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# Social behaviors of mentally-retarded students in physical education learning

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**Abstract:** *This study is aimed at knowing the social behaviors of mentally-retarded students in education learning. As a survey study, the research involves the use of interview and observation as data collection procedures. The subjects of the study are 34 mentally-retarded students. The data is analyzed in a qualitative descriptive manner. The finding shows that mentally-retarded students need intensive and continuous consultation and support for their social behaviors in the physical education learning. In order for these students to participate well in the learning-teaching interaction, it is important to show to them the practical importance and value of doing physical practice. The instructions for the physical practice tasks should be brief and clear, and there should be not more than one instruction at a time. The teacher needs to understand students' characteristics and choose the appropriate learning approach.*

**Key words:** *cooperative behavior, endangering behavior, gymnastic movements, leisure recreation, mentally-retarded, physical education learning, physical practice, social behavior,*

## 1. Introduction

Education is an activity to help the students mature. In an education process, an individual as a student is given the chance to grow and develop. The quality of education must be developed that is aimed to help students to grow and develop well, be of age, beneficial for himself in order to face life demands, and beneficial for the society, nation, and state.

With physical education, the case is the same. Physical education has a role in giving a beneficial environment for students' growth and development. According to "Undang Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional", physical education, physical exercises, and health must be given in all schools. Therefore, physical education must get a balanced attention compared to other lessons. In this way, physical education must be given in schools for students with special needs. One of these schools Special School C (SSC), which is a special school for mentally-retarded children.

In SSC, physical education learning that is given to the students is known as adapted physical education. It is physical education for children who have obstructions, limitations, or shoulder strap physical defects. These children have obstructions in physical activities. Students who have difficulty in following the learning process because of physical, emotional, mental, or social, defects and/or because of special potentials in intelligence and talents are called extraordinary children or children with special needs.

Mentally-retarded children are children with intelligence barriers who need special treatment in learning. Commonly, these children have problems in socialization which is a unique phenomenon to observe. The social behavior of mentally-retarded children is a phenomenon which needs special attention, especially in relation to physical education learning processes. In the same way, it needs special efforts to observe social behavior of these children in physical education learning process. By knowing mentally-retarded children's social behavior in physical education learning process, the teachers and adults will be able to develop physical education learning program designed for mentally-retarded children. In physical education, it is in the form of physical activities which can develop their psychosocial behaviors.

The present research is a study related to the social behaviors of mentally-retarded children. The researcher is interested to investigate how the social behaviors of mentally-retarded students appear in the physical education learning processes at the special schools (SSC).

## **2. Physical Education Learning for Mentally-retarded Children**

According to Sherill (1981:10), adapted physical education is a comprehensive service delivery system designed to identify and ameliorate problems within the psychomotor domain. Adapted Physical Education is a comprehensive service delivery system designed to identify and solve the problem within the psychomotor domain. Meanwhile, Auxter, Pyfer, and Huetting (2001:3), state that adapted physical education is the art and science of developing, implementing, and monitoring a carefully design physical education instructional program for learner with disability, based on a comprehensive assessment, to give the learner the skills necessary for lifetime of rich leisure recreation, and sport experiences to enhance physical fitness and wellness.

Adapted physical education is the careful art and science of developing, implementing, and monitoring physical education learning (instructional) program that is designed for learners who have inadequate ability. The program is based on a comprehensive assessment for giving the learners the necessary skills for their life which is rich of leisure time, recreation, and physical exercise to enhance physical fitness and wellness. The service is given by a specialist in adapted physical education or by physical education teachers who have been trained to carry out many of the duties of the program.

According to the term above, adapted physical education is an education through physical activities which is adjusted or modified to enable students who have limited ability to be able to participate or gain the chance to do and succeed in their activities well and safe as well as get satisfaction. Adapted physical education is aimed at helping the students who have extra-ordinary physical, mental, emotional, and social growth and development. The program is suited with their talents through carefully-designed physical activities.

In order to fulfill the purposes above, adapted physical education must give advantages to the students who have special needs. Through special physical education learning, instructional activities must be able to: (1) stimulate physical growth and development, (2) influence movement skills development, (3) support to develop neuron muscular coordination efficiency, (4) support the physical health development like body force, endurance, cardio vascular resistant, that is useful for daily life, (5) support in developing their emotional, (6) help the social development in order to be able to interact with their social environment, (7) and aid intellectual development.

Physical education for mental retarded children or physical exercises for mental retarded designed to develop vestibular appliance, which is developing capability in their balance both static and dynamic. Furthermore, basic element of ordinary physical ability for physical health should be developed too. These can be done through many kinds of games and gymnastic movements and athletics that can be taught.

### **3. Social Behavior of Mentally-retarded Children in Physical Education**

According to Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1982: 5) the aim of social psychology is to reduce development rules, changes, and the nature of interpersonal relationship behavior. Interpersonal relationship behavior is a complex behavior which should be explored. Human action characterized interpersonal relationship integration to gain the purpose.

The social learning believes that most of human development behavior is gained from learning. According to Bandura, quoted by Pearlman and Cozby (1983: 48), there are many human behaviors gained from observation in learning. Before someone studies a model (certain behavior), the person actively comes to this behavior model. The attention to this model is caused by the subject and observer model. Meanwhile, memory and motorist processes are also involved. Then, Pearlman and Cozby (1983: 49) state that due to the ethnologists, adaptation process in evolution process has a role in social behavior formed. They believe that behavior must be studied in natural setting. In other words, behavior must be studied in natural situation. Thomas, Lee, and Thomas (2003:144-145), argue that naturally children are active and need to learn movement skills. Competition and gift can give positive influences in participation. Therefore, by giving motivation techniques, the teachers can increase participation. The teachers have to understand the psychological and social aspects of physical education for children. The teachers have to support children to have active life style, be motivated children, and do a cooperative work in a team. Motivation is the solution for the children to do their activities. The children must be motivated to develop their skills.

According to Auxter, Pyfer, and Hueting (2001: 225), observed behaviors changes become the aim of adapted physical education learning. These are behaviors that do not endanger children and others, behaviors that are related with participation in the activities, behaviors that are needed by the children to function in real life, behavior that can make the children accepted in the society, and behaviors that can make the children independent.

### **4. Research Method**

This study is quantitative and qualitative descriptive research that is done through survey by observing and interviewing to describe extraordinary children's social behavior in physical education learning process. The study was held at SLB C Pembina Yogyakarta for 3 months from July to September 2008. The subjects of the study were 34 SDLB C Pembina students of the high level in physical education learning.

The instruments were observation and interview orientation forms for SLB C students' social behavior in physical education learning process at SLB C Pembina Yogyakarta. The variable construct of this study is high level ALB (extraordinary students) of SLB C elementary school's social behaviors in physical education learning. These are students' behaviors which can endanger children and others, behaviors in relation with participation in the activities, behaviors that are needed by the children to function as real life, behaviors that

can make the children accepted in the society, and behaviors that can make the children independent. The interview was done as an effort to describe why those behaviors happened in the children and how the effects to each of physical education learning occurred.

Data were collected by directly observing each of the physical education learning activities at SLB C Pembina Yogyakarta. The observation process was held to SLB C students' social behavior in physical education learning process. Observation sheets were used to help in the data collection process. The interview involved social aspects which occurred relating to the SLB C Pembina Yogyakarta students' feelings during the learning process. The observation process was done by the researchers in SLB C every Saturday during the physical education classes. The data were analyzed in a qualitative and quantitative descriptive manner.

## 5. Findings and Discussion

Two kinds of data were collected, one related with social behaviors of the students and the other related with students' attitudes toward the teacher. Each of these is presented below. The first data were related to the characteristics of the students' social behaviors.

**Table 1. Social Behaviors of the Students**

Social Behavior	Frequency	Environment Situation
Behaviors which can endanger children and others.	No such behavior	Restrained
Children behaviors in relation with participation in activities.	Generally, every student tries to do the exercise 3 times	Restrained
Behaviors needed by the children function as real life.	All students need support and help from the teacher	Noisy
Behavior which can make the children accepted in the society	No such behavior	Noisy
Behaviors which can make the children be independent	No such behavior	Noisy
Motivation	Every student needs support and help from the teacher.	Pleasant
Cooperative behavior	No such behavior	Noisy
Respect	No such behavior	Varied
Responsibility	No such behavior	Noisy
Discipline	No such behavior	Restrained
Readiness	No such behavior	Restrained

As can be seen from the Table, the students show varied characteristics that are typical to mentally-retarded children. First, there is no evidence that the children possess behaviors that may endanger their friends or peer. Secondly, almost all the children need guidance and support from adults. Some of the students are sometimes noisy and sometimes restrained. In

relation to motivation, and enthusiasm in following the learning activities, in the beginning of physical education learning using games approach, students are very enthusiastic to join the learning activities. Learning approach done by the teacher raises students motivation in doing the activities. Through games approach, students seem more enthusiastic in following the lesson.

The second data were related to the students' reactions towards the teachers' behavior in learning process. Summary of the findings can be seen in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Students' Attitudes toward the Teacher**

No	Items	Frequency	
		Favorable	Unfavorable
1.	The teacher teaches well.	32	2
2.	A likeable or friendly teacher	33	1
3.	Teaching style is varieties	28	6
4.	Pleased physical activities	30	4
5.	Have a great chances to try	25	9
6.	Pleased classroom situation	27	7
7.	There are many new things in learning.	32	2
8.	Limits time	12	22
9.	Much practices/ physical exercises	30	4
10.	Have a great chances to speak	12	22
11.	Do the assignments successfully.	30	4
12.	Physical exercise outside physical education learning	20	14

The findings of observation and interview with teachers and students in the learning process before, after, and during physical education learning process for SDLB C students can be seen from students' responses concerning their motivation. According to that finding, learning approach is a thing that must be observed in giving conducive situations to learning processes. Time efficiency is increased by students' participation in learning activities and the limit time for the students because they enjoy the pleasant activities. They feel that the time is limited although the teachers have always tried to support or motivate them.

## 6. Conclusion

Physical education learning process involves relationship among the people who are communicating. According to this term, communication theory could be applied, aimed at physical education learning process to run well, effectively, and efficiently. The learning processes are expected to run effectively and efficiently by understanding the communication aspects in physical education learning. Communication consists of processes in which someone tries to reduce uncertainty or unclear factors that are included in the message. It

means that perception factors, accuracy from the sender and the receiver, and interaction on both sides are important factors in communication.

According to the findings, it seems that the learning processes run well. It can be seen from the students' behavior indicators during the physical education learning interactions involving: (1) students' enthusiasm and spirit in doing activities during learning process are well, (2) participation rate in every chance that is given by the teacher (3) students' awareness for always doing physical exercise, and (4) students' motivation rising in the learning activities.

For increasing learning efficiency and affectivity, teachers have to understand students' characteristics and appropriate choice of learning approaches. Almost all of the students need support to join the learning activities. Meanwhile, teachers always have to try to be near to students and understand their needs. Besides, the teachers should understand that for C2 and C3 categories, the students need to be given explanation about the importance or advantages of physical exercises. Mental retarded students (SLB C's students) will always do their activities enthusiastically or be motivated if they understand the values or advantages of what they do. In giving instructions, teachers should be brief and do not give more than one instruction at a time.

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