THE PERCEPTION OF PARENTS TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: CASE STUDY IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

*This study aims to explore the perceptions of parents of regular students (PRS) and parents of
special needs students (PSNS) alike on inclusive education at the elementary school level in
Indonesia. This study was a case study-type qualitative research. The data collection consisted of*

a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The participants in this study were 89 PRSs and 42 PSNS in West Java Indonesia. The findings of the study displayed that the perception of PRSs and PSNs on inclusive education can be categorized into four aspects, namely social, emotional, academic, and non-academic. The perception of social elements can develop communication, social interaction, play, and cooperation between students. The emotional aspect develops a sense of respect, empathy, love, and caring for each other, respecting differences, while at the same time generating SNS insecurity when in an inclusive classroom. As far as academic aspects are concerned to provide opportunities for SNSs and RSs to learn together. Besides, there is a tendency that the teacher cannot always allocate time in order to give more attention to the SNSs than to the RSs. Perception of non-academic aspects that inclusive education is a service that provides every child with the right to access education.

Keywords

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is an educational innovation that provides educational services for all students without discrimination, which has characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, and limitations that combine regular students with special needs. Inclusive education provides an opportunity for all students to be able to participate in joint learning in inclusive classes to be able to develop social, emotional, physical, and psychomotor social development in a comfortable and conducive classroom environment. According to UNESCO (2005), inclusive education is an innovation in education that provides fundamental changes that can accommodate the diversity of good students that are implemented in a learning situation conducive to all children. The Salamanca Statement (1994), stated that inclusive education is one of the most effective and efficient ways to realize education for all by eliminating injustice and creating a society that is friendly in diversity.

Inclusive education emphasizes education for all with a fair system of education, uses a curriculum tailored to the characteristics of children, learning activities that involve all children in order to foster a sense of cooperation, mutual assistance, mutual respect when other students experience disabilities, also increase caring and high empathy when dealing with differences and obstacles. Inclusive education aims to provide opportunities for every child with all the challenges and characteristics, different learning styles to be able to learn together in a conducive learning

environment to improve academic and non-academic abilities (Abbas, Zafar, & Naz, 2016). Besides, that inclusive education can also provide an opportunity for every child to be able to appreciate differences to be positive so that they are accustomed to facing real conditions in the future (Ruppar, Bal, Gonzalez, Love, & McCabe, 2018).

Inclusive education implemented in inclusive schools provides a clear picture that every child has the right to gain access to education and benefit from school services (Adams, Harris, & Jones, 2018). Following the principle of inclusive education that eliminates discrimination, it is imperative that every child can access inclusive education services. For this reason, in addition to the government's duty so that all children can feel inclusive education services, all education stakeholders also should be able to understand the benefits of inclusive education (Colibaba, Gheorghiu, Colibaba, & Munteanu, 2013).

The success of inclusive education is not only the duty and obligation of the government in its implementation (Simaeva & Khitryuk, 2014). Governments, schools, parents, and communities have the same requirements and must unite in the application of inclusive education. Without the role of parents, inclusive education services are challenging to succeed. So it is part of schools and society. As a direct subject of inclusive education services, the role of parents who have students with special needs is critical. Parents must understand the meaning and purpose of inclusive education that their children will undergo (Simayeva, 2013). But in reality, of course, it is not easy to convince parents that they have included their children with schools that provide inclusive education or inclusive schools.

Some problems related to parents about inclusive education have explained several things. The issues faced by parents as well as the difficulties faced by the government and schools include: parents do not understand the meaning of inclusive education, parents' concern that if their children who have special needs will not be able to take lessons because of their limitations, can disturb other students, tend to be alone and cannot work with other friends. Another concern is the occurrence of bullying and the inability of teachers to deal with students with special needs so that learning objectives cannot be achieved (Raven & Jurkiewicz, 2014; Holt, Bowlby, & Lea, 2017). On the teacher side, parents often do not trust the teacher to share time well, because there are students who need more attention because they have limitations that require additional time in learning compared to other students.

1.1 Inclusive Education in Indonesia

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia began in 1998 - 2001 by first ratifying The Salamanca Statement in 1997 followed by conducting some pilot projects in various regions, such as in Yogyakarta. Indonesia's strong commitment to implementing inclusive education is expressed in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of The Republic of Indonesia, Number 70 the Year 2009 Article 1. Furthermore, in Article 2, it explains that the country provides an opportunity for all students to be able to obtain a quality education under their needs and abilities and to provide education that respects diversity and is not discriminatory to all students.

Until now inclusive education is still one of the educational services that the Indonesian government continues to promote in the form of the formation of inclusive schools which become a way out for all students with the spread of students who are difficult to reach because Indonesia is an archipelago with access to education that is still limited to remote, foremost and undeveloped regions. Even though until now, the number of students with special needs has increased, but the number of inclusive schools has not been able to accommodate all children with special needs. Although in all provinces there are special schools for students with special needs, most access to special schools is in large cities. So that many children with special needs are not educated according to their needs and obstacles.

Another problem that occurs in the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is the limited facilities and infrastructure owned by regular schools to become inclusive schools. Regular schools are not yet ready to replace regular schools into inclusive schools, in addition to problems with facilities and infrastructure. Other issues are such as the competence of teachers who do not understand about inclusive education. It is due to they are not from a special education background, so they do not understand the characteristics of students with special needs (Vaz et al., 2015; Mekacher, 2019). Also, the lack of government attention in assisting regular schools to become inclusive schools has become a problem that, until now, requires attention.

Equally important is the mindset of parents about inclusive education is still very lacking (Magumise & Sefotho, 2018; Barrett, 2017). So far, the negative stigma of parents towards students with special needs still dominates the refusal of a regular school to become an inclusive school. Most parents think that students with special needs must attend a special school. Various reasons from parents so that students with special needs participate in special schools so that they get education together with students who have the same obstacles so as not to disturb regular

students who have differences in physical and mental. The concerns of parents are accompanied by fears that people who have not been able to accept the existence of students with special needs in the school environment and the general public environment (Denman, 2015; Shetty, 2018).

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of parents of students, both parents of the regular student (PRS) and parents of special needs students (PSNS), on inclusive education in Indonesia.

2. Research Methods

2.1 Research Design

The approach used in this study is the qualitative approach to a case study. The qualitative approach is focused on the assessment of attitudes, thoughts, and performance that can be said as perceptions (Khotari, 2004). The purpose of using a qualitative approach in this study is to determine the perceptions of PRSs and PSNSs.

2.2 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 2 types of informants, namely PRS and PSNS. All informants were selected from parents who send their children to elementary - school-aged both public and private schools in the areas of Depok City and Bogor City, West Java Province. PRS (n=89) was randomly selected with various educational backgrounds from regular students. PSNS (n=42) was selected from parents who have children with special needs and recommended by teachers and psychologists. Table 1 is detailed information on the number of parents as participants.

Table 1: *Informant Information*

Information	Kind of Participants	
	PRS	**PSNS**
Sex:		
Female	78	36
Male	11	6
Education:		
Elementary	12	7
Junior/Senior High School	34	12
University	43	23
Total Participants	89	42

2.3 Data Collection

The data were gathered using a questionnaire and semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. Researchers conducted data collection, and research assistants consist of 3 people. The procedure for collecting data was given questionnaires to informants first, by explaining the definition of inclusive education to each informant. Interviews were carried out after given a survey in a relaxed state. The topic of these interviews was the interaction that occurred in the classroom during the learning process. The process of data collection was conducted for ten days with 8-9 informants every day, with an average duration of 4-5 hours.

The questionnaires and interview questions were given to informants that are validated to 2 experts who have inclusive education expertise and make revisions according to the direction of the expert. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions, and interviews consisted of 6 queries. The topics of the interview are on matters relating to inclusive education, namely the benefits of inclusive education, the issue of inclusive education, child development in inclusive education, and programs that must be carried out by the government related to inclusive education. The primary data obtained were the recording, which then made the transcript by the researcher for further analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data analysis was conducted by calculating the mean score of both PRS's and PSNS's perception toward inclusive education. The qualitative data, before the data was analyzed further, the first step was to make transcripts from interviews. In the interview results, the following steps were taken: (1) reviewing interview records that determined the phrases related to the most commonly mentioned inclusive education (2) finding and identifying phrases appropriate to inclusive education (3) make a code and the category of each identification result.

The next step was to perform the data analysis process. The researcher applied qualitative data analysis developed by (Spradley, 2016) and modified by (Jamaris & Hartati, 2017) with three analysis steps , that were: (1) thematic analysis of all participants, combining the results of coding and interviewing all PRSs and PSNSs; (2) within-participant thematic study, identified the general theme of each category; (3) cross-participant analysis, identifying the general issue of the inclusive education category between the participants. The final stage of analyzing of inclusive education is

the culture theme as a profile of PRS's and PSNS's perceptions. Below is the process of analysis results.

Table 2: *Thematic-Qualitative Data Analysis for PRS's Perception*

Included Term	Semantic Relations	Cover Term
RS can communicate well with SNS RS can play together with SNS RS Attacked SNS SNS can add friends RS does not bully SNS	Is kind of	Social Aspect
Mutual respect Empathy RS cares about SNS RS can appreciate differences SNS is not confident SNS attitude can affect RS	Is kind of	Emotional Aspect
Helping SNS in learning The teacher cannot divide time The teacher did not give enough attention to the RS The teacher will be overwhelmed to handle all students	Is kind of	Academic Aspect
The right of every child to get an education PSNS must open themselves to the school environment Actively involved in school The government must be involved in inclusive education	Is kind of	Non-Academic Aspect

Note: RS: Regular student, SNS: Special needs student

Table 3: *Thematic-Qualitative Data Analysis for PSNS's Perception*

Included Term	Semantic Relations	Cover Term
SNS's communication and social interactions can develop SNS can play with RS SNS can be friends with RS Bully has occurred SNS like to be alone SNS tends to be annoying SNS doesn't cooperate	Is kind of	Social Aspect
SNS lack confidence SNS tends to be shy SNS is often nervous SNS inferiority	Is kind of	Emotional Aspect

SNS tends to be afraid SNS is sensitive		
The teacher cannot divide time The teacher does not give enough attention when studying The teacher does not understand the characteristics of the SNS The teacher ignores the SNS The teacher let RS disturb the SNS RS can help SNS when learning	Is kind of	Academic Aspect
Do not have the cost to pay aided teacher RS's parents looked negatively at SNS SNS's parents embarrassed by SNS conditions The community sometimes still cannot receive SNS	Is kind of	Non-Academic Aspect

3. Result

The results of the data analysis that has been done, both from the results of the questionnaire and the interview resulted in a profile of each perception of both types of parents both PRS and PSNS as found in Figure 1 below:
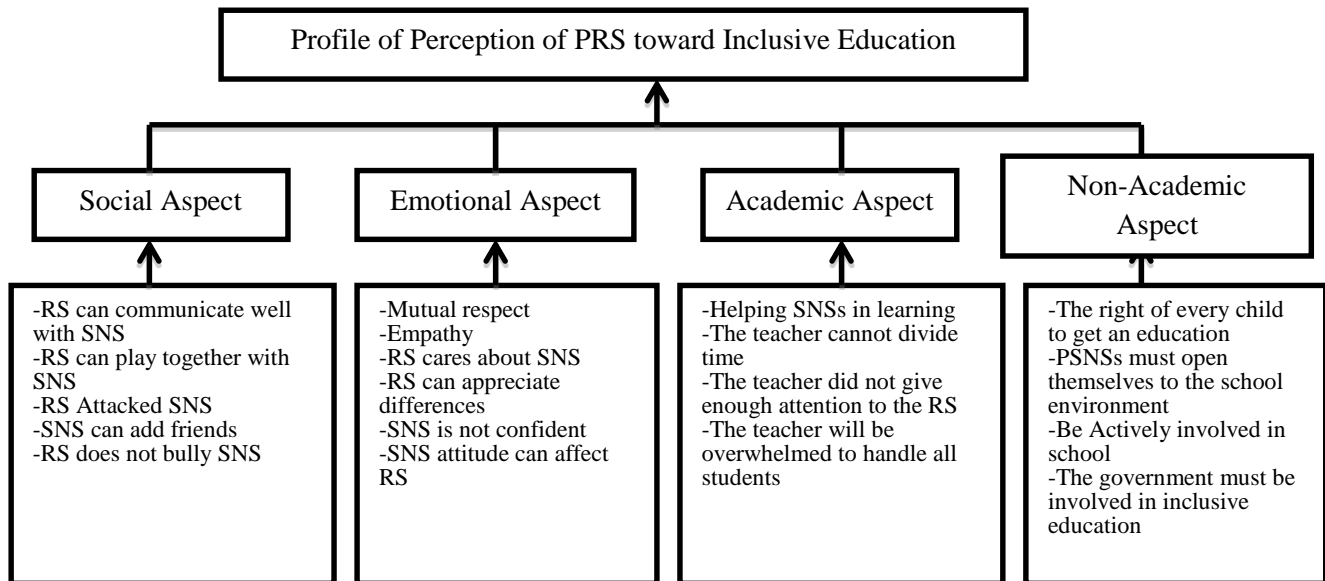

Figure 1: *Profile of PRS's Perception toward Inclusive Education*

In Figure 1, findings on PRS perceptions of inclusive education can be grouped into four categories, namely perceptions on social aspects, emotional aspects, academic and non-academic aspects.
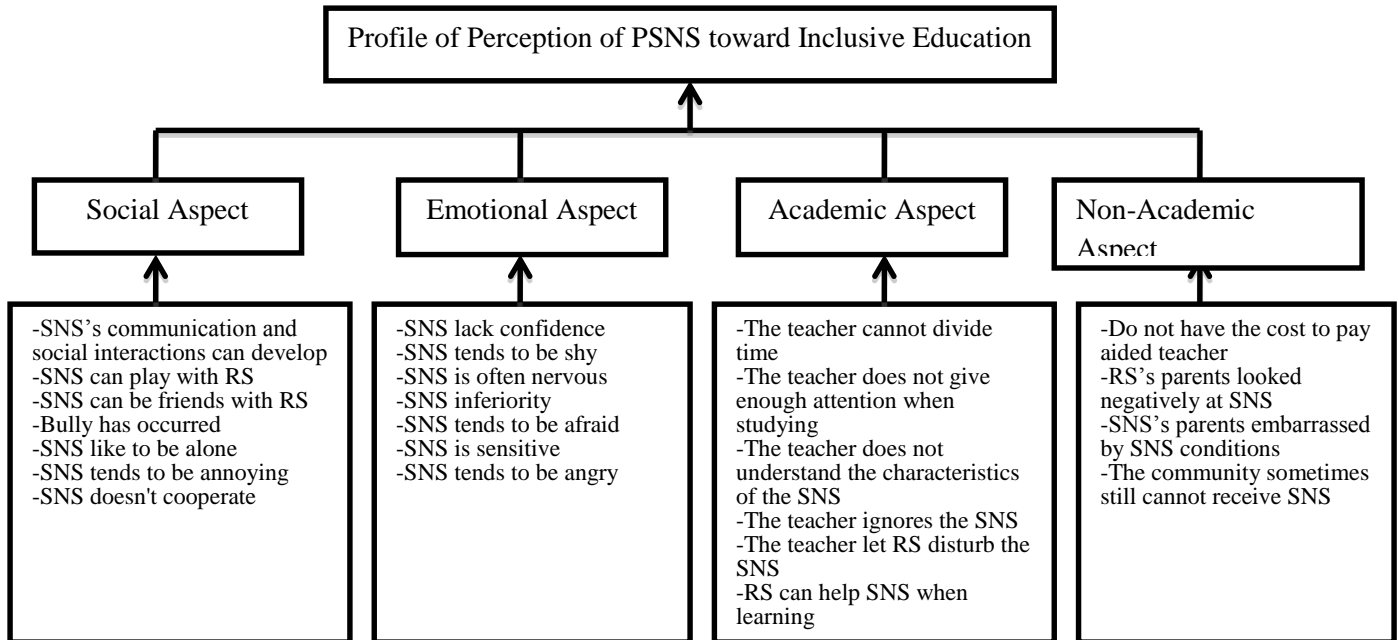
Figure 2: *Profile of PSNS's Perception toward Inclusive Education*

4. Discussion

The perception of PRS and PSNS on inclusive education can be categorized into four aspects that can be viewed from the social, emotional, academic, and non-academic issues.

The perception of social aspects is the view of PRS and PSNS related to the way children socialize with other children. In the context of an inclusive class, parents' perceptions illustrate that children will be able to communicate with each other, both in a learning environment and in other activities at school. For PRS, the social aspect that will emerge at inclusive schools is that children will be able to provide positive benefits for SNS. PRS hoping that with the presence of SNS in the class with conditions and characteristics that are different from the RS, it can lead to a sense of cooperation in conducting learning activities that can play together, even though there are fears that there will be a bully against SNS. The PRS explained this opinion in one interview;

> "I hope my children can learn together, invite children with special needs to play together so that they can be good friends, even though I sometimes worry about being bullied to children with that need" (PRS 1).

The perception that is almost the same as explained by PSNS from the social aspect is that they hope that SNS can communicate and interact well with other students, without any fear and worry. PSNS, who have SNS hopes that they send their children to inclusive schools, is the right

choice because they hope that SNS can work together, play, and learn along with other students. Just like PRS, the PSNS also feels that education in schools inclusive of SNS is still happening. For PSNS, who have SNS with categories of children with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with high emotion, they also have the top concern, that otherwise, SNS will disturb other friends or other RSs. This opinion can be seen in the statement of one of the PSNS below:

> "My child is among those who have high emotions; I am anxious that he disturbs other children, and may also be bullied by other children. I only hope that through this school, my child can learn and make good friends with other children " (PSNS 1)

Parents' perceptions of inclusive education from social aspects should provide a real picture that inclusive education can provide the right space for SNS and RS so that their social development can develop well. The benefits that can be felt by both types of students can make a sound, comfortable, and beneficial relationship for both children (Lam & Phillipson, 2009). Child development from social aspects for elementary school students is significant, which starts from self-introduction so that it can find its character, strengths, and weaknesses. Parents hope that there is a relationship with communication, good social interaction, both in the learning process and in the school environment (Rothe, Urban, & Werning, 2014). The better the way to communicate, the benefits for SNS not only have an impact on the school environment but the climate of the community and other communities. For RS, it fosters confidence in opening relationships with children who have difficult interactions.

Emotional aspects that emerge from the perception of PRS and PSNS are the view that inclusive education is manifested in a behavior that is seen in both RS and SNS. For PRS, inclusive education provides opportunities for RS to develop mutual respect, empathy, compassion, and be able to appreciate differences. Most PRS hopes that inclusive education can shape RS more concerned with SNS, who generally have an attitude of insecurity and shame. PRS also hopes that SNS can foster an attitude of confidence in getting along and behaving with their friends. Although there are concerns from PRS that SNS in negative behavior can influence RS. PRS opinions related to the emotional aspects of inclusive education can be explained in the PRS statement below:

> "I think in inclusive education with many different characteristics, my child can learn about how to respect each other and care for other friends. Don't look down on friends who have limitations "(PRS 2).

PSNS perception of inclusive education from the emotional aspect gives more negative opinions to SNS emotions. PSNS believes that inclusive education causes the feelings of SNS to be unstable, often feeling shy, not confident, often angry, and more sensitive. This is indicated by various unpleasant emotional experiences in the classroom. This opinion can be explained from the results of the interview to the following PSNS:

> "My child tends autism, so sometimes it's often excessive anger, and sometimes it's difficult to control his anger. I am distraught that if he is in a regular class, he will disturb other children "(PSNS 2).

Emotional development in each child greatly influences social development when entering school age. RS and SNS who are in a loving family environment, as well as an environment that supports all forms of children's character, will form children with a stable level of emotion and quickly adapt to situations that sometimes are not following family conditions. In schools that implement inclusive education, with diverse children's characteristics, with varying levels of emotions as well, it gives hope that this condition is a place of practice for SNS to be able to control emotions (Botha & Kourkoutas, 2016). Likewise for RS, experiencing together while learning and playing with SNS, is expected to show respect for SNS. Most parents consider that inclusive schools provide an opportunity for every child to learn to understand the feelings of others and can be a positive provision in the future (Marcuzzi & Romero-Naranjo, 2017). Even under the same conditions, it is not uncommon for parents who have children with special needs, to give other concerns, because their children cannot control themselves or even interfere with other children.

Inclusive education provides a better opportunity for every child to develop emotional aspects that can be designed through fun learning, and all students are involved even though the teacher must pay particular attention to exceptional students, but inclusive education is one way that all students can develop the best way to improve all aspects of development. The process of emotional development will continue to experience strengthening, and its function is better through social experience, in the form of social interaction with the surrounding environment (Potgieter-Groot, Visser, & Lubbe-de Beer, 2012).

Parents' perception of inclusive education is also very much a concern for academic aspects. If you see the attitudes expressed by PRS and PSNS, there are similarities in perception; namely, there are concerns about the teacher who cannot divide time, does not provide proper

attention to all students during the learning process. This opinion can be seen from the explanation of the PRS and SNS below:

"I am apprehensive that the teacher cannot handle all children, especially if there are children with special needs, surely the teacher will give more time to these students" (PRS 3)

"I hope the teacher can give attention to my child because my child needs more attention than other students" (PSNS 3).

In addition to the attention and time that concerns the PRS and PSNS, both parents expect cooperation in learning between the RS and SNS in the classroom. SNS students who tend to more extended time in understanding subject matter such as slow learner students, learning difficulties, or other students are expected through inclusive classes, the occurrence of social interaction, which provides positive benefits for both types of students in learning activities, thus giving an impact well. Although there are concerns from some PSNS that most teachers still have not understood the characteristics of SNS.

Increased academic development for students, both RS and SNS, can develop well if the social aspects and emotional aspects of students are involved in each learning activity. The form of social interaction that occurs between teachers and students and students and students provides an excellent opportunity for academic improvement to occur. Teachers must be able to design learning that offers an opportunity for each student to interact with each other, in the form of learning methods that can involve all students. The purpose of group work learning (Moin, Magiera, & Zigmond, 2009), joint discussion, and role-playing will improve the academic capabilities of the RS and SNS (Huisman, 2016).

The academic success of all students is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to understand the characteristics of each student, especially the SNS. Parents' perceptions, especially PSNS, indicate that many teachers do not understand the aspects of students, so teachers give less attention to SNS. Every teacher must do in learning in an inclusive class is following the characteristics, weaknesses, strengths, and limitations that all students have, including students with special needs. Good cooperation between classroom teachers and aided teachers in learning activities greatly fosters the development of SNS to achieve academic progress well (Bouck, Satsangi, & Flanagan, 2016).

In addition to academic aspects, non-academic aspects such as government attention to the implementation of inclusive education (Connolley & Hausstätter, 2009), public acceptance of students with special needs in obtaining the right to school, and openness and involvement of both parents in school activities provide positive and negative perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education. Both the PRS and the PSNS give almost the same view that the involvement of both parents is necessary for inclusive schools. Parental involvement can take the form of participating in parent meetings in school activities. PSNS needs to open up, provide reinforcement and motivation, and positive thoughts that all children have strengths and strengths in learning in inclusive classes. Likewise, PRS must be able to accept the characteristics of SNSs and have a positive impact on RSs.

The success of inclusive education is not only dependent on academic aspects but also influenced by non-academic factors. The involvement of government, schools, parents, and the community who are stakeholders in inclusive education is a unified system that can provide the development of inclusive education. The government must be able to provide access to every child (Kantavong, 2018), including SNS, who need education services that can develop all events so that they can have a positive impact on SNS. Providing school facilities and infrastructure, modified curriculum, funding, and provision of aided teachers is an obligation for the government so that the implementation of inclusive education can take place well (Sharma, Loreman, & Simi, 2017).

Schools must be able to improve teacher competencies to become inclusive teachers, use modification curricula, friendly learning activities with all students, who can develop all aspects of both social, emotional, and cognitive issues. Inclusive schools must be able to make all children get services that are following the characteristics of each child (Billingsley, DeMatthews, Connally, & McLeskey, 2018). Inclusive schools must have a positive impact on SNS to face the outside world, accustomed to meeting the general public in the future.

The role of the community in the implementation of inclusive education also has a huge impact (Botha & Kourkoutas, 2016). For some parents, many people have not been able to accept the existence of SNS so that they often get discrimination or injustice. The government needs to provide education and intensify inclusive education to the public, in activities involving the community, so that inclusive education can be well received.

5. Limitation Research

The limitation of this study lies in the number of participants involved, which is still lacking so that it does not yet reflect the parents' overall opinion about the implementation of inclusive education. The small number of parents as participants because of the difficulty of researchers finding parents, especially parents who have an SNS, because they still have the shame of having an SNS.

6. Conclusion

The perception of PRS and PSNS on inclusive education can be categorized into four aspects, namely social aspects, emotional aspects, academic aspects, and non-academic aspects. Perception of social elements can be explained that inclusive education services can develop communication, social interaction, play, and cooperate between RS and SNS as well as the potential for bullying. The perception of the emotional aspect explained that inclusive education could develop a sense of respect, empathy, love, and caring for each other, respecting differences, while at the same time generating SNS insecurity when in an inclusive classroom. The perception of academic aspects illustrates that inclusive education can provide opportunities for SNSs and RSs to learn each other together. Besides, there is a tendency that the teacher cannot divide time, giving more attention to the SNS than to the RS. The perception on non-academic aspects that inclusive education is a service that provides every child with the right to access education, so that all parties, namely the government must be able to give a proper education system for all children, parents must be able to open up and be involved in school activities and eliminate the negative perception of SNS, schools that are able to provide appropriate curricula for inclusive schools, and give understanding to the community about inclusive education, although there are still poor perceptions of SNS.

The implication of this research is that schools that provide inclusive education must be able to socialize inclusive education programs to all parents of students so that inclusive education programs can be implemented successfully. The Government, especially the Department of Education, can create a regular program for parents to understand and be involved in inclusive activities. All education communities must be able to work together so that the implementation of inclusive education can be successful.

This research provides an opportunity for researchers in the field of inclusive, especially in the development of models of parent assistance and inclusive schools. This assistance model for

parents is very important to do so that inclusive education programs can run successfully. Inclusive education will not run well if there is no synergy between parents and school.

6. Acknowledgment

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