diverse learning abilities. The school provides child-friendly facilities and builds an inclusive ecosystem involving all elements of the school community. Facilities include an open reading corner, a mosque, a computer lab, a library, and a sports field. Classrooms are equipped with visual aids and technological tools to assist children struggling with text comprehension.

The school pays special attention to slow learners by creating a supportive learning environment for all students. This is demonstrated through active collaboration between the principal, teachers, and parents to foster a conducive learning environment. Activities include regular meetings, communication through group chats, and training programs to improve teachers' skills in handling special needs.

Classroom teachers manage learning and monitor the psychosocial development of all students, including slow learners. They design lessons tailored to the characteristics of students in each class, considering both academically proficient students and slow learners while ensuring their psychosocial comfort.

The classroom setup reflects inclusive principles, emphasizing that every student should receive the necessary support to thrive. The teacher strategically arranges the seating, grouping one slow learner with academically capable peers to promote social interaction and mutual learning. This strategy ensures that slow learners feel supported and comfortable during learning activities.

This approach aligns with Grigorenko et al. (2020), who emphasize that close social support enhances the psychological well-being of slow learners and reduces anxiety in academic settings. The school's efforts uphold the principles of inclusivity, ensuring that every child has equal access to quality education.

Profile of Slow Learner Individuals

Observations and interviews revealed the unique characteristics of each slow learner (SL), highlighting the need for a tailored approach.

- a. SL-1: Based on IQ test results, SL-1 has an IQ score of 80. SL-1 often struggles with focus and is easily distracted by activities around them. They frequently become preoccupied with nearby objects, such as a toy ring or other items. SL-1 requires repeated instructions and tends to ask peers or the teacher to confirm their tasks. Peer support and direct attention from the teacher help SL-1 stay focused on the task.
- b. SL-2: This student consistently receives the lowest grades across all subjects. While SL-2 has mastered reading, they often become overly absorbed in themselves. SL-2 shows the ability to understand tasks but requires repeated reminders to maintain focus. Individual support from the teacher helps them stay on task, although repeated instructions are often necessary.
- c. SL-3: Like SL-2, SL-3 consistently receives the lowest grades in all subjects. SL-3 tends to be very active and enjoys social interactions but often disrupts peers during lessons. They rely heavily on assistance from peers and the teacher to complete tasks, showing behavior that requires extra supervision. The teacher often provides simplified and repetitive instructions to help SL-3 better understand the tasks. This student needs a more intensive approach, including one-on-one guidance and instructional adjustments, to minimize high levels of disruption during class.

Effectiveness of Psychosocial Support

The psychosocial support implemented at SDN Pisangan Timur 11 has proven effective in creating an inclusive learning environment for slow learners (SL). The strategies employed, covering emotional, instructional, and social aspects, have shown significant effectiveness when linked to inclusive education and social support theory. Supportive interpersonal relationships can enhance the psychosocial well-being of children and help them navigate academic challenges (Grigorenko et al., 2020).

a. Emotional Support

Teachers provide individual attention through praise, motivation, and creating a comfortable learning atmosphere to build SL's self-confidence. For instance, motivational praise helps easily distracted students focus and feel valued, motivating them to complete future tasks. Teachers use activities like singing to encourage learning enthusiasm and offer praise after task completion. Teachers also offer praise after tasks are completed, such as "Great job, keep up the good work," or "Correct, keep practicing at home." This strategy aligns with Jia and Cheng's (2022) and Ginting's (2023) research suggesting that positive experiences in the learning environment help children overcome challenges and develop self-

confidence. Individual attention builds emotional skills, enhances self-confidence, and nurtures positive learning habits (Anggraeni, 2022).



Figure 1: Emotional support for slow learners by the teacher

Teacher questionnaires reveal that 83.3% provide emotional support through verbal encouragement, special discussion time, and rewards for small achievements. Student participation in group activities increased by 40%, and 75% of students reported feeling more comfortable when supported emotionally by the school environment. This finding aligns with Dewi (2024), who states that emotional support plays a key role in students' well-being.

b. Instructional Support

Instructional adjustment strategies have proven effective in improving SL's understanding of the material. According to interviews, teachers modify tasks to match individual abilities, using simplified and repetitive instructions. Research by Asri & Nuroh (2023) shows that simple communication strategies and task modifications effectively enhance the motivation and learning abilities of slow learners. Tailored instruction and teaching methods increase the active involvement of slow-learner students, thereby improving learning outcomes (Maciver et al., 2019; Ramadani, 2024).

Strategic seating arrangements, such as placing SL in circles, semicircles, or front rows, enhance social interaction and student attention. This aligns with findings that proper seating arrangements contribute to improved learning outcomes, particularly in social interaction contexts (Feng, et al., 2024). Chan et al., (2022) stated that placing students in the front row can positively impact slow learners' engagement and understanding. This approach provides better access to teacher guidance and reduces distractions, ultimately improving learning outcomes.

Teacher questionnaires show that 83.3% of teachers apply different approaches when teaching SL, including interactive teaching methods (58.3%), providing ability-aligned tasks (75%), and offering continuous support and encouragement (91.7%), as shown in Figure 2.

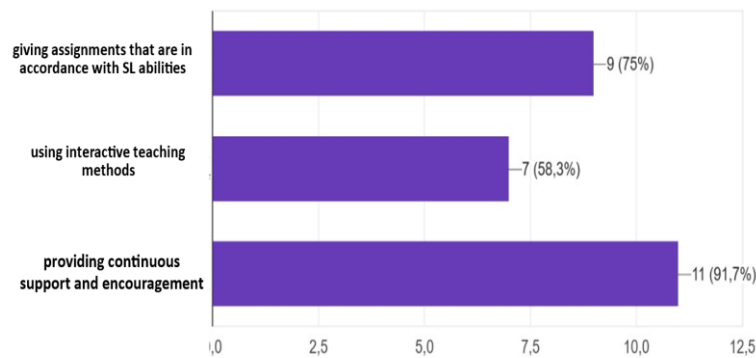


Figure 2: Teaching strategies that teachers use on slow learners

c. Social Support

Peer interactions as tutors create a socially inclusive environment for SL to adapt socially. For example, social interaction within peer groups helps SL-3 understand tasks, improves focus, and fosters a sense of belonging. Observations show peers willingly assisting SL in completing tasks, boosting their confidence. Research by Windiastuti (2020) demonstrates that peer support reduces social isolation, strengthens social skills, and helps SL feel accepted in the classroom environment. Group interactions enhance self-confidence and positive social interactions, while peer-assisted learning builds confidence and enthusiasm, ultimately improving academic performance (Abineneo, Rowa, and Jagom, 2019).

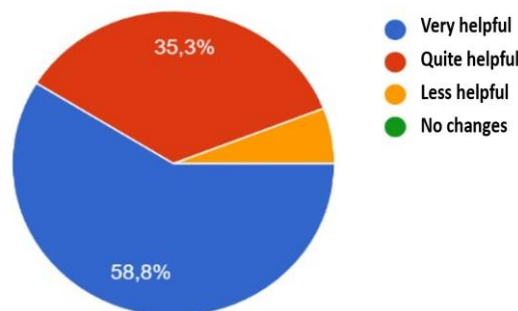


Figure 3: Social support for slow learners

Parent questionnaires reinforce that social support from peers and teachers is highly influential (58.8%) or moderately influential (35.3%) in improving SL's academic competence. Peer support helps slow learners (SL) socially adapt, improving their confidence, focus, and academic performance. These interactions create an inclusive environment that reduces social isolation, as acknowledged by 94.1% of parents who stated that social support from peers and teachers is very influential in improving SL's



academic competence. Overall, the forms of psychosocial support provided at SDN Pisangan Timur 11 for slow learners are as follows.

Table 1. Psychosocial Support Dimensions Strategy for Slow Learners (SL) Implemented at SDN Pisangan Timur 11

Dimensions of Psychosocial Support	Strategies Implemented	Implemented at SDN Pisangan Timur 11
Emotional Support	Providing individual attention and motivation	Teachers begin lessons with singing to build enthusiasm and readiness for learning. For example: <i>“Let’s sing the song ‘Love Mother and Father’ in English version.”</i> This activity aims to improve pronunciation and fluency in English.
	Offering praise and encouragement	Teachers give praise after SL complete tasks, even if the results are not perfect. Examples of teacher praise include: <i>“Great job, keep up the good work.”</i> , <i>“That’s correct, keep practicing at home.”</i>
Instructional Support	Adjusting instructions	Teachers use simple, slow and repeated instructions and modify tasks to ensure SL understand and complete their assignment without feeling overwhelmed.
	Seating arrangement	Students are seated in small groups in the classroom. Each group includes one SL and four peers with regular abilities, placed in front row near the teacher’s desk to facilitate more intensive monitoring.
Social Support	Engaging peers in learning (peer tutoring)	SL feel comfortable asking peers for clarification when they do not understand their tasks. Group members willingly help explain assignments to the slow learners.
Parental Psychosocial Support	Regular communication and supervision of learning at home	Parents help their children practice reading and math at home according to teacher instructions. Parents send videos of their children’s learning activities at home for teacher evaluation. If parents are unable to supervise their children’s learning, teachers recommend private tutoring to help the slow learners meet expected learning goals.
	Accessible and open communication	Teachers maintain communication through a mobile application-based group chat to share information about classroom and school activities. This platform also serves as a medium for discussions between teachers, parents, and students to monitor the learners’ progress.

This matter was reinforced by the opinions of the teachers, who expressed that schools give help support psychosocial, in the form of material support or device help learning (83.3%), access to counselors (33.3%), providing additional training (16.7%), and helping contact parents student slow study If difficult contacted (8.3%) and attending webinars related to SL in person independent (8.3%).

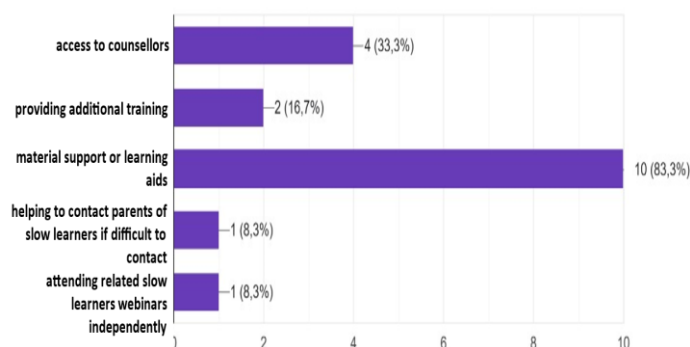


Figure 4. Psychosocial support assistance at school

With the provision of psychosocial support for slow learners, it was found that 85% of slow learners at SDN Pisangan Timur 11 experienced an average increase in academic scores of 20% after implementing the psychosocial support program. This data is in line with research showing that psychosocial support contributes significantly to improving students' academic performance (Suryadi, 2023). An impact assessment was carried out using key indicators such as increased academic scores, which showed an average test score increased by 15 points. This is consistent with research showing that inclusive education can improve students' educational outcomes (Kriswanto et al., 2023). In addition, student attendance rates increased from 75% to 90%, reflecting a positive impact on student motivation and self-confidence, in line with findings that social support can increase student motivation (Hompage et al., 2022). The following table summarizes the results of the implementation of psychosocial support for slow learners.

Table 2. Results of the Implementation of Psychosocial Support for Slow-Learning Children

Indicator	Before Intervention	After Intervention
Average academic score	65	80
Intensity of social interaction	Low	High
Student Attendance	75%	90%

Psychosocial support at SDN Pisangan Timur 11 has proven effective in fostering an inclusive environment for slow learners (SL). The approach, encompassing emotional, instructional, and social support, aligns with inclusive education and social support theories. Research demonstrates improvements in academic scores, social interactions, and attendance among SL. Mukhlis et al. (2023) found active learning methods increase engagement, while Sutomo and Herman (2023) emphasized flexible learning approaches. Supriyani et al. (2022) identified effective strategies like material adjustments, and Prawesti and Yoenanto (2021) highlighted the importance of teacher training. Syaputri and Sumiati, (2020)

stressed parental involvement and effective communication. SDN Pisangan Timur 11 implements comprehensive psychosocial support, including collaborative peer learning. These studies affirm the importance of tailored strategies and collaboration among teachers, students, and parents in improving learning outcomes for SL in inclusive schools, demonstrating the significance of a holistic approach in inclusive education.

d. Psychosocial Support from Parents

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in supporting the learning of slow learners (SL). Psychosocial support from teachers and parents ensures a consistent learning experience at home and school. During interviews, teachers highlighted their efforts to involve parents in teaching children reading and mathematics at home, with instructions to send videos of these learning sessions for evaluation. Teachers acknowledged that SL requires additional time and routine reinforcement to achieve minimum learning goals.

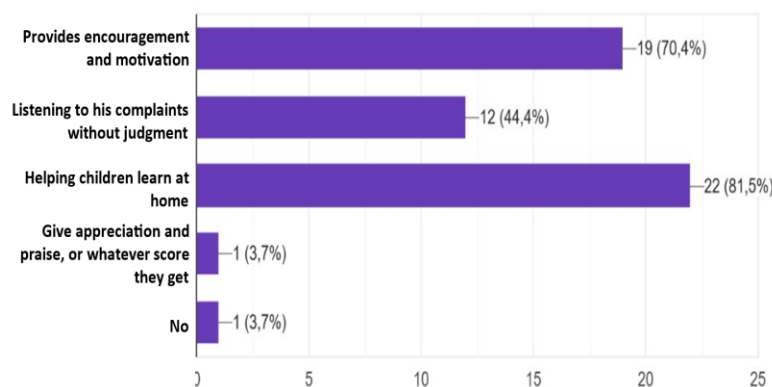


Figure 5. Psychosocial Support from Parents

Based on the questionnaire results, parents provided psychosocial support, including emotional and social support, in various forms, such as providing encouragement and motivation (70.4%), listening to their complaints (44.4%), helping children learn at home (81.5%), and giving appreciation and praise or whatever score they get (3.7%), as shown in Figure 5. These research findings align with the theory of social support, which emphasizes the important role of the family environment, particularly parents, in the holistic development of children (Roksa & Kinsley, 2019). Shin, M., & Hickey (2020) further highlighted that parent-school collaboration enhances the overall effectiveness of psychosocial support for children.

However, not all parents have the time to communicate and collaborate in their child's education. Teachers reported that in such cases, they suggest private tutoring at home to help SL improve. SL often

faces frustration or resistance to learning due to fear of failure. Private guidance addresses gaps in understanding and supports learning progress. Fitriana et al. (2024) argued that SL may need special guidance to understand educational material effectively.

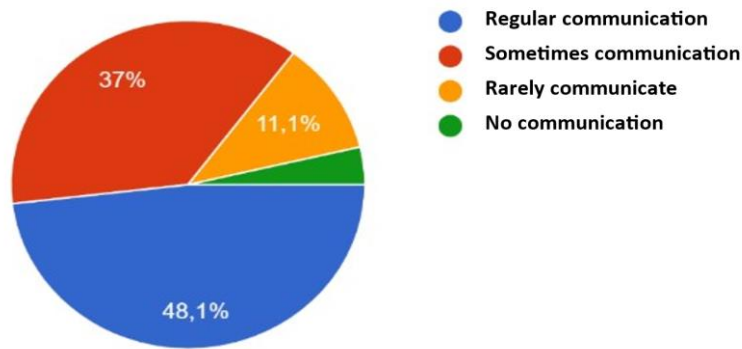


Figure 6. The importance of communication-related to children's psychosocial development

Consistent support and communication between teachers and parents enable better monitoring of children's development. A study by Chatzinikola (2022) highlighted how good communication between parents and teachers helps parents understand how to support their children at home and reinforce appropriate learning routines. Collaboration ensures that strategies implemented at school are reinforced at home, creating an integrated support system for SL. This is supported by parents' opinions that integrated collaboration between teachers and parents is necessary for children's psychosocial development, including regular communication (48.1%) and occasional communication (37%). The diagram below explains how interactions between teachers, parents, and peers support slow learners.

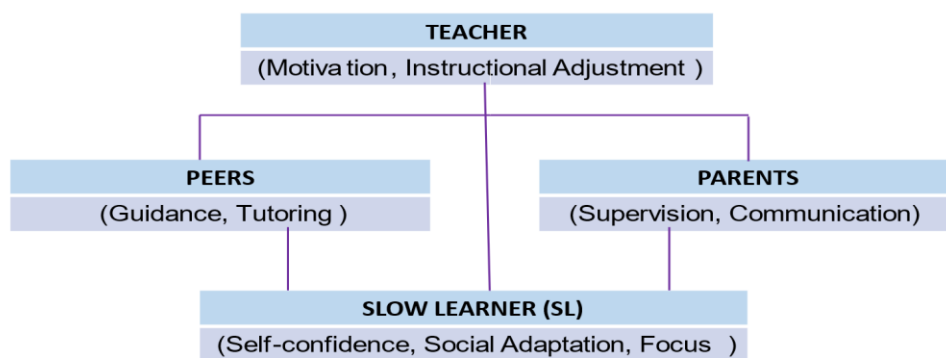


Figure 7. Interactions among teachers, parents, and peers support slow learners



The figure-7 above illustrates the contributions of teachers, peers, and parents to the psychosocial support program's success, emphasizing each party's crucial role in supporting students. Teachers are the central hub for academic and emotional support, peers provide social support through peer tutoring, and parents reinforce learning at home. Interventions in support, such as seating arrangements and song-based teaching methods, demonstrate the approaches' effectiveness.

Grouping slow learners with empathetic peers successfully increased student focus, and observations showed that these students completed 80% of their tasks on time after the intervention. The song-based teaching method also increased class participation from 60% to 85%, which aligns with research indicating that interactive learning methods can enhance student engagement (Wati et al., 2021).

4. Challenges in Implementing Psychosocial Support

Despite the positive outcomes of various strategies, several challenges remain. The first challenge is maintaining focus and motivation among slow learners (SL). For instance, in the case of SL-3, the student was often distracted by surrounding activities and required repeated reminders from the teacher. This aligns with the findings of Minkos and Gelbar (2021), who stated that slow learners require a structured and consistent learning environment, along with repeated instructions, to overcome their limitations in focus. This challenge can hinder SL's psychological and physical development, necessitating specialized services to optimize their potential fully.

The second challenge is dependence on external support. Based on observations, it was found that some SLs often showed strong dependence on teachers and peers to complete tasks. This creates difficulties in gradually fostering their independence. Sanderson and Rojas (2022) suggested that implementing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) approach is recommended to enhance student independence gradually, which aligns with research indicating the importance of individualized approaches in inclusive education (Hoqou and Nasrin, 2023). Observations showed that individual guidance for SL was often provided during class hours when other students worked independently. During these times, teachers focused specifically on SL. However, this practice can cause discomfort for SL and their peers in the same group.

Creating a comfortable and conducive learning environment is crucial during the learning process (Fitriana et al., 2024). A supportive environment enhances learning effectiveness and helps students absorb the material teachers provide. Teachers also provided individual guidance for SL during break times, as additional learning time was considered essential for SL. Research indicates that combining breaks with learning sessions positively impacts students' focus and concentration, thereby improving

learning outcomes (Arviani et al., 2021). Utilizing break times fosters social relationships and enhances social development among students. Short and relaxed breaks help refresh students' mental and physical stamina, allowing them to continue learning effectively. Implementing individual learning programs in separate rooms (Anggraeni, 2022) and one-on-one instruction methods (Dibia and Ajoku, 2018) can help SL catch up academically, increase engagement, and improve academic achievement.

The third challenge involves limited resources and training. Teachers reported needing more specialized training to handle students with special needs, such as slow learners. The lack of training and resources often hampers their ability to provide optimal support, such as developing structured and patient approaches ((Ilzam & Purwoko, 2023).

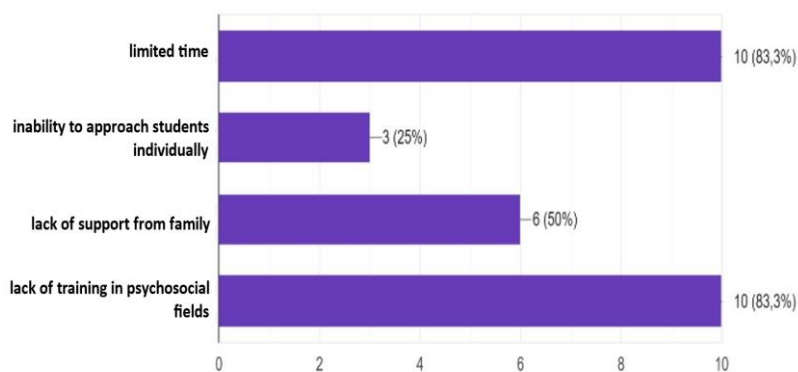


Figure 7. Teachers' challenges in providing psychosocial support

According to the questionnaire results, the biggest challenges faced by teachers in providing psychosocial support to slow learners include limited time (83.3%), lack of training in psychosocial fields (83.3%), lack of support from families (50%), and inability to approach students individually (25%).

The strategies teachers implement during the learning process for slow learners have proven effective, but there are other challenges, such as maintaining focus, dependence on external support, and limited resources. In this study, the main challenges in implementing psychosocial support are limited time (83.3%), lack of training in psychosocial fields (83.3%), and lack of support from families (50%). Solutions such as individual guidance, separate learning rooms, and specialized training are necessary to optimize the potential of slow learners.

Based on the research findings and the objectives of this study, it is clear that there is a relationship between the research findings and the objectives of this study, which is to address the urgent need for inclusive education by providing a model that places collaboration as the key. This is relevant to creating a supportive learning environment for all students, including slow learners. This study emphasizes the



importance of collaboration in inclusive education (Hartadi et al., 2019). The scientific impact of this study offers a psychosocial support-based collaboration model that other inclusive schools can adopt. This approach has the potential to become a reference for national-level inclusive education policies, supporting the findings that inclusive education can increase the participation and achievement of students with special needs, including slow learners (Sumarni, 2019). This study offers novelty in using peer tutoring, which has previously been rarely the main focus in inclusive education. The multi-aspect approach integrating teacher, peer, and parent support into a single framework shows superiority over traditional approaches (Jamaluddin et al., 2022). Recent references, such as Grigorenko et al. (2020) on social support theory, Maciver et al. (2019) on inclusive education approaches, and Shin, M., & Hickey (2020) on family-school collaboration, provide a broader context for understanding the importance of social support in inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

Psychosocial support at SDN Pisangan Timur 11 proves effective in enhancing psychological well-being and academic abilities of slow learners. The combination of emotional, instructional, and social support, along with collaboration between teachers, peers, and parents, creates an inclusive learning environment.

This study highlights the role of peers as tutors, strengthening learning and academic skills and fostering social acceptance. Peer guidance can be integrated into school-based intervention programs to help social adaptation of students with special needs, particularly slow learners. Peer participation in inclusive education strengthens social relationships in the classroom, an aspect rarely found in previous research, which focused more on the roles of teachers and parents.

Integrated psychosocial support through this collaboration can serve as a model for other inclusive schools. Despite challenges like dependence on external support, social and individual support-based approaches show positive results. Guidance based on Individual Education Programs (IEP) has increased motivation, self-confidence, and independence among slow learners.

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