



Enhancing Learning Motivation of Special Needs Children through Arts and Skills Approaches

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Article Information:

Received October 5, 2024

Revised November 13, 2024

Accepted Desember 2, 2024

ABSTRACT

Education plays a crucial role in a child's life, aiming to help them develop abilities through classroom learning. Motivation is a key factor in achieving educational goals, significantly impacting students' performance, including those with special needs in inclusive education. In Indonesia, inclusive education policies ensure equal educational opportunities for all, including special needs children. This research explores how creative skills can enhance the learning motivation of special needs children at SLB Negeri 1 Pagaruyung. Utilizing qualitative methods, the study observes classroom interactions and interviews teachers to understand effective teaching methods and challenges. Findings indicate that creative activities, such as crafts and poetry, significantly boost motivation and confidence in special needs students. Teachers play a vital role in identifying and nurturing students' talents through continuous support and positive reinforcement. The study emphasizes the importance of innovative teaching approaches and a supportive learning environment in fostering motivation and personal growth among special needs children. These insights contribute to developing effective strategies for inclusive education, ensuring all children can reach their full potential.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Learning Motivation, Special Needs Children, Arts and Skills, Personal Development.*

Journal Homepage

<https://journal.minangdarussalam.or.id/index.php/jdpe/>

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How to cite:

Juliandari, J., Fitriani, W., Yeni, P., & Zahir, R. (2024). Enhancing Learning Motivation of Special Needs Children through Arts and Skills Approaches. *World Psychology*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.55849/wp.v1i1.203>

Published by:

Yayasan Minang Darussalam

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role in a child's life, aiming to help them develop abilities through classroom learning processes. To achieve educational goals, learning

motivation is essential. Motivation is the drive that helps someone reach their goals. Students' learning motivation creates the impetus for them to study and achieve the set objectives. The importance of learning motivation for students impacts their performance, resulting in good learning outcomes. Learning motivation for special needs students in inclusive education is naturally different from that of regular students, considering the abilities and limitations of special needs students in inclusive schools (Nabiilah et al., 2023).

Education is one of the crucial aspects of human life, playing a key role in shaping individuals' character, knowledge, and skills. Every child has unique potential and needs an appropriate approach to facilitate their learning process. However, children with special needs often face various challenges in their learning process. Enhancing the learning motivation of children with special needs is essential to ensure they can develop optimally.

In Indonesia, every citizen has the right to education, as stated in the 1945 Constitution Article 31 Paragraph 1. The National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 Articles 11 and 32 also mandate the government to provide Special Education for children who experience learning difficulties due to physical, emotional, mental, social conditions, as well as those with special intelligence and talent potentials. This indicates that children with disabilities have the right to equal educational opportunities as other children (Jaya et al., 2018).

This commitment aims to create inclusive education, ensuring that children with special needs get appropriate educational access to optimize their potential. Schools are expected to provide facilities, support, and trained teachers to meet these needs. However, challenges such as limited resources and social stigma still need to be addressed through cooperation between the government, schools, families, and communities. Innovative approaches, such as integrating artistic skills into learning, can increase the motivation and confidence of special needs students.

Special needs children also have the right to receive proper and quality education, just like other children. Therefore, education for special needs children must be adjusted to their abilities and characteristics to achieve educational goals. Special needs children are those whose growth and development experience physical, mental, emotional, or social abnormalities compared to typical children, requiring special educational services. Special needs children are defined as children who need special educational services to develop their potential optimally. In the context of education, the term "extraordinary" refers to those with deficiencies or deviations not possessed by normal people (Usra et al., 2022).

In this digital era, where information is easily accessible through various media, the challenge of increasing the learning motivation of special needs children is becoming more complex. Conventional learning approaches may no longer be sufficient to spark the interest and motivation of these children. Therefore, innovative and creative approaches are needed to create an adequate learning environment for special needs children.

One effective approach to increasing the learning motivation of special needs children is the artistic and skill-based approach. Through this approach, children are given the opportunity to express themselves, develop creativity, and acquire useful skills for daily life. By providing space for special needs children to engage in artistic activities and hone their skills, it is hoped that their learning motivation can grow and develop significantly.

Previous research has shown that artistic and skill-based approaches positively impact the learning motivation of children, including those with special needs. Through artistic activities, children can experience success, boost their self-confidence, and enjoy a pleasurable learning experience. Moreover, skill development also provides long-term benefits for children's development, both academically and socially.

However, despite the acknowledged importance of artistic and skill-based approaches in enhancing the learning motivation of special needs children, there is still a need to delve deeper and explore the potential of this approach. Technological advancements and changes in children's learning patterns demand adjustments and innovations in the applied learning approaches. Therefore, research aimed at exploring and developing artistic and skill-based approaches as a means to increase the learning motivation of special needs children is highly relevant and urgent.

In this context, this research aims to investigate in-depth how artistic and skill-based approaches can enhance the learning motivation of special needs children. By understanding the factors influencing these children's learning motivation, effective strategies can be developed to improve their learning quality. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute significantly to the development of inclusive and sustainable learning approaches for special needs children.

Thus, this research not only holds theoretical value in developing an understanding of the learning motivation of special needs children but also has practical implications for improving the quality of inclusive education. Through a holistic and innovative approach, it is hoped that special needs children can be given equal opportunities to grow and develop according to their potential. This research is expected to be a solid foundation in efforts to enhance the learning motivation of special needs children through artistic and skill-based approaches.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach by conducting direct observations at SLB Negeri 01 Pagaruyung. The researcher observes how teachers and students interact, the teaching methods used, and how students respond to the lessons. In addition, the researcher interviews a teacher to gain insights into effective ways of teaching special needs children and the challenges faced. The interview questions include teaching methods, ways to motivate students, and observations of students' development.

To strengthen the results of the observations and interviews, the researcher also reviews various relevant scientific journals. These journals are selected because they

discuss topics on inclusive education, the learning motivation of special needs children, and effective teaching strategies. The data obtained is analyzed qualitatively by identifying the main themes that emerge. This analysis process involves coding the data, grouping findings based on themes, and interpreting the results to make comprehensive conclusions. These analysis results are then compared with references from the journals to reinforce the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education is a primary focus that plays a crucial role in assisting the development of Indonesian society in social, economic, political, and cultural aspects. Therefore, efforts to fulfill the educational needs of all Indonesian citizens are continuously promoted by the government. This aligns with the legal foundation of Indonesia, namely the 1945 Constitution Article 31 Paragraph (1), which states that "Every citizen has the right to education," and Law Number 39 of 1999 on Human Rights Article 12, which states that "Every person has the right to protection for personal development, to obtain education, to improve themselves, and to enhance their quality of life to become a faithful, pious, responsible, noble, happy, and prosperous human being in accordance with human rights."

The government continues to strive to ensure that all citizens, including those with special needs, have fair and equal access to quality education. This includes providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, training for educators, and developing inclusive curricula. Thus, it is hoped that all citizens can have equal opportunities to develop and positively contribute to society and the country (Fajri, 2020).

Education is the main pillar for the progress of every nation. A great nation will prioritize education because, through education, poverty can be replaced with prosperity. However, education in Indonesia must continually face various problems at each stage of its development. These problems can only be overcome with the participation of all parties involved in the education system, such as parents, teachers, school principals, the community, and the students themselves. In the input phase, parents play a significant role in instilling good values in their children. Parents are responsible for educating their children with leadership values so that they have sufficient provision to become future leaders when they enter school. In the process phase, parents collaborate with teachers and school principals to reinforce the application of leadership values through the organizational culture in schools. Finally, in the output phase, students must face various challenges in the real world outside school. Students who have undergone the education process with an organizational culture that instills good values will grow into great leaders for this country (Yunita et al., 2019).

Every individual needs education to develop according to their talents and interests, including those with special needs. As stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System Article 5 Paragraph 2, citizens who experience physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social disorders have the right to special education (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2003). This emphasizes that every

individual has the right to optimize their talents and competencies without exception (Kholis & Kustiyono, 2020).

Special needs children (SNC) are children with physical, intellectual, emotional, or social limitations that hinder their development, making them different from their peers. The term "special needs children" replaces "extraordinary children" and includes children with visual, hearing, physical, or mental disabilities, as well as those with adjustment and learning difficulties. They require a curriculum and educational environment tailored to their individual needs to fully benefit from education. SNC have the right to proper living guarantees, opportunities for physical, mental, and spiritual development, and optimal protection from parents and the environment. With proper attention and assistance, they can perform social functions well. SNC are the next generation who need special attention to develop and function well in society, in accordance with their rights as regulated in various national and international regulations (Rositas et al., 2023).

The implementation of inclusive education models for special needs children in public schools often faces complex challenges. These challenges arise from the internal school environment and external factors such as the surrounding community and local policymakers. One major issue is the perception that special needs children can be considered a burden by the school, which can hinder their learning progress in regular classes. Significant differences in learning outcomes productivity between special needs children and normal children in regular schools are often a primary concern. This is because each disability experienced by students can directly or indirectly impact their psycho-social development (Efendi et al., 2022).

In organizing inclusive schools, it is crucial to prepare supportive services and infrastructure to ensure that inclusive education programs in elementary schools run smoothly. This involves strong support from the government in providing the necessary resources. By supporting inclusive education, we can optimize the potential of children, especially those with special needs, so they can grow and develop to their fullest in an inclusive and supportive educational environment (Siahaan, 2022).

Teachers are the second parents for students at school and serve as role models who must have proficient teaching abilities. As influential educational administrators, teachers are responsible for the implementation of the teaching and learning process in schools. Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers states that teacher competencies include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies acquired through professional education and are interrelated. In pedagogical competence, teachers must understand and master teaching skills according to field conditions. An effective teaching style not only encompasses the way information or knowledge is delivered from teachers to students but also involves the organization of teaching and classroom environments. Gafoor (2012) describes teaching style into five aspects: teaching behavior, teaching and classroom environment organization, cognitive style influencing teaching style, identifiable classroom behavior, and ways of completing tasks and making decisions in the teaching process. Frunză (2014)

emphasizes that an ideal teaching style involves two-way communication that motivates students to actively participate in the learning process, creating a reliable and productive cooperative atmosphere (Atma et al., 2021).

Motivation is crucial for determining students' learning success. Everyone has different levels of motivation. There are two main types of motivation: intrinsic (from within oneself) and extrinsic (from external sources). Special needs students often face challenges in building learning motivation because they may feel less confident and less enthusiastic. Therefore, they need extra encouragement from others to help them find their own learning spirit so they can overcome problems and achieve their learning goals better (Ramadhanty & Mufida Istati, 2022).

Motivation is an important factor that can come from various sources, such as family, friends, teachers, and therapists. A supportive environment and positive relationships with people around the child can provide great encouragement for them. Challenging activities that match the child's abilities can also help boost their confidence. Additionally, giving appropriate praise and rewards to children can help increase their motivation and self-confidence.

In the teaching and learning process, it is important for teachers and parents to understand that motivation is key to helping special needs children reach their full potential. By providing the right motivation, special needs children can develop enough confidence to overcome the challenges they face. This will help them develop socially, emotionally, and academically, and give them the ability to become independent and successful individuals. Continuous support from the surrounding environment is crucial in building motivation and self-confidence in special needs children (Setiawan et al., 2023).

Skills education services involve all students, including hearing-impaired children who are part of the special needs group. This program not only focuses on academic skills but also on non-academic skills important for competing in the job market. Special needs children often have limitations in grasping information, which must be addressed by providing skills that match their talents, interests, and needs. This aims to ensure they can still compete with other children in society or when entering the workforce in the future (Jaya et al., 2018).

Inclusive Education and Services for Children with Special Needs

Inclusive education is an educational service system that includes children with special needs learning together with their peers in the nearest regular school to their place of residence. The spirit of inclusive education is to provide the broadest possible opportunities for all children to receive quality education tailored to the individual needs of students without discrimination. The implementation of inclusive education requires schools to make adjustments in terms of curriculum, educational facilities, and learning systems that are adapted to the individual needs of students. Therefore, accurate identification and assessment processes by trained and professional personnel in their field are needed to develop appropriate and objective educational programs.

Every interpretation of inclusive education must be placed within a broader educational policy, aiming to create a friendly and supportive learning environment for all students. This involves cooperation between the government, schools, teachers, and the community to ensure that all children have fair and equal access to education that suits their potential and needs (Chairunnisa & Rismita, 2022).

In the implementation of inclusive schools, it is important to prepare supportive services and facilities from the government so that the implementation of inclusive education programs in schools can run well. To optimize the potential of children, especially children with special needs, inclusive education is essential. In this context, teachers must have a good understanding of children with special needs. They need to be aware of various types of special needs, such as autism, Down syndrome, or learning difficulties. It is also important for teachers to understand how to effectively teach children with these various needs, using appropriate teaching methods and tools for each child.

Teachers in inclusive schools or Special Schools (SLB) must create a friendly and inclusive classroom atmosphere for all children. Good communication between teachers, students, and parents is crucial to supporting children's development. Additionally, teachers must collaborate with other professionals such as psychologists and therapists to help these children develop optimally. Teachers also need to continuously improve their competencies to be able to provide appropriate support.

Observation at SLB Negeri 1 Pagaruyung

Based on research conducted at SLB Negeri 1 Pagaruyung Batusangkar, it was found that teachers understand the special needs of their students well. They acknowledge that each child has their own strengths and uniqueness. In an interview with Bu Murni, a teacher at the SLB, it was revealed that children with special needs are unique, interesting, and challenging. Bu Murni explained that children with special needs are not a mistake, but a blessing given by Allah.

Bu Murni faces significant challenges in teaching very active children, like Dafa, who tends to be disruptive in class and has difficulty staying still. Bu Murni does not give up and continuously seeks ways to help Dafa stay focused and engaged in learning. She collaborates with the school team and Dafa's parents to find the best solutions to support Dafa's development. Another example is Zahra, a mute child who often sulks but has an extraordinary talent for making accessories. Bu Murni always provides positive support to Zahra and creates a safe and supportive environment. With patience and love, Bu Murni helps Zahra discover and develop her potential.

The process of identifying children's interests and talents at the SLB is carried out by observing their behavior and responses to their daily learning environment. Teachers and school staff actively monitor the children's development, paying attention to their tendencies, interests, and potentials. They also use special assessment tools tailored to the needs of children with special needs, such as psychological tests.

Bu Murni develops students' interests and talents through various creative activities, such as crafting, poetry, and other creative projects. This helps students discover their potential and interests. Another example is Arif, a cheerful child who loves to talk and has won singing and poetry competitions. Bu Murni provides support and attention to help Arif use his creativity positively.

To train the development and potential of each child, especially children with special needs, it does not always have to be through cognitive and affective knowledge. Psychomotor knowledge, such as crafting skills, is also very important. These skills are closely related to life skills and can help children with special needs in many aspects. Handicrafts are suitable for children with special needs because they are basic, simple, and not too strenuous. These activities can also be adjusted to their physical and non-physical limitations. Moreover, training in crafting skills is very beneficial to help children with special needs live independently and integrate into society. Therefore, handicrafts are very suitable as a learning medium to develop the potential of children with special needs (Mufidah, 2018).

Art and cultural education for them is not only focused on providing information and skill formation. More than that, this education aims to realize the desires, needs, and abilities of individuals so that they can achieve a better quality of life and prepare for adulthood in the future. If the school is unable to provide all the required programs, they must collaborate with other institutions, although the main responsibility remains with the school where the child with special needs (ABK) is enrolled as a student. Thus, education for ABK in regular schools and special schools (SLB) is fundamentally to help the child develop their potential. The goal of skill learning is to equip ABK with useful work skills after they complete their education (Sobarna, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Inclusive education that focuses on children with special needs (ABK) emphasizes the importance of motivation and the development of art as tools to support their development. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is crucial for the learning success of ABK. Support from family, teachers, and the surrounding environment can enhance their self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Providing appropriate praise and rewards also helps build motivation and self-esteem, enabling ABK to overcome the challenges they face and develop socially, emotionally, and academically.

Art and psychomotor skills, such as handicrafts, play a significant role in the education of ABK. Art activities not only provide ABK with opportunities for self-expression but also help in developing useful life skills. Through art activities, ABK can discover and develop their potential and interests, which supports their independence and integration into society. Observations at SLB Negeri 1 Pagaruyung show that teachers actively support students' interests and talents through various creative activities, helping students find and develop their abilities in a positive and inclusive manner.

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