

A STUDY OF REGULAR STUDENTS' SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: HOW DOES IT RELATE TO SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE?

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Abstract

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is still a challenge. Not all students with special needs are treated well by regular students. Students with special needs need social support in carrying out the learning process in inclusive schools. More studies need to be conducted on the social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs. This study analyses the relationship between social acceptance and social support of regular students towards students with special needs. This research uses a correlational quantitative approach. Research data were collected using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The sample of this study totaled 209 regular students at SMP N 259 Jakarta, grades 7, 8, and 9, in whose classes there were students with special needs. Data collection used a questionnaire guided by the researcher. The instrument used to measure social acceptance consists of 21 items, while the instrument used to measure social support consists of 20 items. The results showed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.832. This result means that the relationship between social acceptance and social support of regular students towards students with special needs is significant. So, the higher the social acceptance, the higher the social support. There needs to be socialization about inclusive education to encourage social acceptance of students with special needs. That way, social support will also increase.

Keywords: inclusive school, social acceptance, social support, students with special needs

Kajian Dukungan Sosial Siswa Reguler Terhadap Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus: Bagaimana Hubungannya dengan Penerimaan Sosial?

Abstrak

Implementasi pendidikan inklusi di Indonesia masih menjadi tantangan. Tidak semua siswa berkebutuhan khusus diperlakukan dengan baik oleh siswa reguler. Siswa berkebutuhan khusus membutuhkan dukungan sosial dalam menjalankan proses pembelajaran di sekolah inklusi. Perlu dilakukan penelitian lebih lanjut mengenai penerimaan sosial siswa reguler terhadap siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Penelitian ini menganalisis hubungan antara penerimaan sosial dan dukungan sosial siswa reguler terhadap siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif korelasional. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan teknik proportionate stratified random sampling. Sampel penelitian ini berjumlah 209 siswa reguler di SMP N 259 Jakarta, kelas 7, 8, dan 9, yang di dalam kelasnya terdapat siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner yang dipandu oleh peneliti. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengukur penerimaan sosial terdiri dari 21 item, sedangkan instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengukur dukungan sosial terdiri dari 20 item. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan koefisien korelasi (r) sebesar 0,832. Hasil ini berarti hubungan antara penerimaan sosial dan dukungan sosial siswa reguler terhadap siswa berkebutuhan khusus adalah signifikan. Jadi, semakin tinggi penerimaan sosial maka semakin tinggi pula dukungannya. Perlu adanya sosialisasi mengenai pendidikan inklusi untuk mendorong penerimaan sosial terhadap siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Dengan begitu, dukungan sosial juga akan meningkat.

Kata kunci: dukungan sosial, penerimaan sosial, sekolah inklusi, siswa berkebutuhan khusus

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a cornerstone in shaping human character and building a knowledgeable and competent generation capable of contributing meaningfully to society. It is widely recognized as a fundamental right that must be guaranteed for every individual, regardless of physical, mental, social, or economic differences. The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 31 paragraph 1, explicitly states that “every citizen has the right to education,” affirming the government’s responsibility to ensure equitable educational opportunities for all. This constitutional provision is further reinforced by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasizes that citizens with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, or social abnormalities are entitled to special education. These legal foundations reflect Indonesia’s strong commitment to providing education without discrimination and ensuring that all citizens, including those with special needs, have access to learning opportunities that allow them to reach their fullest potential.

Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2024), there are approximately 15.378 students with special needs in the Jakarta area, with East Jakarta hosting the largest population, consisting of 5.183 students with single disabilities and 232 students with multiple disabilities. These statistics reveal not only the growing number of students with special needs in urban educational settings but also the urgent need to strengthen inclusive education at both the local and national levels. As Indonesia strives to fulfill the Education for All commitment and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4), which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all, integrating children with special needs into mainstream education has become a central educational priority.

Inclusive education represents an important reform in the global movement toward educational equity and social justice. It advocates for the participation of all learners, regardless of ability, background, or social status, within a single learning environment that respects diversity. The underlying philosophy of inclusive education is based on the belief that every child is unique and possesses the right to learn together with peers in a supportive and non-discriminatory environment (Mansur, 2019). The purpose of inclusive education is not limited to providing access to schooling but to ensuring meaningful participation, where every student (whether regular or with special needs) can thrive. Herawati (2016) explains that inclusive schools must guarantee equal access to learning opportunities, promote interaction, and create a classroom atmosphere that fosters cooperation and respect between students with and without disabilities.

In practice, inclusive education in Indonesia has been implemented across various provinces with varying degrees of success. While some schools have integrated inclusive principles effectively, others still face multiple obstacles, such as limited teacher competence, inadequate facilities, and persistent social stigma (Desiningrum, 2016). The implementation of inclusive education at the junior high school (SMP) level, in particular, presents a set of unique challenges. Students in this age group are in a transitional phase toward adolescence, a developmental period characterized by heightened emotional sensitivity, identity formation, and the need for social belonging. Consequently, the success of inclusive education at this level depends not only on institutional readiness but also on the social and psychological dynamics that shape peer relationships and classroom interactions.

One of the most pressing challenges is the limited professional competence of teachers in accommodating diverse learner needs. Most junior high school teachers in Indonesia have not received sufficient training in inclusive pedagogy, adaptive assessment, or differentiated instruction. As a result, learning practices tend to remain uniform and are primarily designed for regular students, leaving the specific needs of students with disabilities insufficiently addressed. This issue is further compounded by the lack of qualified special education support teachers who possess expertise in individualized instruction. According to data from the Ministry of Education, more than half of inclusive schools in Indonesia still lack adequate

special education personnel, resulting in classroom teachers bearing additional responsibilities for which they are not properly trained or supported.

Infrastructure and learning facilities also remain a major concern. Many schools, both in urban and rural areas, do not yet have disability-friendly environments. Basic accessibility features such as ramps, adaptive classrooms, or assistive learning technologies are still limited. This lack of infrastructure restricts the participation and comfort of students with special needs, thereby undermining the goal of inclusion. In addition, the psychosocial and emotional support systems available in most schools remain weak. Only a few schools provide counseling services specifically designed for students with special needs or programs that train regular students to develop empathy and understanding toward peers with disabilities. Consequently, stigmatization, prejudice, and negative attitudes toward students with special needs still persist in certain school settings, creating barriers to social interaction and integration.

Low levels of social acceptance among regular students continue to be a key obstacle to achieving meaningful inclusion in junior high schools. Early adolescence is a stage during which peer approval plays a significant role in shaping self-concept, motivation, and emotional well-being. Differences in physical, emotional, or behavioral characteristics often become a source of misunderstanding, discomfort, or even rejection toward students with special needs. Pratiwi (2016) found that several inclusive schools in Indonesia still encounter cases of exclusion, where students with disabilities are viewed as disruptive to learning. These findings highlight that the social dimension of inclusion demands serious attention. Dulisanti (2015) also notes that the success of inclusive education depends not only on curriculum quality and teaching methodology but also on the social climate of the school, particularly in terms of peer relationships and teacher attitudes. Inclusion is meaningful only when students with special needs are not just physically present in classrooms but also socially and emotionally accepted by their peers.

Social acceptance, therefore, represents a crucial psychosocial outcome of inclusive education. Hurlock (2007) defines social acceptance as the extent to which individuals are recognized, respected, and included within their peer groups. It involves active inclusion and emotional recognition rather than mere tolerance. Students who are socially accepted tend to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem, active participation, and prosocial behavior, whereas those who experience rejection often suffer from loneliness, anxiety, and low motivation to learn. According to Hurlock (2007), the factors influencing social acceptance among adolescents include first impressions, reputation, social behavior, maturity, and social adjustment. Similarly, Arslan and Şahbaz (2012) identify three key determinants of social acceptance for students with special needs: social skills, behavioral patterns, and peer attitudes. These dimensions shape how peers perceive, evaluate, and interact with students who are different from them.

During adolescence, when identity and belongingness become dominant psychosocial needs, social acceptance plays a central role in emotional development (Arsanti, 2016). Students who feel accepted are more confident and adaptive, while those who experience rejection tend to become socially isolated. In inclusive classrooms, levels of acceptance are strongly influenced by regular students' empathy, understanding of diversity, and quality of contact with peers who have disabilities. Suharsiwi (2017) asserts that students who engage in cooperative activities and show empathy are generally more open to inclusion and diversity. Recent research supports this view. Rappoport and Smith (2020) demonstrated that peer-mediated interventions, in which regular students receive guidance to support classmates with disabilities, significantly increase social participation and acceptance. Likewise, Tuncer and Akman (2022) found that involvement in collaborative inclusive projects leads to higher empathy and more positive peer attitudes. These findings underline that enhancing social acceptance requires deliberate and continuous efforts to build students' social-emotional competencies and internalize inclusive values.

Alongside social acceptance, social support functions as another key construct that contributes to the social well-being and adjustment of students in inclusive schools. Sarafino (2011) defines social support as the perception or experience of being cared for, valued, and connected to others in a supportive network. It encompasses several dimensions: emotional support, which includes expressions of empathy and concern; instrumental support, which refers to tangible help; informational support, which involves advice and guidance; and appreciative support, which relates to validation and encouragement. In educational contexts, support from teachers, peers, and parents significantly shapes students' sense of belonging and engagement. When students feel that they are supported, they become more resilient in coping with academic and social challenges (Sarafino & Smith, 2011). Shakespeare-Finch and Obst (2011) further explain that both received support and perceived support play crucial roles in fostering emotional well-being and positive interpersonal relationships.

Within inclusive schools, social support serves as an essential bridge connecting students with and without special needs. Hasan and Handayani (2014) note that peer support promotes cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect, helping to break down stereotypes and social barriers. Arslan and Şahbaz (2012) likewise emphasize that peer support can mitigate negative stereotypes and foster greater acceptance. Empirical evidence has strengthened this theoretical link: Li et al. (2020) found that social support predicts prosocial behavior and reduces prejudice in inclusive classrooms, while Zhou et al. (2021) reported that peer emotional support enhances students' self-efficacy and motivation. Moreover, in Southeast Asian contexts characterized by collectivism and high social interdependence, social support tends to exert an even stronger influence. Nguyen and Le (2023) found that Vietnamese and Indonesian students view peer relationships as central to their identity and belonging, meaning that social support directly promotes mutual acceptance and inclusivity.

The relationship between social support and social acceptance is both conceptual and reciprocal. Social support helps to create emotionally safe environments that encourage peer acceptance, while feeling accepted by peers further motivates students to offer support and engage in positive interactions. Sarafino (2011) highlights that emotional and instrumental support enhance individuals' sense of connectedness and belonging, while Hurlock (2007) argues that the experience of being accepted strengthens prosocial tendencies. These perspectives suggest a bidirectional dynamic: social support nurtures acceptance, and acceptance, in turn, reinforces supportive behaviors. This relationship has been consistently verified by empirical studies. Sanda and Zuhroh (2021) found that while social acceptance levels in inclusive schools were moderate, students who perceived higher social support tended to demonstrate stronger acceptance toward peers with disabilities. Wahyuni et al. (2022) also reported that consistent support from teachers and peers was linked to more positive attitudes toward classmates with special needs. However, not all-inclusive settings produce similar outcomes. Pratiwi (2016) reported that discrimination and social distance persist in certain schools, implying that contextual factors such as leadership, teacher commitment, and peer culture significantly influence the support–acceptance relationship. Encouragingly, newer observations in Jakarta's inclusive schools indicate emerging patterns of empathy and cooperation, showing gradual but promising cultural change toward inclusivity.

In urban schools such as SMP N 259 Jakarta, inclusive education has been implemented with increasing awareness, yet challenges remain evident. Preliminary observations in the school revealed that some regular students were reluctant to interact closely with peers with special needs, particularly those displaying atypical behaviors such as emotional outbursts or physical contact. While these behaviors are sometimes misinterpreted, they emphasize the necessity of building supportive peer relationships within the inclusive classroom context. SMP N 259 Jakarta was therefore chosen as the research site because it represents a public junior high school that has adopted an inclusive education model and accommodates students with diverse types of special needs. The school's heterogeneous student population provides a

suitable environment to examine the relationship between social support and social acceptance and to identify how these constructs interact to shape inclusion outcomes.

Although a number of previous studies have examined social acceptance toward students with special needs (e.g., Arslan & Şahbaz, 2012; Pratiwi, 2016; Sanda & Zuhroh, 2021), only a few have explored the direct correlation between social support and social acceptance in Indonesian inclusive schools, especially at the junior high school level. Most existing research has focused on descriptive analyses or intervention programs without delving into the relational dynamics between these variables. Furthermore, comparative studies across Southeast Asian cultural settings remain limited, even though cultural norms play a significant role in shaping social behavior and support mechanisms. The present study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the relationship between social support and social acceptance among regular students toward their peers with special needs in an inclusive junior high school in Jakarta. By integrating the theoretical frameworks of Sarafino (2011) and Hurlock (2007) with recent empirical findings, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how supportive peer interactions can enhance social inclusion.

Therefore, this study is designed to analyze the relationship between social support and social acceptance among regular students toward students with special needs in the context of inclusive junior high schools. The rationale for this focus lies in the understanding that social support serves as a foundational element that enables the development of social acceptance within peer relationships, manifested through empathy, cooperation, and positive interaction. By examining how varying levels of social support influence regular students' willingness to accept, engage with, and include peers with disabilities, this research aims to uncover the underlying social mechanisms that contribute to the success of inclusive education. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can inform school-based interventions and policy development aimed at fostering inclusive values, strengthening peer relationships, and promoting equality in educational environments. Through this analysis, the study is expected to advance both theoretical understanding and practical strategies for enhancing inclusive practices in Indonesian junior high schools, particularly by demonstrating how the presence of strong social support networks can lead to more positive and enduring social acceptance of students with special needs.

METHODS

This study is a cross-sectional correlational study that examines the relationship between social support and the social acceptance of regular students toward students with special needs. The research method used is a correlational quantitative approach. Quantitative research is a method used to study a specific population or sample, collect data using research instruments, and analyse data quantitatively or statistically. Data collection was conducted from August to September 2023. This study was conducted at an inclusive school in East Jakarta. The population in this study consisted of regular students in grades 7, 8, and 9 at SMP N 259 Jakarta, including those with special needs. The researcher choose the location of this study for several reasons, namely (1) the school was one of the schools that implemented an inclusive education programme, where students with special needs studied together with regular students; (2) this school has a diverse social environment, in terms of teachers, peers, and parental support; (3) the location of the school in an urban area of Jakarta, and SMP N 259 Jakarta has a heterogeneous student body, both in terms of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. This heterogeneity provides a rich context for describing the phenomenon of social acceptance in a complex and multicultural environment; (4) The choice of location was also supported by its accessibility and the school's readiness to cooperate in the research. This study used probability sampling techniques, specifically proportional stratified random sampling, which is appropriate when the population is heterogeneous and is proportionally stratified (Sugiyono, 2019). The sample used in this study had the following criteria: regular students of SMP N 259 Jakarta in grades 7, 8, and 9 who were in the same class as students

with special needs. The data were analysed using Pearson's correlation to see the relationship between social acceptance and social support of regular students towards students with special needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 209 respondents and focused on how regular students perceive and support students with special needs (SEN) in their school environment. Figure 1 presents the age distribution of the respondents who participated in the study. The graphic illustrates that respondents come from a variety of age groups. This distribution represents students from different grade levels, suggesting that perspectives gathered in the study span multiple developmental stages. This study involved students in grades 1, 2, and 3 in junior high school.

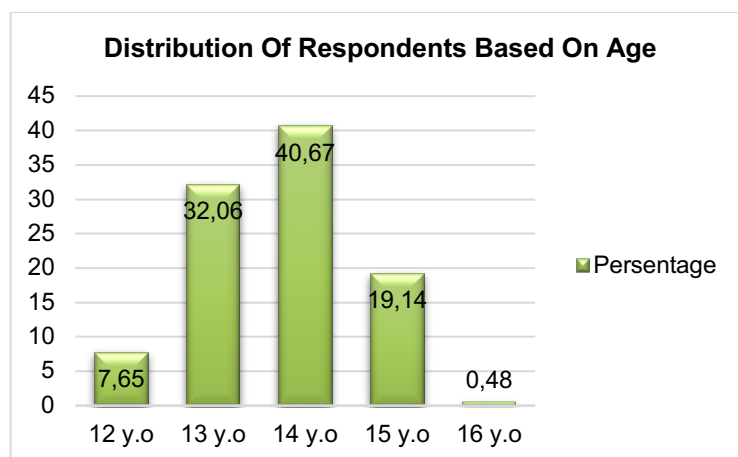


Figure 1. Diagram of The Distribution of Respondents Based on Age.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on whether they have a child with special needs in their immediate (nuclear) family. The results show that only a small proportion of regular students have family members with special needs at home (2,90%). Personal experience with special needs individuals could give practice lessons on how students perceive and treat their peers with similar challenges.

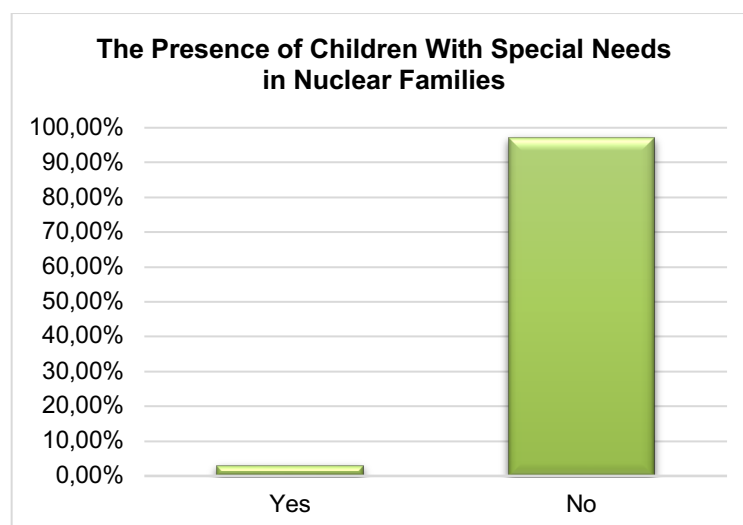


Figure 2. Diagram of The Distribution of The Presence of Children with Special Needs in Nuclear Families

Inclusive education is an effort to meet the educational needs of all children, focusing on those vulnerable to marginalisation. By integrating regular students with students with special needs, inclusive education creates a learning environment for all students. In many schools in Indonesia, inclusive education is still a struggle. According to research by Pratiwi (2016), children with special needs often face discrimination from others around them, so there are still differences in the treatment of these children. It is important to talk about social acceptance and support, as this results from a lack of social acceptance between ordinary students and children with special needs. This study investigates the relationship between social support for regular students and social acceptance for students with special needs.

According to Sarafino and Smith (2011), social support is comfort, praise, or assistance from other people or organisations. Support can come from various people, including family, peers, partners, and community organisations. People who get social support feel respected and valued and become members of a social network.

In this study, the dimensions of the social support variable were used using an instrument developed by Jane Shakespeare-Finch and Patricia L. Obst (2011). The instrument consists of two dimensions: Emotional Support and Instrumental Support. The categories on the social support variable are categorised into 3: low category, medium category, and high category. In aggregate, the results showed that the social support for students with special needs was 19 students in the low category (9.1%), 144 students in the medium category (68.9%), and 46 students in the high category (22.1%). So, it can be concluded that the social support provided by regular students to students with special needs is in the medium category. Based on the research results presented in Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of social support is in the medium category. As many as 64.1% of regular students provide social support to students with special needs in the medium category. The emotional support dimension has three indicators: assisting with attention, information, praise, or appreciation. Meanwhile, in the instrumental support dimension, 61.7% of regular students provide social support for students with special needs in the medium category. Instrumental support (e.g., helping with in-class activities) reflects practical inclusion. Instrumental support consists of two indicators: providing service assistance, such as completing assignments, volunteering time, and providing material assistance. In the high category, more regular students provide social support in the emotional support dimension than in the instrumental support dimension. This condition can occur due to the lack of knowledge or skills of regular students in aiding that suits the needs of students with special needs.

Table 1. The Distribution of Respondents based on the Dimension of Social Support Variable

Category	Emotional Support		Instrumental Support	
	n	%	n	%
Low (0 – 33,3%)	16	7,7	29	13,9
Medium (33,4 - 66,6%)	134	64,1	129	61,7
High (66,7 - 100%)	59	28,2	51	24,4
Total	209	100,0	209	100,0

According to Ünal and Yel (2019), social acceptance in classrooms implementing inclusive education can be defined as the acceptance of peers and others, both inside and outside the classroom, communication with them, their desire to engage in social activities with them, and the maintenance of ongoing positive relationships. In this study, the dimensions used are sourced from Arslan & Şahbaz (2012), which states three factors influence social acceptance of children with special needs, namely social skills, student behavior towards students with special needs, and peer attitude or perceptions of regular students towards students with special needs. In terms of social acceptance, the study assessed three aspects: social skills, student behavior, and peer attitude. Most students perceived the social skills of their peers with

special needs as moderate, with 70.3% choosing this category, 20.6% rating them low, and only 9.1% considering them high. This finding aligns with Sanda and Zuhroh's research (2021), which shows that regular students in inclusive classes have average social acceptance in the moderate category. The perception of behavior was more balanced, as 44.0% saw it as moderate and 44.5% as high, while only 11.5% thought it was low. The most encouraging results appeared in peer attitudes, where 54.5% of students expressed a high level of positive attitude toward their peers with special needs, and only 1.9% showed low acceptance. This reflects a strong level of inclusiveness and openness among the students.

Table 2. The Distribution of Respondents based on the Dimension of Social Acceptance Variable

Category	Social Skill		Behavior of the Student		Peer Attitude	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low (0 – 33,3%)	43	20,6	24	11,5	4	1,9
Medium (33,4 - 66,6%)	147	70,3	92	44,0	91	43,5
High (66,7 - 100%)	19	9,1	93	44,5	114	54,5
Total	209	100,0	209	100,0	209	100,0

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis presented in Table 3 indicate a very strong positive relationship between social support and social acceptance among regular students toward students with special needs at SMP N 259 Jakarta. The correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.817$ with a significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) = 0.000 shows that the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). This means that the higher the social support perceived by students, the higher their level of social acceptance toward peers with special needs. In other words, support fosters acceptance. These results underline the importance of promoting empathy, collaborative learning, and peer-support programs in schools. When students are encouraged to interact with and assist their peers with special needs, it leads to deeper understanding, greater mutual respect, and stronger social bonds. Despite a slight limitation in perceived social skills among students with special needs, the overall atmosphere appears highly inclusive and supportive, providing a positive outlook on the impact of inclusive education models. This study highlights how kindness, help, and peer engagement can transform school environments into spaces of belonging and shared growth for all students.

This strong positive correlation suggests that social support plays an important role in shaping students' social acceptance. High levels of social support create an inclusive school climate where every student feels valued, supported, and respected. When regular students experience positive social interactions and a supportive atmosphere, they are more likely to develop empathy, tolerance, and openness in interacting with students with special needs. The findings also reinforce the notion that social acceptance is not only influenced by individual factors but also by the social context and the level of support provided by the environment. In the context of inclusive education at SMP N 259 Jakarta, social support can serve as a key factor in fostering a respectful and collaborative culture among students. However, it is important to note that this relationship cannot be interpreted as causal, as the study employed a cross-sectional correlational design. This design only describes the simultaneous relationship between variables at one point in time. Despite this limitation, the findings provide strong empirical evidence that enhancing social support within the school setting can be a strategic approach to strengthening social acceptance in inclusive education environments.

Table 3. The Result of Correlation Coefficient Test

Corelations		Social Acceptance	Social Support
Social Acceptance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.817**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	209	209
Social Support	Pearson Correlation	0.817**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	209	209

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Positive social acceptance can boost the self-confidence and self-esteem of students with special needs. Feeling accepted and supported by peers and teachers can help reduce stress and improve their psychological well-being. Social support from peers and teachers can help students with special needs overcome learning difficulties or social-emotional challenges. This support may include help with learning, emotional support, or practical help with daily activities. Positive social acceptance in the regular school environment can also create an inclusive and supportive environment for students with special needs. This condition can help reduce stigma and discrimination and create opportunities for positive social interactions between students with special needs and other students. Social support for students with special needs in inclusive schools can make an important contribution to their overall development through positive social acceptance. Social support from peers can help create an inclusive, supportive learning environment and strengthen special needs students' sense of involvement in school life.

The findings of this study reveal a very strong positive correlation between social support and social acceptance among regular students toward students with special needs ($r = 0.817$; $p < 0.01$). This result reinforces the theoretical perspective of Sarafino (2011), who states that social support (comprising emotional, informational, and instrumental forms) plays a critical role in fostering individuals' psychological well-being and sense of social connectedness. In the context of this study, the presence of social support within the school environment, such as empathy from peers and encouragement from teachers, helps students feel secure and valued. This sense of belonging, as described by Sarafino, enhances their capacity to develop positive social interactions, which in turn contributes to higher levels of social acceptance toward peers with special needs. Furthermore, the result aligns with Hurlock's (2007) theory of peer acceptance, which explains that children and adolescents who receive social support are more likely to develop adaptive social behaviors and positive attitudes toward others. According to Hurlock, acceptance within a peer group depends on emotional understanding, mutual respect, and supportive interactions. In this study, the strong relationship between social support and social acceptance suggests that when students experience consistent social reinforcement, they are more open, empathetic, and accepting of diversity within their peer group.

Comparatively, this finding differs from Pratiwi (2016), who found that some inclusive schools still experience discrimination and limited social integration between regular students and students with special needs. The present study, however, indicates a more positive social dynamic, suggesting that the inclusive practices in SMP N 259 Jakarta may have been more effectively implemented. Meanwhile, the result extends the findings of Sanda and Zuhroh (2021), who reported moderate levels of social acceptance in inclusive settings. The higher level of correlation found in this study implies that when social support mechanisms are stronger, the degree of peer acceptance also increases significantly. Overall, these findings both support and expand upon existing theories and empirical studies, highlighting the importance of strengthening social support systems to promote a more inclusive and accepting school culture.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, the Pearson correlation hypothesis test results, the correlation coefficient (r) value shows a number of 0.832 with a positive value, so that the better the social acceptance, the better the social support provided. It can be concluded that the research hypothesis H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, which means there is a relationship between social acceptance and social support for regular students and students with disabilities. Based on the correlation coefficient value obtained, it can be concluded that social acceptance has a strong relationship with the social support provided by regular students to students with special needs.

Based on the results of the research conducted, there are several recommendations, namely:

1. An effort needs to be made to increase the social acceptance of regular students towards students with special needs, such as through socialization and counselling related to creating a friendly and inclusive school environment for all students with various characteristics.
2. Socialization related to the types of special needs in inclusive schools and how to respond to things that might occur in the social interaction of regular students with students with special needs is needed to minimize the impact of aggressive behavior.
3. Future research is expected to examine the socialization of inclusive behavior and social life at home so that students perceive students with special needs positively. Parents are role models who can help children develop perceptions. This effort can help schools create an inclusive school environment.

The results of this study carry several important practical implications for the development of inclusive education in Indonesia. Given the strong positive correlation between social support and social acceptance, schools, particularly inclusive ones, need to cultivate empathy and effective communication skills among students. Programs such as peer mentoring, collaborative learning, and empathy-based workshops can be implemented to strengthen mutual understanding between regular students and students with special needs. Teachers and school counselors also play a pivotal role in facilitating supportive classroom interactions, ensuring that every student feels valued and included. By promoting a school climate grounded in social support, institutions can enhance peer acceptance and reduce potential social barriers that often emerge in inclusive environments. From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the enrichment of social psychology and inclusive education literature by extending Sarafino's (2011) concept of social support and Hurlock's (2007) theory of peer acceptance within the context of Southeast Asian culture. The findings highlight the reciprocal relationship between peer support and social inclusion, suggesting that emotional and instrumental support among students not only improves individual well-being but also strengthens collective acceptance and cohesion. This reinforces the notion that social dynamics in inclusive education are culturally situated, implying that collectivist cultural values in Southeast Asia may amplify the impact of social support on acceptance behaviors compared to Western contexts where individualism predominates.

This study, however, has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research was conducted in only one inclusive school in Jakarta (SMP N 259 Jakarta), which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The results may not fully represent other geographical areas or different educational levels, such as elementary or senior high schools. Additionally, the cross-sectional correlational design only captures relationships at a single point in time and does not allow for causal inference. Future studies are recommended to include longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to explore the causal pathways and deeper qualitative insights regarding social support and peer acceptance in diverse inclusive educational settings.

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