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Social Interaction Patterns of Children on Special Needs (ABK) with Non-ABK Children at SDN 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the pattern of social interaction between children with special needs (ABK) and non-ABK children at SD Negeri 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar, and to identify the forms of social interaction and the inhibiting factors. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The research subjects consisted of 2 ABK children, 4 non-ABK children, and 2 class teachers. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis used the Moleong model which includes data reduction, categorization, and data interpretation. Data validity was tested through source triangulation and technical triangulation. The results of the study indicate that social interaction between ABK and non-ABK has begun to form, but has not occurred consistently. Interactions occur more frequently during learning activities, group work, and teacher direction. The forms of social interaction found include associative interactions in the form of cooperation, mutual assistance, and social acceptance, as well as dissociative interactions in the form of passive attitudes, tendencies to be alone, and limited communication of ABK. Factors inhibiting social interaction include limited communication and low self-confidence among children with special needs, lack of understanding among children without special needs, differences in ability between students, and teacher dominance in facilitating social interaction in the classroom. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that social interaction between children with special needs and those without special needs still requires support through inclusive learning, strengthening communication skills, and the active role of teachers as social facilitators to create better and more sustainable interactions.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of human resources and in developing students' potential optimally. In the Indonesian educational context, ensuring the right to education for all children without discrimination has become a major concern, including for Children with Special Needs (ABK). Nusaibah et al. (2025) argue that education is a fundamental right of every child, including ABK, which must be fulfilled without discrimination through the implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive education is considered an important approach to ensuring equal access to education for ABK by providing them with equal learning opportunities in the same educational environment alongside non-ABK students (Putri et al., 2025). According to Hiola and Rahmatiah (2026), the success of the educational process for ABK in schools is not only determined by their participation in learning activities but is also strongly influenced by social acceptance and the quality of social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students in the school environment. In mainstream schools that include ABK students, positive social interaction plays an essential role in helping ABK develop self-confidence, expand social relationships, and increase participation in learning activities and daily social interactions. Conversely, poor social interaction may lead to difficulties in social adaptation, reduced involvement in school activities, and limited peer relationships.

Research by Dewi et al. (2024) shows that patterns of social interaction in school settings can take the form of associative interactions, which promote cooperation and social acceptance, as well as dissociative interactions, which may create social barriers among students. At the elementary school level, social interaction plays a particularly important role as this stage represents the initial phase of children's social development. At this level, students begin to learn how to communicate, cooperate, and understand differences in character, background, and abilities among their peers.

However, in practice, social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students does not always proceed as expected. Based on preliminary observations at SDN 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar, it was found that among the ABK students enrolled, several experienced difficulties in social interaction. This condition is reflected in limited communication skills, uneven friendship formation, and restricted participation of ABK in both social and learning activities.

Preliminary observations also indicate that there are several types of ABK in the school,

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including students with physical disabilities (tunadaksa), who have limitations in mobility or use wheelchairs, and students with intellectual disabilities (tunagrahita), who require assistance in understanding learning materials and engaging in social interaction. Some ABK students experience difficulties in communicating with peers and tend to isolate themselves in school social activities. For example, during group work activities, students with intellectual disabilities often struggle to understand instructions and therefore tend to remain passive, waiting for directions from teachers or peers. In addition, during recess, some students with physical disabilities are able to participate in classroom learning but still have limited interaction with peers and tend to sit separately from playgroups.

Furthermore, there are barriers to ABK participation in classroom activities that require cooperation, such as group work, play activities, and collaborative learning involving non-ABK students. This raises questions regarding the patterns of social interaction formed between ABK and non-ABK students in their daily school activities, as well as the factors influencing the emergence of both associative and dissociative interactions. These conditions indicate that social interaction patterns between ABK and non-ABK students within the same school environment are highly varied. On one hand, some ABK students are able to interact and are accepted by their peers; on the other hand, some are still excluded from group activities. Differences in ABK characteristics—whether physical, intellectual, sensory, or emotional—also influence their ability to interact socially. These differences create diverse social interaction dynamics, ranging from cooperation and social acceptance to interaction barriers such as miscommunication, lack of peer acceptance, and social distance.

These findings are consistent with Salma et al. (2024), who found that social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students can develop in an associative manner through acceptance, helping behavior, and cooperation. However, their study also identified dissociative interactions in the form of avoidance, teasing, and negative treatment toward ABK, which arise from non-ABK students' limited understanding of ABK conditions. Salma et al. (2024) further emphasize that the quality of social interaction in schools is strongly influenced by peer acceptance and the school environment, particularly the role of teachers and school culture.

Although previous studies have contributed significantly to understanding social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students, they tend to focus on general interaction patterns or separate aspects of social acceptance and interaction barriers. These studies have not yet deeply examined how associative and dissociative social interaction patterns are formed, developed, and manifested in students' daily activities in elementary schools, such as classroom learning, group work, play activities, and informal interactions within the school environment.

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In addition, research specifically examining the dynamics of social interaction patterns in the elementary school context in the Pematangsiantar region remains limited.

This gap indicates the need for a more contextual and comprehensive analysis of social interaction patterns between ABK and non-ABK students in everyday school life. Therefore, research is needed not only to describe forms of social interaction but also to analyze the dynamics and factors influencing the formation of associative and dissociative interaction patterns in real school settings. SDN 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar is one of the elementary schools with a diverse student population, including ABK students. To understand this phenomenon more deeply, a theoretical framework is required to explain the forms and patterns of social interaction that occur. Social interaction in the educational context is understood as a reciprocal relationship that influences individuals with individuals, individuals with groups, and groups with groups within a social environment (Suyanto & Narwoko, 2020).

In sociological studies, patterns of social interaction are generally classified into two main forms: associative interactions, which lead to cooperation, accommodation, and social harmony, and dissociative interactions, which lead to competition, contravention, and social conflict. This theoretical framework is used as an analytical lens to understand the forms and patterns of social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students within a single school environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative research is used to obtain in-depth and meaningful data in order to understand complex social phenomena. This approach is selected because the study aims to explore and describe in depth the naturally occurring social phenomenon, specifically the patterns of social interaction between Children with Special Needs (ABK) and non-ABK students within the school environment. The descriptive nature of this research means that it seeks to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the phenomenon under investigation without manipulating any existing variables. A qualitative descriptive design is considered appropriate because it focuses on revealing real conditions in the field as they naturally occur. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of social interaction patterns between ABK and non-ABK students in a single school context (Sugiyono, 2022).

This research is also context-specific, as it is conducted in one selected school setting. The qualitative descriptive design allows the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon by considering the social, cultural, and situational context of the school environment. Furthermore, this approach enables the exploration of participants' experiences,

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perceptions, and meanings related to their daily social interactions. In this study, the researcher acts as the primary instrument in the data collection and analysis process. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine the forms of social interaction occurring among students, while interviews were used to explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding their social interactions. Documentation was utilized as supporting data to strengthen and complement the findings obtained from the field.

The research was conducted at SDN 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar, located on Jalan Rambutan Raya, Perumnas Batu VI, Lestari Indah Village, Siantar District, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra Province, under the leadership of Principal Restamilihenny Purba, S.Pd. The study was carried out from March to April in the 2025/2026 academic year. The selection of this school was based on its diverse student population, including the presence of ABK students, which makes it relevant for examining social interaction patterns in an inclusive educational setting. The subjects of this research consist of both ABK and non-ABK students at SDN 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique, where participants are chosen based on their relevance to the research focus and their direct involvement in the phenomenon being studied (Sugiyono, 2022). This technique ensures that the data obtained are rich, meaningful, and contextually relevant, as the selected participants are directly engaged in daily social interactions within the school environment.

The object of this study is the pattern of social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students at SDN 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar. This includes associative interactions such as cooperation and acceptance, dissociative interactions such as social barriers and conflict tendencies, as well as factors that hinder social interaction. These interactions are observed through various school activities, including classroom learning, group work, recess, play activities, and informal interactions within the school environment.

Data analysis in this study follows the qualitative analysis model proposed by Lexy J. Moleong (2017), which is carried out continuously from data collection to the completion of the research. The analysis begins with data reduction, where raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation are selected, simplified, and focused according to the research objectives. This is followed by data categorization, in which the reduced data are grouped based on thematic similarities such as classroom interaction, peer relationships, teacher interaction, interaction barriers, and the development of social interaction patterns. Finally, data interpretation is conducted to derive meaning from the categorized data by linking findings from various sources and relating them to relevant theoretical concepts. Through this process, the

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study is able to explain the nature of social interaction among ABK and non-ABK students, the influencing factors, the existing barriers, and the development of interaction patterns in the school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Emerging Associative Social Interaction

The findings of this study indicate that social interaction between Children with Special Needs (ABK) and non-ABK students at SDN 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar has begun to develop through cooperation, mutual assistance, and social acceptance in both classroom learning activities and extracurricular settings. Non-ABK students have started involving ABK students in group work, assisting them in completing tasks, and inviting them to participate in play activities. These conditions demonstrate the emergence of associative social interaction, which reflects positive social relationships. This finding is consistent with Suyanto and Narwoko (2020), who state that associative social interaction is characterized by cooperation, accommodation, and mutual acceptance in social relationships. However, these interactions are still situational in nature and have not yet become spontaneous in students' daily social lives.

2. ABK Social Participation Remains Passive

Based on observations and interviews, it was found that the social participation of ABK students in interaction processes tends to remain passive. ABK students are generally quiet, less active in initiating communication, and more likely to wait for instructions from teachers or invitations from peers. This condition results in social relationships that are not fully reciprocal, as interactions are still largely dominated by non-ABK students. This finding aligns with the concept of social interaction proposed by Suyanto and Narwoko (2020), which emphasizes that social interaction requires reciprocal social contact and communication between individuals.

3. Presence of Dissociative Social Interaction

The study also reveals the presence of dissociative social interaction, which is reflected in behaviors such as social withdrawal, limited communication, and reduced participation of ABK students in certain school activities. In some situations, ABK students receive limited responses from their peers, resulting in underdeveloped social relationships. This condition is consistent with Suyanto and Narwoko (2020), who explain that dissociative

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social interaction is characterized by social distance, limited social relationships, and tendencies toward avoidance in interaction processes. In this study, dissociative interaction does not appear in the form of open conflict but is more evident in limited student engagement in social activities.

4. Communication as a Key Factor in Social Interaction

The findings further reveal that communication plays a crucial role in shaping social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students. Communication limitations among ABK students make it difficult for them to express opinions, respond to conversations, and understand peer communication, thereby restricting their social participation. This finding is consistent with Suyanto and Narwoko (2020), who state that communication is a fundamental requirement for social interaction, and is also supported by Salma et al. (2024), who explain that communication barriers among ABK students can affect their ability to interact with their social environment.

5. The Role of Teachers in Supporting Social Interaction

In addition to communication factors, the study found that teachers play an important role in supporting the development of positive social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students. Teachers facilitate group work, provide assistance to ABK students, and encourage students to help and cooperate with one another during learning activities. Social interaction among students tends to be more active when teacher guidance and support are present. This finding aligns with Martono and Primadata (2024), who state that teachers act as social facilitators in building interpersonal relationships among students within the school environment.

Overall, this study shows that the pattern of social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students is influenced by both individual and environmental factors. Individual factors include communication limitations, shyness, and low self-confidence among ABK students, while environmental factors include peer acceptance, teacher support, and the classroom atmosphere, all of which affect student social engagement. These findings are consistent with Dewi et al. (2024), who explain that social interaction is shaped by interrelated internal and external factors that collectively influence interpersonal relationships.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings presented in Chapter IV, which include observations,

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interviews, documentation, data analysis, and research results, it can be concluded that social interaction between Children with Special Needs (ABK) and non-ABK students at SD Negeri 098166 Perumnas Pematangsiantar has begun to develop. However, it is still in a developing stage and has not yet formed a stable pattern in students' daily interactions within the school environment. In relation to the first research question, the pattern of social interaction that emerges is still inconsistent and tends to be situational. Social interaction mainly occurs under certain conditions, such as during group work, play activities, or when directly guided by the teacher. This indicates that social interaction has not yet developed spontaneously but is still dependent on external stimuli and has not been fully internalized as a consistent social habit in students' daily school life.

Regarding the second research question, the forms of social interaction identified include both associative and dissociative interactions that occur simultaneously within the school environment. Associative interaction is reflected in cooperation, mutual assistance, and social acceptance from non-ABK students toward ABK students, particularly during group tasks and shared play activities. However, these interactions are not yet optimal, as ABK students tend to remain passive and show limited balanced participation. On the other hand, dissociative interaction is also present, indicated by social withdrawal, limited communication, and low social engagement, which hinder effective and reciprocal interaction among students. Based on the third research question, several inhibiting factors were identified in the social interaction between ABK and non-ABK students. These factors include communication barriers, low self-confidence among ABK students, limited understanding of ABK conditions among non-ABK students, differences in students' abilities, limited instructional time, and the dominant role of teachers in facilitating interaction. Although these factors are interrelated and hinder the development of independent and optimal social interaction, the findings also show positive progress, marked by increasing willingness of ABK students to engage socially and growing empathy and acceptance from non-ABK students. This indicates that social interaction has the potential to develop further if supported by appropriate learning strategies, an inclusive school environment, and active teacher facilitation.

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