

# Social Skill Scale based on Diversity Awareness for Elementary School Students: Validity and Reliability

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**Abstract**— Developing students' social skills in inclusive schools becomes an important study because of the diverse situation mainly due to students with special needs there and it could be reference of social skills expected by students and become a measure of program success. Previous research has found 46 items of Social Skills Scales based on Diversity Awareness for Elementary School Students (S3DAESS): empathy (15 items), communication and social interaction (13 items), controlling aggression (5 items), open minded (4 items), helping behaviors (4 items), self-understanding (3 items), and learning behavior (2 items). This study aims to establish validity and reliability of S3DAESS. Respondents were 256 students from 13 schools. 12.5% (49) respondents are students with special needs. The scale for each respondent was filled by the teacher. Data analysis through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method using statistics with SPSS software. The result shows all items fulfill validity coefficient ( $\geq 0.40$ ). The smallest coefficient of item is 0.406 (realizing self-strengths and weakness) and the biggest is 0.845 (interacting without distinguishing non-physical special needs of friends). Invalids items (loading factor of  $< 0.50$ ) found are apologizing, showing good response to friends, working with special needs friends, collaborating; not avoiding teachers or other adults, good speaking or behaving, offering help, and realizing self-strengths and weakness). Scale reliability test shows a very high consistency or reliability (alpha coefficient of 0.975 ( $> 0.6$ )). The norm tests establish the standard norm for scale:  $< 92$  indicate low social skills categories; 92-138 medium; and  $> 138$  high

**Keywords**— students' social skills, diversity awareness, behavior scale construction

## I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive schools that accept students with diverse conditions, including students with special needs have positive impact on improving students academic and non-academic. Good management of inclusive schools programs will improve the response and learning support for all students [1], with a broader and flexible range of curriculum that can bring positive impact on students' academic

achievements [2]. Inclusive schools not only focus on academic orientation, but also emphasize social skills. Increasing social behavior for all students and school residents is an advantage and is referred to as the most positive results of schools that correctly implement inclusive programs [2]. The social behavior model provided in inclusive schools brings opportunities for the development of positive behaviors, builds self-confidence and enthusiasm of students, improves problem-solving skills, communication, adaptation, social involvement, friendship, caring, and decreases children's anxiety about differences [1], [2], [3].

However, there are still many challenges related to social behavior problem in inclusive schools. Social behavior problems such as internal and external behavior problem, low adjustment and social integration usually appear in students without - and more in - with special needs [4]. These problem behavior are closely related to low social skills [5]. A person with low skills tends to behave according to his own desires, does not consider the environment, has problems on communication and interaction with friends; difficult to establish social contact with teachers and other adults; and tend to be friends with other children who have problem behavior [5], [6], [7]. Purwandari *et al.*, [8] has found students in elementary school inclusion who have low social skills experience behavioral problems in learning such as not doing work and not obeying the rules; and having verbal and physical aggressive behavior.

Social skills are referred to as behaviors that are needed by someone to interact with others in environment as expected and able to adapt to the expectations of the environment [10]. Communication behavior, social involvement and interaction, self-adjustment, developing self-potential, overcoming problems are the daily social skill behavior that important to develop by every children. In school, social skills are needed to interact and collaborate with teachers and friends [11]; develop the ability to overcome problems and empathize [12]; and to adapt to academic tasks at school [13]. Therefore, students with low social skills will often

experience rejection and problems of social acceptance from teachers, friends, and the surrounding environment and poor social involvement [14], [15], [7], [1]. Low social skills also have an impact on academic failure [7]. Karakaya & Tufan [5] because they are difficult to learning adaptation. Choiri & Yusuf said that the actual problem of access to education for individuals with special needs is not on their impairment, but on social acceptance [1].

One important factor in developing social skills of students in inclusive schools is diversity awareness. The response to diversity in inclusive education would provide learning opportunities to all students and eliminate negative behaviors and exceptions to minority groups, including students with special needs [16]. Diversity awareness is established in the knowledge of the impact of diversity; acceptance of different values, and attitude of respect for diversity [17]. Diversity awareness in school seems to be the same as behavior that describes in social skills such as mutual respect, communication, showing social support, giving opportunities to participate, and interacting openly and not choosing friends.

It has been mentioned previously that if inclusive school programs are managed well then the school will be a good place to develop social behavior or skills. However, the situation of diversity remains a challenge for the development of social skills in inclusive schools. Accepting special needs or diversity friends cannot just happen. Peer rejection to special needs or minority students often found when there is no encouragement to accept them. Support and conditioning is needed to all students to develop diversity awareness of behaviors [18].

The problem that often arises in schools related to student behavior and social skills is that most teachers still hard to understand students Bakhri et al., [1], including difficult to identifying learning behavior problem more accurately and clearly as modifiable behavior Ames et al., [19], so become less able to provide optimal services that are appropriate to students' condition [1], [19]. Some of the efforts made by teachers are to make adaptations in the classroom to handle students' behavior problem, and exclude students with behavior problem from the classroom to receive special services, although the program still often does not succeed when the their behavior problem are severe [2]. The teacher still not accustomed to establish student behavior problems with systematic descriptions and does not contain judgmental [19]. More over, schools do not have a systematic and procedural program to improve students' social skills, although there have been efforts to teach social skills delivered to each subject and be taught directly in daily activities in the school environment [8]. In terms of diversity in schools, teachers still need training in understanding to respond to different student conditions, especially for students with special needs [16].

Students social skills development program is important to be designed by inclusive schools that face diverse situations. Program implementation needs to be planned and structured so that the results are as expected and can be clearly measured. Therefore, a measurement tool is needed to measure success, evaluation, reflection, and program improvement. With these gauges, teachers and school

administrators can monitor, evaluate, and make changes needed to ensure the development of students in inclusive schools [2].

Previous research Mahabbati, *et al.* in [9] had explored the construction of Social Skill Scale based on Diversity Awareness for Elementary School Students (S3DAES). The basic theory of social skills used is the social competence and school adjustment by [13] that consist of three aspects: (1) Teacher-Preferred Social Behavior includes basic social behaviors supporting social interaction, including contact behavior and communication, sympathy and empathy, compromise and cooperation; and problem solving behavior, responding to disorders and problems, and overcoming the impulses of aggression. (2) Peer-Preferred Social Behavior: friendship interactions outside of learning include friend acceptance, friend interaction behavior, adaptation, helpful behavior, initiative, and positive talent shown. (3) School Adjustment Behavior, including time management skills, following learning directions, work ability, and response to learning. The concept of diversity awareness used is a condition illustrated in inclusive elementary schools in Kota Yogyakarta which formulated based on Focus Group Discussion with inclusive elementary schools teachers. The results of the study produced the S3DAES formula which consisted of seven (7) aspects. The design of the scale consists of indicators that are determined based on the percentage of occurrence of each aspect. Aspects of empathy behavior have 15 indicators, communication and social interaction have 13 indicators, controlling aggression have 5 indicators, openness have 4 indicators, behavior helping have 4 indicators, understanding self have 3 indicators, and behavior to learn have 2 indicators. That are 46 indicators as items of S3DAES.

Therefore, this study will continue to establish validity and reliability of S3DAES.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the material and proposed methodology. Section III presents the obtained results and following by discussion. Finally, Section IV concludes this work.

## II. MATERIAL & METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is establishing the validity and reliability of S3DAESS. This study involved 256 participants for 13 inclusive elementary schools' students with special needs ( $n=49/12.5\%$ ) and without special needs ( $n=207/86.5\%$ ). The type of special needs students including visual disability ( $n=2$ ), gifted and talented ( $n=1$ ), hearing disability ( $n=1$ ), intellectual disabilities ( $n=9$ ), physical disabilities ( $n=5$ ), emotional and behavior disorders ( $n=2$ ), autism ( $n=6$ ), learning disabilities ( $n=3$ ), slow learners ( $n=19$ ), communication disability ( $n=1$ ). The participants were from all of grade elementary schools: grade 1 ( $n=28$ ), grade 2 ( $n=44$ ), grade 3 ( $n=51$ ), grade 4 ( $n=51$ ), grade 5 ( $n=57$ ), and grade 6 ( $n=25$ ).

The S3DAESS was fulfilled by teachers ( $n=118$ ) that already interact with participants for more than a year. They have been teachers for 6 to 37 years. The relationship between the teacher and the students who filled the scale was mostly the classroom teachers ( $n=217$ ). Others were

special teachers ( $n=22$ ); subject teachers ( $n=13$ ); and extra-curricular teachers ( $n=4$ ).

The scale to be generated in this study is a psychological scale that contains attitudes or behaviors that describe the social skills of elementary students based on diversity awareness. The theory referred to is the theory of social competence and school adjustment [13]. Previous study produced 7 aspects of 46 items of S3DAES that consist of empathy (items = 15), communication and social interaction (items = 13), controlling aggression (items = 5), openness (items = 4), helping behavior (items = 4), self-understanding (items = 3), and willingness to learning (items = 2). The aspects of social skills found are then formulated in behavioral indicators. The scale formulated is a Likert model measurement scale which consist of 1 (never); 2 (rarely); 3 (sometimes); and 4 (always).

Analysis was carried out with two methods of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), with SPSS software. The samples tested were 253, because three samples were missing or did not fill the scale completely.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis consisted of validity and reliability of Alpha Cronbach. Validity consists of item validity by looking at the loading factor and discriminant validity. The loading factor is a variable forming factor which is seen from every question item, while discriminant validity is seen from the grouping of item numbers which form a factor. The loading factor generally has a minimum cutoff of 0.30 (the bigger the better), while the discriminant validity has a criterion the item number must be in the factor column.

The results of the validity analysis presented in Tables I and II. Table I shows the item validity with a loading factor

$\geq 0.40$ . The results of CFA output by SPSS using the Rotated Component Matrix for each item that has a loading factor  $\geq 0.40$ , and the smallest coefficient is 0.406 (realizing self-strengths and weakness) to the largest 0.845 (interact without distinguishing the different non-physical conditions of friends). This means that all items are valid because they are  $\geq 0.40$ .

The results of discriminant validity can be seen in Table I. At the output of Table I the method used is confirmatory so that the software will be asked to confirm items into seven predetermined factors. The question to be answered is whether the items tested can gather on each seven factors. If you can collect, you can fulfill discriminant validity would be establish if the items are gathered. An item in one component has a level of similarity (similarity of answers) with other items in each component. The definition of grouping here does not have to be sequential from 'empathy' on first component 1 to 'learning behavior' in component 7 but can jump.

Table I shows the 'empathy' factor has items that collects in component 2 or 5, 'communication and social interaction' factor in component 1 or 4, 'controlling aggression' in component 3, 'openness' in component 1, 'helping behavior' in component 4, 'self-understanding' factor in component 1, and 'enthusiastic in learning' in component 1. It appears that components 6 and 7 are not filled, on the other hand there are several factors that are in the same component (i.e. empathy, communication and social interaction, self-understanding, enthusiastic in learning). This shows that there are items that are not in the component. Components that are not contained (exist) this item should be for the items of self-understanding and enthusiastic in learning factors.

TABLE I. CFA ANALYSIS USING LOADING FACTOR  $\geq 0,40$

NO	Item	Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<b>EMPATHY</b>							
1.	Interact without distinguishing friends different physical conditions		,739					
2.	Interact without distinguishing friends different non-physical conditions (intellectual, behavior, emotional condition)		,845					
3.	Accepting friends weakness		,821					
4.	Appreciating or not feeling bad on friends strenght		,622					
5.	Accepting differences of friends without special need		,706					
6.	Accepting differences of friends with special need		,775					
7.	Respecting or allowing differences in friends from him (tollerance)		,526		,422			
8.	Protecting friends with special needs		,614			,505		
9.	Showing regretful or apologizing when doing wrong	,448				,455		
10.	Giving attention to friend							,714
11.	Supporting friend with special need		,612			,597		
12.	Giving opportunity to special need friend		,654			,559		
13.	Giving good response to friend				,452	,425		
14.	Not disturbing friends			,669				
15.	Not spiteful			,578				
	<b>COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>							
16.	Cooperating with all friend				,540			
17.	Cooperating with special needs friend		,451			,486		
18.	Cooperating in positive activity	,470			,497			
19.	Willingness to interact with friend	,440			,501			
20.	Not avoid teachers or other adults	,441		,499				
21.	Involving in group activity	,716						
22.	Starting communication (by asking, opening the conversation, etc)	,817						
23.	Doing verbal or non verbal reciprocal communication	,681						
24.	Speaking or behaving in good manner				,496			

NO	Item	Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	Making friendship with all of friend				,651			
26.	Not choose in friend	,652						
27.	Easy to be warm or familiar to teacher and friend	,721						
28.	Accepted by teacher and friend				,576			
	<b>CONTROLLING AGGRESSION</b>							
29.	Not threatening and intimidating friends			,841				
30.	Not bullying to special need friend			,776				
31.	Not bullying to other friend			,830				
32.	Refrain from saying rude			,754				
33.	Controlling from rude and bad behavior			,768				
	<b>OPENNESS</b>							
34.	Behave honestly			,586				
35.	Showing confident behavior	,772						
36.	Showing ability to be a leader	,773						
37.	Showing open minded and adaptable behavior	,782						
	<b>HELPING BEHAVIOR</b>							
38.	Initiative to give helping	,443			,495			
39.	Helping friend with special need						,825	
40.	Helping friend without special need				,656			
41.	Sharing with other				,633			
	<b>SELF UNDERSTANDING</b>							
42.	Realize self strenght and weakness	,406			,445			
43.	Expressing self ability	,747						
44.	Adapting to environment	,647						
	<b>ENTHUSIASTIC IN LEARNING</b>							
45.	Be excited and look happy to study	,636						
46.	Dynamically involved in school activities actively	,701						
	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. <sup>a</sup>							

The next analysis tried to increase the cutoff coefficient of loading factors from 0.40 to 0.50. Table II shows the item validity with a loading factor  $\geq 0.50$ . In the results of the IBM SPSS software output, not all items have a value factor loading. This is because items that do not appear have a loading factor  $< 0.50$  so they are filtered by software. The item number item that does not appear is: ‘empathy’ (showing regretful or apologizing when doing wrong/9, giving good response to friends/13), communication and

social interaction (cooperating with special needs friend/17, cooperating in positive activity/18, not avoid teachers or other adults/20, speaking or behaving in good manner/24), helping behavior (initiative to give helping), self understanding (realize self strenght and weakness/42). This item is invalid because it has a loading factor  $< 0.50$ .

TABLE II. CFA ANALYSIS USING LOADING FACTOR  $\geq 0,50$

No	Item	Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<b>EMPATHY</b>							
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7	Respecting or allowing differences in friends from him (tollerance)	,526						
8	Protecting friends with special needs	,614				,505		
9	Showing regretful or apologizing when doing wrong							
10	Giving attention to friend							,714
11	Supporting friend with special need	,612				,597		
12	Giving opportunity to special need friend	,654				,559		
13	Giving good response to friend							
14	Not disturbing friends			,669				
15	Not spiteful			,578				
	<b>COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION</b>							
16	Cooperating with all friend				,540			
17	Cooperating with special needs friend							
18	Cooperating in positive activity							
19	Willingness to interact with friend				,501			
20	Not avoid teachers or other adults							
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24	Speaking or behaving in good manner							
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26	Not choose in friend	.652						
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42	Expressing self ability	.747						
43	Adapting to environment	.647						
<b>ENTHUSIASTIC IN LEARNING</b>								
44	Be excited and look happy to study	.636						
45	Dynamically involved in school activities actively	.701						
46	Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. <sup>a</sup>							

The results of the item validity analysis in Table II- after increasing the cutoff- indicate that there are some invalid items. The results of discriminant validity indicate that there are four components that have items, while the other three groups is in another component (column). Cronbach alpha generally has a cutoff of 0.70, whereas the results of the Cronbach alpha analysis show a coefficient of more than

0.70. The Cronbach Alpha instrument reliability value is 0.967. This reliability coefficient is very high. This study also determined the norm of scale to establish social skills students with clear quantitative numbers. Scale norms will find out whether students' social skills are included in the category of high, medium, or low. The categories are visualized in Table III.

TABEL III. THE NORMS SCALE DETERMINATION

	empathy	communication and social interaction	controlling aggression	openness	helping behavior	self understanding	enthusiastic in learning	S3DAES
Max score	60	52	20	16	16	12	8	184
Min score	15	13	5	4	4	3	2	46
Range	45	39	15	12	12	9	6	138
Hypothetic mean	38	33	13	10	10	8	5	115
Hypothetic SD	8	7	3	2	2	2	1	23
M-SD	30	26	10	8	8	6	4	92
M+SD	45	39	15	12	12	9	6	138
Category: Low	<30	<26	<10	<8	<8	<6	<4	<92
Category: Moderate	30-45	26-39	10-15	8-12	8-12	6-9	4-6	92-138
Category: High	>45	>39	>15	>12	>12	>9	>6	>138

The S3DAES found 7 components that comprise items (empathy, communication and social interaction, controlling aggression, openness, helping behavior, self-understanding, and enthusiastic in learning). Components and items were obtained from Focus Group Discussion

with inclusive elementary school teachers in Yogyakarta regarding the needs of students' social skills development. The concept of social skills that as the basic is Social Competence and School Adjustment (SCSA) Walker & McConnell, which has 2 aspects (social behavior needed

in social interaction, and learning adjustment behavior) [20], Merrell, [13]. The teacher formulates components and items based on the problems and needs for developing social skills in the school.

All components and items that appear in accordance with the formulation of the social skills of elementary school students are found in previous studies. Empathy is needed to interact and collaborate with teachers and friends [11], [12], [13], and in the context of diversity, empathy is needed as the basis of social relations based on accommodative attitudes toward differences [21]. Communication and social interaction contact and communication, compromise and collaboration, and dealing with problems without aggressiveness also called as important social behavior in previous studies [11], [10], [13]. Openness that includes behaving honestly, openly, confidently, and can be a leader in accordance with [13] formulated as social behaviors that support friend interaction. Then Walker & McConnell's established willingness to learn behavior as a behavior that reflects learning adjustment behavior which is an aspect of students' social skills Merrel in [13], and as behavior to develop self-potential [10]. The empathy has the most items in S3DAES, because according to the teacher's empathy is the basis of other aspects of social skills accomplishment [9].

Walker & McConnell limited the definition of social skills in SCSA, according to the objectives of the instrument formulated as screening and identification of low social skills in students at risk for academic and social. On S3DAES, the formulation of social skills adds an element of diversity awareness that emphasizes more on social skills needed by students to accept diverse situations in school and behave accordingly in these conditions [9]. The basic of diversity also appears in the definition of research results: accepting social situations that can certainly vary. Peer rejection to special need students is often found when there is no encouragement to accept them, so the scale has beneficial to teacher for supporting and conditioning the student's behaviors that value diversity [18].

The emphasis on diversity awareness in this research is more focus on interaction with special needs friends. This is the effect of the real conditions of the influence of diversity that occurs in schools as sample of this study. The school which became the sample collection consisted of 8 public elementary schools, and 3 private religious affiliated elementary schools, and 1 national affiliated private elementary school, so this affected the condition of the diversity of the schools. It appears in scale items that the conditions of diversity that arise are more in the presence of friends who have special needs and how students can adapt to group tasks or activities. Nevertheless, S3DAES can still be used for multi-diversity situations because some items also mention cooperation and being positive with all friends. Brown & Brown in [17], formulated that diversity awareness consist of understanding of diversity and attitude that respects diversity, knowledge about different values and the impact of diversity.

The definition of social skills based on this research founding is the ability to accept social situations and to behave verbally and non-verbally to interact with other people with the behavior that expected by norms and rules. Shepherd [7] and Maag in [22] mention that social skills are behaviors that help a person to socially interact with the environment. The definitions formulated from the FGD results are more detailed because they explicitly mention verbal and nonverbal abilities. This shows the situation of diversity that is often faced by elementary students in inclusive schools. There is always the possibility of students with hearing impairment students in school, so that behaviors that show social skills do not have to be manifested in verbal behavior.

The reliability and validity test of scale items through the SPSS shows that the scale is reliable as reaching the alpha coefficient of 0.975 ( $>0.6$ ). All items on the scale also reach validity which is indicated by the value of items from Corrected item total correlation  $>0.3$ . The results establish 38 S3DAES items from the 46 items previously formulated.

The results of the validity test of items with a loading factor  $\geq 0.50$  indicate that there are some item numbers that do not appear : showing regretful or apologizing when doing wrong (empathy/9), giving good response to friend (empathy/13), cooperating with special needs friend (communication and social interaction/17), cooperating in positive activity (communication and social interaction/18), not avoid teachers or other adults (communication and social interaction/20), speaking or behaving in good manner (communication and social interaction/24), initiative to give helping (helping behavior/38), and realize self-strength and weakness (self-understanding/42). Showing regretful or apologizing is identic to items on openness components. Giving good response to friend (empathy/13) has been represented by several items on others empathy components in the form of positive response behavior towards friends. Cooperating with special needs friend (communication and social interaction/17) and cooperating in positive activity (communication and social interaction/18) seems to overlap with cooperating with all friend (communication and social interaction/16). Not avoid teachers or other adults (communication and social interaction/20) seems to overlap with easy to be warm or familiar to teacher and friend (communication and social interaction/27). Speaking or behaving in good manner (communication and social interaction/24) seems with doing verbal or non-verbal reciprocal communication (communication and social interaction/23). Initiative to give helping (helping behavior/38) seems identic with helping friend with special need (helping behavior/39) dan helping friend without special need (helping behavior/40). Realize self-strength and weakness (self-understanding/42) seems similar with expressing self-ability (self-understanding/43).

Construction of measuring instruments for social skills based on diversity awareness is needed to find out the social skills of students, especially in inclusive elementary schools. Knowing the level of social skills students need

to arrange the program of students' social skills and important to support the successful implementation of education in the diversity setting. In inclusive schools, diversity awareness is seen in the accommodative attitude and mutualism of all school personnel towards the possibility of differences between them [21].

Scale can be one source for determining the positive behavior that will be developed. Behavior scale can also help teachers to identify students who experience behavioral problems (with an indication of low social skills), then look at what aspects and items are of low value [23]. The results of scale are useful to determine whether students experience withdrawal or acting out problem behavior [20], because students with withdrawal social behavior are usually difficult to identify.

The weaknesses of S3DAES can be noted. This scale may not reveal the overall dimensions of social skills needed in more complex and broad setting diversity, so scale validation tests are still needed for students in schools that have a more varied social culture and diversity. Improving the scale according to the more diverse findings of the validation test for schools is needed as the purpose of future research.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The S3DAES is developed based on the school needs about students' social skills, so that the items that appear according to the conditions in these schools as sampling representation. Some items that fall are items that are similar or represented by other items. Scale formulation is needed to develop students' social skills in schools, measure program achievement, and become a tool for early detection of student behavior problems.

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