

The Relationship Between Social Perception and Social Acceptance of Regular Students Towards Students with Special Needs

Siti Zahra Lintang Lestari*, Priyono, Dewi Sri Rejeki
Corresponding Author: zahra.24.szll@student.uns.ac.id
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationship between social perceptions and social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs. This study used a quantitative approach with the type of correlation research and survey research design. The subjects in this study were 90 regular students. Data was collected using a questionnaire with a Linkert Scale type with measured variables, namely social perception and acceptance variables. Data analysis in this study used simple linear regression analysis techniques. A simple linear regression test shows the sig value. <0.05 with $0.000 < 0.05$ and a correlation coefficient of 0,652. A positive and significant relationship exists between social perception and social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs.

Keywords: Social Perception, Social Acceptance, Inclusion, Children with Special Needs

INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs (under 18 years old) experience intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and mental limitations and have the potential for exceptional intelligence and talent (Arriani, 2022). Therefore, they need adjustments in school assignments, teaching methods, or other relevant services to fully develop their abilities and potential (Zaitun, 2017). Education is a lifelong process in both formal and non-formal educational institutions; the educational process is a process of self-adjustment and a method of solving life problems (Sambira, 2020). The special needs possessed by children with special needs cause the acquisition and implementation of some of their needs and obligations that are the same as ordinary regular children to be carried out differently from ordinary regular children (Sambira & Rosmi, 2021). Children with special needs have the same right to learn at school as other students. There should be no discrimination in education, including for children with special needs (Handbook of Inclusive Education, 2020). Children with special needs often receive less attention and do not get the same educational rights as typical children; therefore, inclusive education is critical (Siahaan, 2022).

Inclusive education means ensuring and guaranteeing the rights of every child to access and participate, removing barriers so that schools can provide an excellent educational experience (Dharma, 2022). Inclusive education can be implemented with some adjustments, namely adjustments to the curriculum, the learning process, and classroom arrangements. In implementing inclusive education, the problems are about more than just space and learning materials that can be used for students with special needs. Other issues exist, such as the environmental/social adaptation of students with special needs in schools

with regular students (Maghfiroh et al., 2022). One of the barriers is the attitude of social acceptance and the desire to be friends with regular students and students with special needs in the school environment. Social acceptance plays a crucial role in shaping children's development positively because, through acceptance from the surrounding environment, children learn to understand diversity, develop empathy, and form a strong self-identity (Khadijah & Zahraini, 2021).

Social acceptance is defined as an individual's acceptance of his group and relationship with others, being chosen as a group member for gathering activities and being accepted by his peers (Verkuyten, 2021). Not being accepted by peers lowers self-confidence and leads to increased anxious and shy behaviour. Negative attitudes from peers, teachers and others who are actively involved in the process of implementing inclusive education for learners with special needs can cause the individual to experience loneliness and social exclusion. Based on initial observations, researchers found that learners with special needs at SMK N 8 Surakarta rarely have regular friends and are often with their peers. During break time, only a few regular learners were willing to interact with them, while others seemed indifferent and distant. Learners with special needs often sit alone in class while others chat without involving them. This rejection occurs because of regular learners' low social perceptions of learners with special needs, who only see physical barriers or limitations, reclusiveness, and withdrawal without trying to understand their situation. Social perception relates to the way regular learners perceive learners with special needs. Social perception is a process that expresses how a person organizes and interprets sensory impressions to give meaning to other individuals as objects of perception (Saleh, 2020). This study looks at the relationship between social perceptions and social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs.

METHOD

This research uses quantitative research methods with a type of correlation research. In comparison, the research design used is survey research. The population in this study were regular students in grades X and XI at SMK N 8 Surakarta in the 2023/2024 school year. The sample used in this study amounted to 90 regular students, with six students with special needs consisting of 2 blind and four slow learners. The sampling technique was purposive sampling. The data collection used in this study was a questionnaire. The instrument used to collect data in this study consists of two scales: the social acceptance scale and the social perception scale. The perception scale is based on aspects of perception, according to Saleh (2020), citing Robbins' opinion, namely physical, psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual aspects. In comparison, the social acceptance scale is based on aspects of social acceptance according to Andangjati et al. (2021), citing the opinion of Parker and Asher, namely aspects of validation and caring, conflict and betrayal, companionship and recreation, help and guidance, intimate exchange, conflict resolution. The data analysis used is simple linear regression.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting research, a trial was conducted. The data obtained will be tested for validity using Pearson Product Moment with the help of Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) 27.0 for Windows. The social perception scale consists of 48 items. After being tested for validity, there were 30 valid items (13 favourable and 17 unfavourable) and

18 invalid items (11 favourable and seven unfavourable). The social acceptance scale consists of 48 items. After validity testing, there were 33 valid items (16 favorable and 19 unfavorable) and 15 invalid items. The reliability testing results, the social perception and social acceptance scales show high Alpha reliability coefficient values of 0.903 and 0.912, respectively.

The data of this study were collected from 90 regular learners divided into three classes at SMK N 8 Surakarta. The class distribution of the research respondents was 34 regular students of class X SP 10 (38%), 27 regular students of class XI ST 2 (30%) and 29 regular students of class XI SM 1 (32%) at SMK N 8 Surakarta.

Table 1. Social Perception Scale Rating Categorization

Number Range	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
$x < 70$	Low	21	23%
$70 \leq x < 96$	Medium	54	60%
$x \geq 96$	High	15	17%

On the results of descriptive analysis, it was found that on the scale of social perceptions and social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs were in the moderate category. With the description on the social perception scale there are 21 regular students (23%) have low social perceptions, 54 regular students (60%) have moderate social perceptions, and 15 regular students (17%) have high social perceptions. From the 4 aspects of social perception, it is known that there is no significant difference between aspects. All aspects affect social acceptance with a medium category between 50%-75%. The difference between the lowest and highest percentage is 3%. The lowest aspect is the socio-cultural aspect at 68%. And the highest aspect is the psychological aspect at 71%.

This is in line with other research which shows that the more positive social perceptions of students with special needs, the lower the level of bullying they experience (Arifni & Firman, 2023). Positive social perceptions can help create an inclusive school environment, where students with special needs feel accepted, valued and have equal opportunities to participate (Phillips et al., 2019).

Table 2. Social Acceptance Scale Rating Categorization

Number Range	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
$x < 77$	Low	17	19%
$77 \leq x < 101$	Medium	59	66%
$x \geq 101$	High	14	16%

Meanwhile, on the social acceptance scale, 17 regular students (19%) have low social acceptance, 59 regular students (66%) have moderate social acceptance, and 14 regular students (16%) have high social acceptance. Of the 6 aspects of social acceptance, it is known that there is no significant difference between aspects. All aspects affect social acceptance with a medium category between 50%-75%. The difference between the lowest and highest percentage is 12%. The lowest aspect is in the intimate exchange aspect at 61% where regular students have been able to accept the existence of students with special

needs, but have not been able to share personal things with students with special needs. The highest aspect is the companionship and recreation aspect at 73%, which means that doing activities together will increase social acceptance of students with special needs.

Good social acceptance can have a positive impact on the psychological and social development of learners with special needs, such as building a positive self-concept, increasing participation opportunities, developing social skills, improving mental well-being: learners with special needs will feel happier and more supported, which can help reduce anxiety and depression. This is in line Hofmann (2023), which shows that high social acceptance can improve self-concept, social participation, social skills, and mental well-being of students with special needs.

Furthermore, the prerequisite test for analysis is the normality test and linearity test. Normality test results with a significance value of 0.200. Which data can be said to be normal because the significance value > 0.05 . In the linearity test, the significance value (linearity) in this study is 0.000 and the significance value of deviation from linearity is 0.444. This study is linear because the significance value is < 0.05 with $0.000 < 0.05$ and the significance value of deviation from linearity > 0.05 with $0.444 > 0.05$. So, it can be concluded that the data in this study are normal and linear.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Result

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5217.454	1	5217.454	65.069	.000 ^b
	Residual	7056.101	88	80.183		
	Total	12273.556	89			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Acceptance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Perception

Hypothesis testing in this study uses simple linear regression tests. Hypothesis testing is carried out to prove or reject the research hypothesis that has been formulated, namely: "there is a significant relationship between social perception and social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs". In table 3, the results of hypothesis testing show a significance value < 0.05 , namely 0.000, so the proposed research hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is a significant relationship between social perception and social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs at SMK N 8 Surakarta.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.652 ^a	.425	.419	8.95449

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Perception

Table 4 shows that the coefficient (R) of 0.652 indicates a positive and fairly strong relationship between social perception (X) and social acceptance (Y). This is categorized as a high relationship. The R Square value or the Coefficient of Determination (KD) which shows how good the regression model formed between the independent and dependent

variables. The coefficient of determination obtained is 0.425. The independent variable (social perception) has a contribution effect of 42.5% on the dependent variable (social acceptance).

Table 5. Coefficient of Simple Linear Regression

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	39.334	6.202		6.342	.000
	Persepsi Sosial	.595	.074	.652	8.067	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Social Acceptance

The results of the calculation of the simple regression coefficient in table 5, the value of a is obtained from the unstandardized coefficients value in the constant column of 39.334, the value of b is obtained from the unstandardized coefficients value in the social perception column of 0.595. Based on the values of a and b, the regression equation $Y = 39.334 + 0.595X$ is obtained. Based on this equation, when the value of social perception is 0, the social acceptance is 39.334. The positive regression coefficient value (0.595) indicates a unidirectional relationship between the independent variable (social perception) and the dependent variable (social acceptance). This means that if social perception increases by one point, then social acceptance will also increase by 0.595. Thus, the results of hypothesis testing reveal that there is a positive and significant relationship between social perception and social acceptance. The results of this study are reinforced by research conducted by Radhadangu et al. (2020) where the results showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between social perceptions and regular students' social acceptance of students with special needs.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between social perception and social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs at SMK N 8 Surakarta. Positive social perceptions make regular learners able to accept, understand, and make friends with students with special needs, both in learning and daily relationships. This creates an inclusive environment, supports academic success, psychological well-being, and reduces bullying behavior. This study has the novelty of examining the social perceptions of regular learners who are in the same class with learners with special needs, although the results are limited to classes X and XI, and only include visually impaired and slow learners. For future research, it is hoped that the population and sample will be increased so that the results are broader and more balanced. Overall, this study successfully demonstrated that positive social perceptions play an important role in increasing social acceptance and creating an inclusive and supportive school environment

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