

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The implementation of educational practices for all children is a mandate brought by 1945 Indonesia's Constitution, listed in articles 31 paragraphs 1 and 2. The mandate states that every citizen has the right to education and that every citizen is obliged to attend basic education and the government is obliged to take care of its financial needs. The paragraph also explains that every child who is registered as an Indonesian citizen has the right and obligation to carry out their education. In this context, each child referred to in this verse also includes children who have a special background or what is commonly called children with special needs (Sukadari 2019, 39). Based on the mandate of the educational practice, education is not only exclusively for children born without any special needs, but also in inclusion intended for children with special needs. The practice of inclusive education is not a new thing in Indonesia. Many schools both public and private in Indonesia have been and are currently undergoing inclusive education.

Inclusive education is an educational practice that includes special needs students getting the same teachings and treatment as students without special needs in the classroom (Widya and Rifma 2020, 96). In this inclusive practice, special needs students are not only included as non-active learning participants, namely being present to just see the learning process but children with special needs are invited to be involved in the learning process, as well as interact with teachers and friends in the classroom. This inclusion education practice service is also in line with the circular letter of Director of *Majelis Pendidikan Dasar and Menengah* no.

380 of 2003 which reads, "Inclusive education is education that includes children who have special needs to learn together with other normal children".

To carry out the practice of inclusive education, a school should not just "accept" the presence of children with special needs in school. If so, the school cannot be addressed as a school that runs the practice of inclusive education. There are several things that schools need to pay attention to and prepare to create an inclusive learning environment ranging from teaching staff to facilities that support inclusive services (Sukadari 2019, 77). Some of the things to consider are the teachers and school facilities: the school needs to know that not all the teachers have basic knowledge about special needs students and how to treat them in the classroom according to their specific needs.

In addition to teachers, schools also need to facilitate special needs students with the proper supporting facilities. These supporting facilities cannot be equated with the facilities of students without special needs because special students like this have specific backgrounds and needs, as well as several different treatments, so they cannot be equated with students without special needs (Sukadari in *Model Pendidikan Inklusi dalam Pembelajaran Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* 2019, 113-114).

These supporting facilities are required on inclusive school services and are placed and adapted to class models as described by Vaughn, Bos and Schumn in *Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Luar Biasa* (2008, 6-10) that the placement of students who have abnormalities or special needs students in inclusive schools can be implemented through these models: (1) regular class or full inclusion, a class in which special needs students join and study together with non-special needs

students and use the same curriculum; (2) regular class with cluster, a class in which special needs students join and study together with a special group of non-special needs students; (3) regular class with pull-out, a class in which special needs students join and study with non-special needs students, but at certain times or situations are pulled out from the classroom to a specific classroom such as a tutoring room or study room to get guidance services from a special guidance teacher; (4) regular class with cluster and pull-out, referring to the definition of cluster class models and pull-out classes above, this class model is where special needs students join and study together with a special group of non-special needs students, but at a certain time or situation are directed towards the guidance room or learning resource room; (5) special class with various integration, that is where special needs students learn and receive guidance services from a special guidance teacher in the classroom, but in certain fields, they can study with non-special needs students in regular classes. Lastly, (6) fully specialized students where special needs students learn and get learning services from special guidance teachers in special classes in inclusive schools.

XYZ School is one of the schools that run inclusion education. The school began its operation in 2019 and now has five children with special needs consisting of autism, Attention-deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), speech delay, and hearing impairment. In supporting the implementation of inclusive education for special needs students, the school not only accepts these students, but the school also ensures the well-being and development of every aspect by providing and facilitating them with support programs from supporting teachers, and support rooms devoted to students who have learning difficulties and special needs. In

addition, to further equip the needs of special needs students and create an increasingly inclusive learning environment, in September 2021 the school opened a program called the sensory circuit.

Based on the inclusive class models presented by Vaughn, Bos and Schumm in the *Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Luar Biasa* (2008, 6-10) above, this sensory circuit program is included in the third model, which is regular classes with pull-out. This sensory circuit program is usually conducted before class activities begin, or even in the middle of learning. This sensory circuit program is very useful for teachers to create effective classroom management with special needs students on a regular class basis.

This sensory circuit program is a series of physical activities that aim to train the focus of special needs or learning difficulties students, as well as correct behavioral problems. This program requires the important role of support teachers, where they need to master each series of activities and benefits and be able to determine the physical activity that suits the needs of these students (Horwood 2009, 51). With this sensory program, it is hoped that special needs and learning difficulties students can enjoy being in the school environment more, as well as show good changes in their focus and behavior.

With the above exposure, the role of support teachers is indeed very important in mastering sensory programs so that the goals of this program can be achieved by students. However, based on the results of the researcher's observation on the implementation of this sensory circuit program, some obstacles occurred and caused the program cannot be run effectively. Some of these obstacles include: (1) initial training is done virtually. Training is carried out virtually due to the rising

COVID-19 cases. Therefore, support teachers do not get their own time to try and practice a series of sensory circuit physical activities directly but are limited to seeing sensory equipment through images and videos; (2) The researcher also found that some support teachers have not had experience in special needs education, so they have difficulty starting sensory programs, considering they are unfamiliar and have no pre-knowledge of this program. Although they have participated in training at the beginning, it is still not enough to equip them for this program.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the problem described in the research background above, the researcher found some issues arose in XYZ inclusive school regarding the implementation of the new school's program and support teachers' readiness for the program. The problems are identified as follows:

1. The sensory circuit program is a new program in the school, purportedly to support special needs students and difficult learners, and was first launched in September 2021.
2. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the support teachers had the first training in the sensory circuit program virtually, which made it impossible for the teachers to try the sensory activities in person.
3. The support teachers' first try at the sensory circuit program was done together with special needs students, so some of the teachers were not aware of the sensory activities, or its equipment, and struggled to adapt to all the 3-sections at once.
4. The sudden changes of COVID-19 forced the school to continue shifting from online to onsite and have made the support teacher struggle to manage

the class as they need to think of the best ways in maintaining special needs students' engagement and interest in learning.

5. As the shifting continues from online to onsite, the teachers had less time to consistently practice the sensory circuit program, and it eventually made the teachers feel unaware of the program.
6. As a result of teachers' unawareness due to lack of time and practice, some of the teachers prefer not to adopt the program with the students during the home visit.

1.3 Problem Limitation

To understand and describe the problem identified above, this research is limited to specific parts to get the expected result of the evaluation towards the awareness and adaptability of support teachers using the sensory circuit program and in-depth of the support teachers in the Learning Support Department of XYZ inclusive school's abilities to aware and adapt to the newly-program sensory circuit, as well as its impact to their classroom management for coping special needs students' behavior problem.

1.4 Research Questions

To conduct this research, the researcher generates the research questions as a framework. They are:

1. How are the support teachers aware that the sensory circuit program impacts their classroom management to cope with special needs students' behavior problems?

2. How do the teachers adapt to the use of sensory circuit program as classroom management in coping with special needs students' behavioral problems?
3. How is the sensory circuit program involved in improving support teachers' awareness and adaptability?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions above, thus the objectives of this research are expected to analyze and describe:

1. To analyze the support teachers' awareness of the sensory circuit program and its impact on classroom management in coping with special needs students' behavior problems.
2. To describe the support teachers' adaptability using the sensory circuit program on their classroom management in coping with behavior problems of special needs students.
3. To analyze the involvement of sensory circuit program in improving support teachers' awareness and adaptability.

1.6 Research Benefit

The research benefit consists of 2 different perspectives, they are:

1.6.1 Theoretical Benefit:

This research is expected to add to and complement various studies and findings in the field of education, especially inclusive education, and special needs students. In addition, this research is expected to be a benefit for adding to the support teachers' theories on the sensory circuit program, as one of the ways to improve teachers' awareness in knowing and realizing its impacts on classroom

management and eventually be able to adopt the program into their teaching practices.

1.6.2 Practical Benefit:

This research is expected to provide input on school evaluation related to the awareness and ability of support teachers in adapting sensory circuit programs as one of the facilities for special needs students and can be a basis for consideration to create new facilities or programs aimed at creating more of the inclusive learning environment, and it also may help to determine whether or not further training is needed to increase support teachers' awareness and adaptability towards sensory circuit program.

1.7 Research Systematic Writing

Chapter I Introduction

The background study was conducted by the researcher to find out the problem that occurred from the newly implemented program to facilitate special needs and learning difficulties students. After the problem was found, the researcher focuses on the research by deciding on the problem identification which is related to the support teachers' awareness and adaptability in using the sensory circuit program. The researcher then formed three research questions that related to teachers' awareness, adaptability, and the involvement of the sensory circuit program. Thus, the objectives of this research are to analyze and describe in depth the support teachers' level of awareness and adaptability in using the program, and how is the program involved in the support teachers' growth.

Chapter II Literature Review

In this chapter, the researcher presents the literature review that underlies the theory

built and developed in this research. In this chapter, the researcher outlines a literature study that discusses inclusive education, early childhood education, awareness, adaptability, classroom management, and sensory circuit programs. This chapter also includes the previous studies, in which a similar study discussed sensory circuit program. The discussed theories in this chapter will be developed as the research instrument, as well as in the research discussion in the Chapter V.

Chapter III Research Method

The section of research method contains the research design used is qualitative, the type of research used is an evaluation study that refers to the support teachers' awareness adaptability in using sensory circuit program. This research was conducted in XYZ school, specifically in Learning Support room where all the activities of the sensory circuit program were conducted. The research participant in this research is all the five support teachers' in Learning Support Department. The data is gathered and collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data validity used in this research is triangulation, where all the gathered data will be compared to each other, as well as with a related theory and document.

Chapter IV Research Findings

This chapter presents the data found in the study. These data are obtained through observation and interviews. These data are represented as they are, following the findings of researchers when conducting this research. These findings are presented in the form of transcripts of interview results from the five support teachers and the result of observations that were divided into three categories of place, actors, and activities.

Chapter V Research Discussion

This chapter discusses a review of research findings analyzed with the theories of awareness, adaptability, and sensory circuit program that have been presented in Chapter II. Discussion based on the three research questions is also analyzed in this chapter, which is divided into three dimensions of awareness and four dimensions of adaptability, as well as the implementation of a sensory circuit program in XYZ school. There are 33 total quotations were analyzed in this chapter. In addition, the limitation of the research is also discussed in this chapter in which the total of the participant was very limited, as well the sub-variables may not be found in other school or institution.

Chapter VI Conclusion and Suggestion

This chapter presents three conclusions obtained from the research on the awareness and adaptability of support teachers in coping with special needs students' behavior problems at XYZ School, as well as the implementation of the sensory circuit program for the support teachers' growth. In addition, the researcher also conveyed suggestions that are found through the results of the research.