



# Problem Analysis of Special School Teachers in Identification and Assessment of Students with Special Needs

Erma, Kumala, Sari

Special Education Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty

ermakumalasari@fkip.uns.ac.id

**Abstract.** This study aims to identify and map the problems of special school teachers in identifying and assessing students with special needs. This research is quantitative research with a survey approach. There are 66 teachers from special schools in Central Java who are respondents in this study. The data collection method in this study used a questionnaire related to teacher problems in identifying and assessing students with special needs. Data analysis was carried out with a descriptive statistical approach. The results showed that special school teachers still experienced difficulties or problems in identifying, assessing, academic assessments, and non-academic assessments of students with special needs in special schools. In addition, special school teachers still experience difficulties or problems in assessing students with special needs in special schools with certain types of special needs, including students with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, students with visual impairments, students with autism spectrum disorders, gifted and talented students, students with hearing impairments, students with emotional and behavioral disorders, and students with specific learning difficulties. The results of this study are expected to be used as consideration in determining policies related to the identification and assessment of students with special needs in special schools.

**Keywords:** teachers, identification, assessment, students with special needs, special schools

## 1 Introduction

Special school teachers have an important role in providing educational services to students with special needs in special schools. All learning carried out for students with special needs in special schools is carried out by special school teachers. Thus, one of the determinants of the success of educational services for students with special needs in special schools is the role and ability of the teacher. Therefore, the role and ability of teachers to provide educational services to students with special needs in special schools is an important thing that needs attention.

© The Author(s) 2023

M. Salimi et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Learning Innovation and Quality Education (ICLIQE 2022)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 767, [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-114-2\\_104](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-114-2_104)

Before providing educational services, teachers need to identify and assess students with special needs in order to clearly know the problems, potentials, obstacles, and needs of these students with special needs. Identification and assessment play a very important role in the service of students with special needs in special schools (Benner, 2003; Wortham, S. C., 2005). Ideally, the school has a special team to identify and assess all new students. The ideal team consists of special education teachers, psychologists, speech and language development specialists, physical and occupational therapists, counselors, and other related professionals (Charema 2010). But in reality, not all schools have an assessment team that comes from various disciplines. Thus, teachers have an important role in carrying out identification and assessment of students with special needs when the school does not have an assessment team for such identification and assessment.

Identification activity is a screening process for children with physical, intellectual, social, and emotional/behavioral disorders. Identification is obtained from complaints and certain symptoms on things that are not appropriate in the child's development period. Meanwhile, assessment is a systematic and comprehensive process to explore further problems from the identification results to find out what the child's potentials, problems, and obstacles are. Assessment is a process that refers to various instruments that can be used to obtain information such as knowledge, understanding, skills, and behavior of children. Assessment functions as identification and diagnosis, program planning and evaluation (Benner, 2003; Wortham, S. C., 2005). Meanwhile, Udipi, Kishore, & Sesshadri (2019) explained that identification and assessment function to identify and improve etiologic factors and risk factors; identify needs related to conditions and design program plans to reduce the impact of their disability; effectively adapt the nature and needs of the condition to the best available intervention methods; and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Based on data in the field, it turns out that there are still many special school teachers who have difficulty identifying and assessing children with special needs. This results in the occurrence of misplacement, less precise learning plans that are in accordance with the child's condition, further impacting the child's lack of performance in developing their potential. This fact is supported by the results of checking the validity of data on National Festival and Competition activities, many participants have special needs that are different from the data recorded in the DAPODIK. DAPODIK is the basic data of education which is the main data source of education in Indonesia. Thus, the accuracy of the identification and assessment results is important and needs to be carefully considered by teachers because it will determine the accuracy of service and learning programs for students with special needs in special schools, both in academic and non-academic aspects.

The varied characteristics of students with special needs can also cause difficulties for teachers in identifying and assessing students with special needs. Not all students with special needs show their characteristics clearly (Garguilo, 2012). In addition, the teacher's misunderstanding of the various characteristics and problems of students with special needs can also cause difficulties and problems for teachers in identifying and assessing students with special needs. Many special school teachers do not have an

educational background from Special Education so they lack an understanding of students with special needs. The absence of standard instruments for identification and assessment of students with special needs in special schools also adds to the difficulty of teachers in conducting identification and assessment. Teachers need to find or develop their own instruments for the identification and assessment of students with special needs in special schools. Meanwhile, not all teachers have the tenacity in finding or compiling their own instruments for the identification and assessment of students with special needs in special schools. Some of these conditions can cause confusion and problems for special school teachers in identifying and assessing students with special needs.

Thus, this study aims to identify and map the problems of teachers in identifying and assessing students with special needs in special schools. By knowing the mapping of teacher problems, the government or the authorities can determine policies related to the identification and assessment of students with special needs in special schools.

## **2 Methodology**

This research is quantitative research with a survey approach. There are 66 teachers from special schools in Central Java who are respondents in this study. The data collection method in this study used a teacher problem questionnaire in the identification and assessment of students with special needs. The questionnaire consists of aspects of teacher problems in identifying students with special needs, assessment of students with special needs, academic assessment of students with special needs, non-academic assessment of students with special needs, and assessment of students with special needs based on their special needs. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions, with each aspect consisting of 2 questions. Five questions are closed questions with a choice of yes and no answers given to get a firm answer to their self-assessment, while the other 5 questions are open-ended questions with descriptive answers to get an explanation of the previous closed answers. Data analysis was carried out with a descriptive statistical approach. The data that has been collected is tabulated to calculate the percentage, then described to obtain the meaning of the data.

## **3 Results and Discussion**

The results of this study are data on teacher problems in identification, assessments, academic assessments, non-academic assessments, and assessments based on the types of special needs of students with special needs in special schools. In more detail, the results of the research and discussion can be seen in the section below.

### 3.1 Teacher Problems in Identifying Students with Special Needs

The results showed that special school teachers in Central Java still had difficulties or problems in identifying students with special needs in special schools. As many as 68% of special teachers in the Central Java region are still experiencing problems or difficulties, while only 32% of special teachers in the Central Java region do not experience problems or difficulties in identifying students with special needs in special schools.

**Table 1.** Teacher Problems in Identifying Students with Special Needs

No	Category	Amount	%
1	Experience problems	45	68
2	Do not experience problems	21	32
Total		66	100

The problem faced by teachers in conducting identification on students with special needs is because of the diversity of types and characteristics of students with special needs. In addition, the condition of multiple disabilities in students with special needs also increases the level of difficulty for teachers in identifying students with special needs. According to Salinger, R. L. (2016), knowing in the beginning of learning is done to identify students who can be at risk academically due to learning disabilities or other difficulties. Thus, students' initial results can be used to ensure that they receive the services and support needed to improve their academic performance.

### 3.2 Teacher Problems in the Assessment of Students with Special Needs

The results showed that special school teachers in the Central Java region still experienced difficulties or problems in assessing students with special needs in special schools. As many as 77% of special teachers in the Central Java region still experience problems or difficulties, while only 23% of special teachers in the Central Java region do not experience problems or difficulties in conducting assessments of students with special needs in special schools.

**Table 2.** Teacher Problems in Identifying Students with Special Needs

No	Category	Amount	%
1	Experience problems	51	77
2	Do not experience problems	15	23
Total		66	100

Several teachers stated that the problem with the assessment of students with special needs was because some teachers did not come from special educational backgrounds. They feel they don't have enough understanding about students with special needs. This makes them confused and having problems in assessing students with special needs.

In addition, the problem of assessment of students with special needs is also caused by teachers having difficulty finding or making instruments to conduct assessments of students with special needs. The absence of a standardized instrument and standardized

assessment guide was also complained of by teachers as a problem in carrying out assessments for students with special needs. However, ACT (2018) explains that assessment identification instruments such as screening tests will not provide information regarding accurate or definite measurement results of disability or types of special services for students with special needs. The screening test is only a tool to help identify problems with students with special needs, but does not provide detailed information regarding limitations or services that need to be provided for students with special needs. Thus, the ability and sensitivity of teachers in identifying and assessing students with special needs remains important in identification and assessment, even though there are aids in the form of instruments or guides.

### 3.3 Teacher Problems in Academic Assessment of Students with Special Needs

The results showed that special school teachers in the Central Java region still experienced difficulties or problems in conducting academic assessments of students with special needs in special schools. As many as 55% of special teachers in the Central Java region are still experiencing problems or difficulties, while only 45% of extraordinary teachers in the Central Java region do not experience problems or difficulties in conducting academic assessments of students with special needs in special schools.

**Table 3.** Teacher Problems in Academic Assessment of Students with Special Needs

No	Category	Amount	%
1	Experience problems	36	55
2	Do not experience problems	30	45
Total		66	100

Although the academic field is the area of expertise of the teacher, there are still many special school teachers who report having difficulties in conducting academic assessments of students with special needs in special schools. The diversity of conditions and types of disabilities of students with special needs can be one of the reasons related to the problems in academic assessment of students with special needs experienced by special school teachers.

### 3.4 Teacher Problems in Non-Academic Assessment of Students with Special Needs

The results showed that special school teachers in Central Java still had difficulties or problems in conducting non-academic assessments of students with special needs in special schools. As many as 55% of special teachers in the Central Java region are still experiencing problems or difficulties, while only 45% of special teachers in the Central Java region do not experience problems or difficulties in conducting non-academic assessments of students with special needs in special schools.

**Table 4.** Teacher Problems in Non-Academic Assessment of Students with Special Needs

No	Category	Amount	%
1	Experience problems	36	55
2	Do not experience problems	30	45
Total		66	100

Non-academic assessment problems experienced by teachers are caused by the teacher's lack of understanding of non-academic aspects or developmental aspects, such as cognitive, sensory-motor, and socio-emotional aspects. In addition, developmental problems or non-academic aspects of students with special needs tend to be more complicated and varied compared to developmental problems for students in general. This makes it increasingly difficult for special school teachers to carry out developmental assessments or non-academic assessments for students with special needs in special schools. In addition, the lack of non-academic assessment instruments and guidelines is also the cause of the problems experienced by teachers in conducting non-academic assessments of students with special needs in special schools.

### 3.5 Teacher Problems in Identification and Assessment of Students with Special Needs Based on the Type of the Special Needs

The results showed that special school teachers in the Central Java region still experienced difficulties or problems in assessing students with special needs in special schools with certain types of special needs, including students with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (36%), students with visual impairment (23%), students with autism spectrum disorders (14%), gifted and talented students (14%), students with hearing impairment (5%), students with emotional and behavioral disorders (5%), and students with specific learning difficulties (5%). Meanwhile, special school teachers in the Central Java region stated that they had no difficulties or problems in assessing students with motoric impairment, students with intellectual disabilities, and slow learner.

**Table 5.** Teacher Problems in Identification and Assessment of Students with Special Needs Based on the Type of Special Needs

No	Category	Amount	%
1	Students with visual impairment	15	23
2	Students with hearing impairment	3	5
3	Students with intellectual disabilities	0	0
4	Students with motoric impairment	0	0
5	Students with emotional and behavioral disorders	3	5
6	Slow learner	0	0
7	Students with specific learning difficulties	3	5
8	Gifted and talented students	9	14
9	Students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)	9	14
10	Students with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	24	36
Total		66	100

ADHD and ASD are disorders that tend to be less understood by the environment than other disability disorders because studies on ADHD and ASD can be said to be new when compared to studies on other disability disorders. In addition, ADHD and ASD have similar characteristics that intersect so that it requires high sensitivity and considerable experience to be able to clearly distinguish the two disorders. In addition, ASD is a disorder with a large range spectrum and varying degrees (APA, 2013). Thus, it can cause difficulties for teachers in identifying and assessing students with ASD. Therefore, it is understandable that teachers still have difficulties in identifying and assessing students with ADHD and ASD.

Emotional and behavioral disorders are also disorders that do not appear directly. The problems of students with special needs, such as students with emotional and behavioral disorders, are seen from the results of initial complaints from parents or teachers due to behavioral problems that arise that are different from other children (Reschly, D., J., 1996). Problems in students with emotional and behavioral disorders mainly lie in the social-emotional aspect, which can only be observed through manifestations in the form of behavior. Therefore, teachers tend to have difficulty in identifying and assessing students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Learning difficulties and gifted and talented have special needs, especially in cognitive aspects. This aspect can be observed in behavioral manifestations and academic performance which is the main field of study for teachers. The problems of students with special needs, such as students with intellectual disabilities, slow learning, or learning difficulties, are seen from the results of initial complaints from parents or teachers due to academic achievement problems that arise that are different from other children (Reschly, D., J., 1996). However, it turns out that there are some teachers who still have difficulty in identifying and assessing students with learning disabilities and gifted and talented students. Students with learning difficulties tend to be difficult to distinguish from slow learners, who both have problems in cognitive aspects. Maki, K. E., Burns, M. K., & Sullivan, A. L. (2018) also explained that school psychologists also tend to experience doubts in diagnosing children with learning difficulties. The high training and experience did not increase the confidence of school psychologists in diagnosing children with learning difficulties. This is similar to the problems faced by teachers in identifying and assessing students with learning difficulties. Meanwhile, gifted and talented students do not attend special schools so that special school teachers rarely have experience with these students.

Meanwhile, visual and hearing impairment is actually a disorder that appears directly. Limitations on physical aspects such as visual or hearing impairment can be directly observed by the teacher. The problems of students with special needs, such as students with visual or hearing impairments, can be clearly seen from the results of medical decisions by doctors immediately after birth or during the early school years (Reschly, D., J., 1996). However, it turns out that there are some teachers who still have difficulty in identifying and assessing students with visual or hearing impairments. This can happen especially for teachers who do not have an educational background from Special Education so that they do not understand clearly about children with visual or hearing impairments.

## 4 Conclusion

This study aims to determine the problems of special school teachers in identifying and assessing students with special needs with a quantitative survey approach. The results of the study indicate that special school teachers in the Central Java region are still experiencing difficulties or problems in conducting identification, assessment, academic assessment, and non-academic assessment of students with special needs in special schools. In addition, special school teachers in the Central Java region still experience difficulties or problems in conducting assessments of students with special needs in special schools with certain types of special needs, including students with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, students with visual impairments, students with autistic spectrum disorders, gifted and talented students, students with hearing impairments, students with emotional and behavioral disorders, and students with specific learning difficulties. Meanwhile, special school teachers in the Central Java region stated that they had no difficulties or problems in assessing students with motoric impairment, students with intellectual disabilities, and slow learner. The results of this study are expected to be used as consideration in determining policies related to the identification and assessment of students with special needs in special schools, especially in the Central Java region, such as the need for training on identification and assessment of students with special needs in special schools.

## Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to express the deepest gratitude to those who have assisted in the implementation of this research, especially at Sebelas Maret University (UNS) Surakarta Indonesia, which has fully funded this research through a UNS research group grant. Furthermore, thanks to the supporting team of this research. Without the help of the parties mentioned above, this research would not be able to run properly.

## References

1. ACT. (2018). *How to Identify a Special Child in the Classroom*. dari <http://www.teacherstrainingmumbai.com/blog/2018/08/09/how-to-identify-a-special-child/>
2. APA. (2013). *Diognostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 5<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-V)*. USA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
3. Benner, S. (2003). *Assessment of Young Children with Special Needs, A Content-Based Approach*. Canada: Delmar Learning.
4. Charema, J. (2010). Inclusive education in developing countries in the sub-Saharan Africa: From theory to practice. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(1), 87–103.
5. Garguilo, R. M. (2012). *Special Education and Contemporary Society 4 – An Introduction to Exceptionally*. California: SAGE Publication, Inc.
6. [Kishore](#), M. K., [Udipi](#), G. A., [Seshadri](#), S. P. (2019). Clinical practice guidelines for assessment and management of intellectual disability. *Indian Journal Psychiatry*. Vol 61, No. 8, pp.194-210.



7. Maki, K. E., Burns, M. K., & Sullivan, A. L. (2018). School Psychologists' Confidence in Learning Disability Identification Decisions. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 41(4), 243–256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948718769251>
8. Reschly, D., J. (1996). Identification and Assessment of Students with Disabilities. *The Future Vol Special Education for Students with Disabilities (Spring, 1996)*. Vol 6 No 1, pp. 40-53 (14 pages).
9. [Salinger, R. L. \(2016\). Selecting Universal Screening Measures to Identify Students at Risk Academically. \*Intervention in School and Clinic\*, 52\(2\), 77-84.](#)
10. Wortham, S. C. (2005). *Assessment in Early Childhood Education*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

