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The Correlation between the Understanding on Children with Special Needs and Teaching Profession with the Performance of Pre-Service Teacher in Internship Program at School for Persons with Disability

ABSTRACT: This research aims to reveal the correlation between the understanding of pre-service teacher at schools for persons with disability or SLB (Sekolah Luar Biasa) about children with special needs or ABK (Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus) as an independent variable X_1 and understanding of the teaching profession as an independent variable X_2 , with their performance in carrying out internship activities at SLB as the dependent variable Y . By applying a quantitative research approach, the results of the study showed that: understanding of ABK was low with Mean $X_1 = 1.694$; understanding of the teaching profession was high with Mean $X_2 = 3.071$; and the performance of the internship was also low with Mean $Y = 1.764$. The results of the correlative analysis show that the understanding of the ABK has a very high correlation with the internship performance with $r_{X_1Y} = 0.946$; the understanding of the teaching profession has a low correlation with the internship performance with $r_{X_2Y} = 0.339$; while the two independent variables have moderate correlated with the dependent variable with $r_{X_1X_2Y} = 0.477$. It could be interpreted that a sense of concern for the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities is less influential in shaping the professional attitude of prospective teachers than their motivation to enjoy the various benefits that can be obtained if working as a teacher. Therefore, it is recommended that visiting SLB activities should be made as part of an orientation program for new students before the first lecture begins. In addition, the university offered scholarships to family members with disabilities and children of SLB teachers to attract their interest in continuing their education as prospective SLB teachers.

KEY WORDS: Children with Special Needs; Teacher Professionals; Internship Program; School for Students with Special Needs.

INTRODUCTION

The awareness of parents of children with disabilities, or children with special

needs, and in Indonesia called as ABK (Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus or Children with Special Needs), has recently increased. As

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Suggested Citation: Gintings, Abdorrahman. (2019). "The Correlation between the Understanding on Children with Special Needs and Teaching Profession with the Performance of Pre-Service Teacher in Internship Program at School for Persons with Disability" in *EDUCARE: International Journal for Educational Studies*, Volume 11(2), February, pp.127-138. Bandung, Indonesia: Minda Masagi Press owned by ASPENSI with ISSN 1979-7877 (print) and ISSN 2621-587X (online).

Article Timeline: Accepted (December 22, 2018); Revised (January 27, 2019); and Published (February 28, 2019).

an illustration, the number of Students with Special Needs, or persons with disabilities in Indonesia, in the last 10 years, according to Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic Indonesia has increased by 550.49% from 19,756 people in 2008 to 128,510 in 2018 (cf Purbani, 2013; MoEC RI, 2015; and Jaya *et al.*, 2018). Simultaneously, in the same period of time, the number schools for ABK and SLB (*Sekolah Luar Biasa* or Special Needs School) has also increased by 27.94% from 1,686 units to 2,157 units (cf MoEC RI, 2017; Widyawati & Felicia, 2017; and Jaya *et al.*, 2018).

This quantitative increase is inseparable from the continuous efforts of the Indonesian government, through the MoEC RI (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia), to improve education services for ABK as well as increasing socialization to parents of students. This effort was strengthened by organizing a special program to find children with special needs and to encourage parents to send their children to school. This is due to the existing stigma in the community about the birth of children with special needs is a result of God's punishment for the bad behavior and sins of their parents, so many parents are ashamed and reluctant to send their children to school (Suwaryani, 2008; Wike, 2015; and Mastiani, 2018:3).

Indeed, improving services qualitatively has not guaranteed the achievement of goals and benefits for the crew itself. One component of education management, which is also one of the components of the SNP (*Standar Nasional Pendidikan* or Education National Standards) is the professionalism and performance of the education staff, who teach at the SLB. This is in line with the opinion of Ron Brandt (1992/1993), as cited also in Udin S. Sa'ud (2009), that almost all reform efforts in education, finally, depend on the teacher (Brandt, 1992/1993; and Sa'ud, 2009:116).

In this context, I. Yuastutik (2016) and other scholars also argued that there is no point of developing education if teachers are left behind, because various studies found that teacher is the most consistent and strong factor that influence the quality of education (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hightower *et al.*, 2011; and Yuastutik, 2016).

Therefore, in order to be able to carry out their educational tasks professionally, a prospective teacher must first be trained and educated specifically (Malm, 2009; and Husien, 2017:22-23). This demand is reinforced by the results of a study conducted by P. Lubrica *et al.* (2018), and other scholars, which revealed that students feel teachers are not doing good practices related in adapting to different class environments (Blaylock *et al.*, 2016; Blazar & Kraft, 2017; and Lubrica *et al.*, 2018:116).

However, the professionalism and performance of the teacher are largely determined by the process they are undergoing, when attending prospective teacher education programs. This is in line with the research findings conducted by Mohammed Ali Alkahtani (2016), and other scholars, that the low quality of education services provided by teachers to children with special needs, in that case students with autism, is due to their lack of knowledge about students with disabilities. The researchers, then, recommended the need for improvements in the education system for prospective teachers, who would be assigned to schools for children with disabilities (Rieser *et al.*, 2013; Alkahtani, 2016; and Kang & Martin, 2018).

Since the introduction of the teacher as a profession by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, in the Teacher's Day on 25 November 2005, there has been an education reform of prospective teachers in Indonesia (cited in Mutohar, 2016; and Rahman, 2016). One of the changes applied in the education of prospective teachers in Indonesia is PPG (*Pendidikan Profesi Guru* or Teacher Professional Education). The PPG is a component of the professional attitude formation program as applied in other professions, such as the medical profession (Surya, 2012; Syahril, 2016; and Fauzan, 2017).

In general, the purpose of implementing this PPG is to form the four core competencies of teachers as mandated by Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Chapter IV, Article 10, Paragraph (1), which reads "[...] pedagogics, personality competencies, social competencies, and professional competencies obtained through professional education" (Setneg RI, 2005b:6; and Ada &

Azisah, 2016). In the explanation section of Article 10, Paragraph (1), it is clarified that:

What is meant by pedagogic competence is the ability to manage the learning of students. Personality competence is defined as a strong, noble, wise, and authoritative personality ability and an example for students [...].

What is meant by professional competence is the ability to master subject matter widely and deeply. What is meant by social competence is the ability of teachers to communicate and interact effectively and efficiently with students, fellow teachers, parents/guardians of students, and the surrounding community (Setneg RI, 2005a:5).

In the curriculum of PPG (*Pendidikan Profesi Guru* or Teacher Professional Education) in Indonesia, there is a PPL (*Program Pengalaman Lapangan* or Internship Program) for the formation of the professionalism of prospective teachers. For prospective SLB (*Sekolah Luar Biasa* or Special Needs School)'s teachers, PPL program is conducted at the SLB (Ediyanto *et al.*, 2017; Husien, 2017:151; and Utami, 2018).

Thus, the prospective teachers get the opportunity and facilities to familiarize themselves with the situation and environment of ABK (*Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* or Children with Special Needs)'s schooling life. Their presence there will provide an opportunity to interact with students of various types of disabilities. This is very important considering that some of the prospective teachers are not from families, which have family members with disabilities (Fauzan, 2017; Husien, 2017; and Utami, 2018).

In fact, most prospective student teachers still have psychological problems in carrying out educational service assignments for students with disabilities. As a result, prospective teachers still feel over proud and less interested in getting along with students at the SLB, where they carry out their internship program. This attitude is counter-productive to the success production of SLB teachers, who are ready and able to provide quality education services according to the Education National Standards (Kurniawati, 2017; and Widyawati & Felicia, 2017).

Basically, professionalism of a PLB (*Pendidikan Luar Biasa* or Special Needs

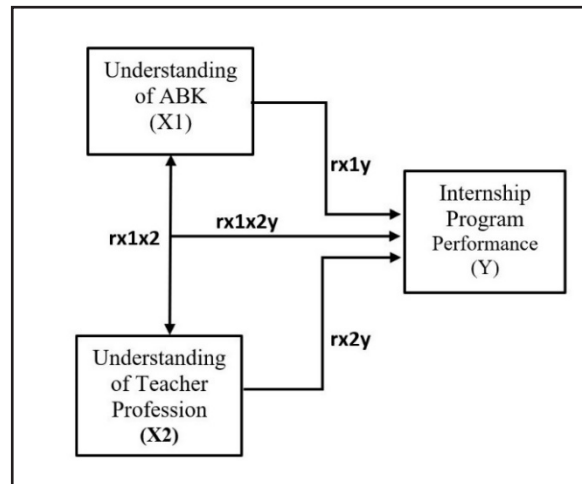


Figure 1:
Constellation of Relationships
between Research Variables

Education)'s teacher is related to two worlds: the world of teacher training and the world of ABK. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question of whether there is a correlation of between understanding of the teaching profession and ABK with the performance of prospective teachers in conducting internships at the SLB as part of the PPG curriculum?

Furthermore, based on the discussion of the answer, this study proposes several recommendations in improving the quality of the implementation of the internship program for SLB's teacher candidates.

METHODS

This study applies a quantitative research approach to obtain an overview of the correlation of two independent variables (Creswell, 2003; Williams, 2007; and Yilmaz, 2013), namely: Understanding of ABK (*Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* or Children with Special Needs) as X1, and Understanding of Teacher Profession as X2 with Internship Program Performance as Y of SLB (*Sekolah Luar Biasa* or Special Needs School)'s teacher candidate students at the FKIP UNINUS (*Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Islam Nusantara* or Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Islamic University of Archipelago) in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The constellation of relations between the three research variables is as illustrated in the figure 1.

Table 1:
Descriptive Categorization

| Range | Category |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1.000 – 1.600 | Very Low |
| 1.601 – 2.200 | Low |
| 2.201 – 2.800 | Moderate |
| 2.801 – 3.400 | High |
| 3.401 – 4.000 | Very High |

Note: Results of Data Calculation.

Table 2
Guidelines for Interpreting the Correlation Coefficient

| Correlation Interval | Correlation Level |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 0.000 – 0.199 | Very Low |
| 0.200 – 0.399 | Low |
| 0.400 – 0.599 | Moderate |
| 0.600 – 0.799 | Strong |
| 0.800 – 1.000 | Very Strong |

Note: Adapted from Sugiyono (2010:184).

Data was gathered by distributing three sets of questionnaires for each variable, with four closed answer alternatives adopting a Likert-scale: Strongly Agree (*Sangat Setuju* = 4), Agree (*Setuju* = 3), Disagree (*Kurang Setuju* = 2), and Disagree (*Tidak Setuju* = 1). As respondents, there were 82 Semester 2 students from Academic Year 2018-2019 in the Teacher Education Study Program for ABK (*Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* or Children with Special Needs) as a sample drawn randomly from a total of 128 students (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2007; and Pearse, 2011).

For triangulation, two Supervisor Lecturers were interviewed. In addition, six students were taken with a combination technique, purposive or representative and random sampling. The sample of student respondents consisted of three groups, which are: students from families which a member has disabilities; children from SLB (*Sekolah Luar Biasa* or Special Needs School) teachers; and students who are not from the previous two groups (Holtzhausen, 2001; and Peter, 2010).

The location of the respondents' internship is in three SLB units, which are: SLB Mekar, SLB Kuntum, and SLB Tunas. The three SLBs are located in the city of Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The location of the interview was held in the Lecturer's room of the FKIP

UNINUS in Bandung. The entire series of research activities were carried out starting from September 2018 to January 2019.

Data from the questionnaire answers were analyzed using descriptive analysis and correlative analysis, as following here:

Firstly, *Descriptive Analysis*. It is done to get an idea of the high value of the three variables by calculating the average score given to each statement in the three questionnaires with the formula:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum Sc}{N}$$

Mean is the average score. Sc is the score given for each statement. N is the number of statements for the variables analyzed. The Mean calculation results are, then, interpreted referring to the contents of table 1.

Secondly, *Correlative Analysis*. It is intended to determine the level of the relationship between: Variable free X1 with Y or rX1Y; free variable X2 with Y or rX2Y; and a combination of both independent variables X1 and X2 together with Y or rX1X2Y. Correlation analysis is calculated using the Pearson Product Moment correlation formula with the assumption that the data is normally

Table 3:
Descriptive Analysis Results

| Description | X1 | X2 | Y |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Mean | 1.694 | 3.071 | 1.764 |
| Category | Low | High | Low |

distributed and linear (Bewick, Cheek & Ball, 2003; and Hazra & Gogtay, 2016). The correlation formula used is:

N stands for the number of data. r is the correlation coefficient. In order to be able to interpret how strong the relationship is, the guidelines can be used as shown in the table 2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis Results. The results of the calculation of descriptive analysis of the three variables can be seen in the table 3.

The results show that PLB (*Pendidikan Luar Biasa* or Special Needs Education) Study Program' students had a low understanding of ABK (*Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* or Children with Special Needs) with Mean = 1.694. It can be interpreted that the choice to continue their education as prospective PLB's teachers less influenced by their knowledge of ABK. It can be assumed that this trend is due to the low understanding of the community about persons with disabilities (Mudzakir, 2011; Tirtayani, 2017; and Mastiani, 2018:3).

In addition, most of the prospective SLB (*Sekolah Luar Biasa* or Special Needs School)'s teacher students from families, who have family members are ABK or children of SLB teachers, who have knowledge and experience with the lives of persons with disabilities (Sartica, 2013; Efendi, 2018; and Jaya *et al.*, 2018).

Moreover, the students of PLB Study Program have high knowledge of the teaching profession with Mean = 3.071. This can be interpreted that their choice to pursue the education as prospective PLB's teachers is influenced by their knowledge of the teaching profession rather than understanding about ABK. It can be assumed that this trend was due to the government's success in disseminating teacher reform policies. The policy provides an increase in social welfare

for teachers and other awards, such as a 60-years retirement age that is higher than the retirement age of non-teacher civil servants – 58 years (Ediyanto *et al.*, 2017; Haug, 2017; and Efendi, 2018).

In addition, teachers are also given other various benefits according to the mandate of Law Number 14 of 2005 and derivative regulations. These results also confirmed the 2013 BERMUTU (Better Education through Reformed Management and Universal Teacher Upgrading) program report, which showed that not a few high school graduates who graduated with the highest ranking placed LPTK (*Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan* or Educational Personnel Education Institutions) as their first choice in continuing their education (Nurliana, 2012; and Ningsih, Viant & Inderawati, 2014).¹

PLB student teacher performance, in implementing the Internship Program, is at a low level with Mean = 1.764. This was allegedly because most of the students, 58 people from 82 people, or 70.73%, had just visited schools for people with disabilities for the first time. In addition, only 16 people, or 19.51% of them, came from families with family members with disabilities. Only 8 people, or 9.76%, are actually persons with disabilities. The Supervisors explained that those who have absolutely no experience relating to schools and children with disabilities still feel awkward and unfamiliar with the atmosphere in schools for people with disabilities (Mian, 2017; Andriana, 2018; and interview with Respondent A, 22/12/2018).

¹See also, for example, "Indonesia: Better Education through Reformed Management and Universal Teacher Upgrading" in *The World Bank*, on 24 April 2014. Available online also at: <http://projects-beta.worldbank.org/en/results/2014/04/14/indonesia> [accessed in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia: March 24, 2018].

Table 4:
Results of Correlation Coefficient Calculation

| Correlation | Correlation Coefficient | Category |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| X1Y | 0.946 | Very Strong |
| X2Y | 0.339 | Low |
| X1X2Y | 0.477 | Moderate |

In the interview, the two Supervisors stated that many of the prospective teacher students, especially those who did not have sufficient knowledge and experience of persons with disabilities, were still reluctant to associate with SLB students where they carried out the internship program (interview with Respondent B, 27/12/2018; and interview with Respondent C, 27/12/2018).

The two Supervisors underline the same conditions with studies conducted by Loi Sook Wei & Mohd Hanafi Mohd Yasin (2017), and other scholars, that most pre-service teachers of special education have inadequate field-based experiences and lack of exposure to disabilities (Adioetomo, Mont & Irwanto, 2014; Wei & Yasin, 2017; and Wibowo & Muin, 2018).

The interviews with prospective teacher students confirmed the study of the induction program for novice teachers conducted by Kairit Tammets, Kai Pata & Eve Eisenschmidt (2019). In the study, they found that many prospective teachers found it difficult to collaborate with senior teachers to share professional knowledge that would enrich their experiences (cf Johnson *et al.*, 2014; Blaylock *et al.*, 2016; and Tammets, Pata & Eisenschmidt, 2019). This stems from the lack of support from the Senior Teachers and Supervisors from the university, which is expected by the prospective teachers (Mulford, 2003; Zhao & Zhang, 2017; interview with Respondent B, 27/12/2018; and interview with Respondent C, 27/12/2018).

Correlative Analysis. The results of the calculation of a simple correlation coefficient using the Pearson Product Moment formula between variables X1, X2, Y, and Z are as can be seen in te table 4.

Understanding of children with special needs (X1) correlates very strongly with internship performance (Y) with correlation

coefficient $r_{X1Y} = 0.946$, while understanding of the teaching profession (X2) correlates low with internship performance (Y) with correlation coefficient $r_{X2Y} = 0.339$. The combination of the two independent variables, the understanding of children with special needs (X1) and the understanding of the teaching profession (X2), together correlated moderately with the performance of the internship with coefficients $r_{X1X2Y} = 0.477$

The analysis of the correlation between the two independent variables on the variable performance of the prospective PLB (*Pendidikan Luar Biasa* or Special Needs Education)'s teacher shows that the understanding of children with special needs is more strongly correlated with the internship performance of the prospective PLB's teacher compared to the correlation of understanding of the teaching profession (cf Azizah, 2015; and Budiarti & Sugito, 2018).

According to this result, it could be interpreted that the very high correlation of understanding of ABK (*Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* or Children with Special Needs)'s children with the internship performance of SLB (*Sekolah Luar Biasa* or Special Needs School)'s teacher candidates has to do with intrinsic motivation to carry out an internship program in students who already have knowledge about ABK, both those who have siblings with disabilities and whose parents are SLB's teachers as stated in interviews with them. They added that they continued their education to study programs for SLB's teacher candidates based on their intention to provide assistance to persons with disabilities (Tucker, 2013; Azizah, 2015; and Budiarti & Sugito, 2018).

Good intentions, or intrinsic motivation, is one of the factors that contribute to a person's high performance, which certainly applies also to the performance of student candidates for SLB's teachers (Brantas, 2009; Torang,

2013; and Tucker, 2013). More than that, performance is also a function of competence which includes knowledge and experience about the work done (Winterton, Le Deist & Stringfellow, 2006; and Wirawan, 2009:9). In line with that, knowledge about ABK has encouraged the use of expertise to carry out quality internship tasks (True ed., n.y.; Wirawan, 2009; and Petriela *et al.*, 2015).

A knowledge of the various welfare schemes provided by the government to the teaching profession as delivered by two students, who did not have disability siblings was also not an SLB's teacher child, motivating them to continue their education to study programs for SLB teacher candidates. Referring to the theory of motivation from A.H. Maslow (1943)'s hierarchy of needs, the motivation possessed by this group is extrinsic at the level of physical or material needs (*cf* Maslow, 1943; Ward & Lasen, 2009; and Hasibuan, 2014:225). Even though including the main needs, but the lowest weight.

Therefore, this theory is confirmed by the results of this study, namely the value of the correlation of knowledge about the teaching profession with low internship performance. In addition, basically extrinsic motivation does not last long, if the causative factor is not obtained. This is experienced by students of SLB's teacher candidates whose knowledge of the teaching profession is high, but their knowledge of ABK is low (Ward & Lasen, 2009; Hasibuan, 2014; and Haug, 2017).

The performance indicated by their internship productivity is low, because of their low motivation as a result of dissatisfaction, as they have not received various welfare allocated to teachers who are already in charge, according to L.W. Porter & E.E. Lawler (1968)'s model (*cf* Porter & Lawler, 1968; Engkoswara & Komariah, 2012:217; Fahmi, 2013:119; and Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016).

The results of this study also confirm the opinion of H. Weihrich & M. Cannice (2011), and other scholars, which reminds us that it is possible that under certain conditions motivation does not succeed in encouraging performance improvement (Roberts, 2005; Weihrich & Cannice,

2011:344; and Dobre, 2013).

The combined correlation of understanding of children with special needs (X1) and understanding of the teaching profession (X2) with an internship performance (Y) is moderate, because it is the resultant of the two correlation vectors of the two independent variables individually with the dependent variable. In this case, the medium correlation is the result of a very strong correlation with a low correlation. This condition can be interpreted that the understanding of ABK and the understanding of the teaching profession affect each other the performance of prospective SLB's teachers.

In accordance with vector theory, the resultant value of two vectors will be between the second value of the forming vector. If the two vector formers are $rX1Y$ vectors, which are larger than $rX2Y$ vectors, then the vector resultant will be smaller than $rX1Y$ but larger than $rX2Y$ vector. Because $rX1Y$ is very strong, and $rX2Y$ is low, the combined vector value, $rX1X2Y$ is rationally acceptable.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that students have a low understanding of ABK (*Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* or Children with Special Needs), a high understanding of the teaching profession, and low performance in implementing an internship program. Moreover, students choosing their careers to become SLB (*Sekolah Luar Biasa* or Special Needs School)'s teachers are highly correlated with their understanding of the teaching profession and have a low correlation with their understanding of ABK. This result can be assumed that the choice of career to become a SLB's teacher is more motivated by the desire to obtain a bright future life from teacher profession, because of the various welfare benefits rather than the desire to provide quality education services to ABK.

Furthermore, this study also shows that in implementing the internship, students who have family members as persons with disabilities or have parents with professions as SLB's teachers are more serious and active in serving SLB students compared

to their classmates who have no family life background that is related with children with special needs or people with disabilities.

According to the results above, this study proposes several recommendations in relation with Special Education teacher program. Firstly, prospective special education teacher should be provided with the understanding of ABK, especially for new students who do not have family members with disabilities and who are not children of SLB's teachers. This could be given during the orientation program through visiting SLB and inviting PLB (*Pendidikan Luar Biasa* or Special Needs Education)'s experts and SLB students to give lectures on various aspects of the lives of persons with disabilities.

Secondly, increasing the number of prospective SLB's teacher students who have experience in children with special needs as a positive capital, universities with Special Education Program should allocate funds to offer scholarships to Senior High School graduates if they continue their studies in Educational Study Programs for children with special needs. Allocation of scholarship offers could also be increased by coordinating with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia.²

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