

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER IN TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Salwa Najiah^{1*}, Retno Hanggarani Ninin², Fitriani Yustikasari Lubis³

Padjadjaran University Bandung, Indonesia

Email: salwa20005@mail.unpad.ac.id^{1*}, rhninin@unpad.ac.id²,
fitriani.y.lubis@unpad.ac.id³

*Correspondence

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Accepted : 10-08-2023</p> <p>Revised : 14-08-2023</p> <p>Approved : 15-08-2023</p>	<p>Education is a right for everyone including students with special needs or also called Children with Special Needs (ABK). Teachers must guide and provide learning facilities for their students to achieve educational goals. In the learning process, students categorized as ABK require different services than non-ABK children. Educating ABK is not easy, the strength of the teacher's character is an important factor that can support teachers in dealing with ABK. Strength of character reflects virtue values which refer to positive qualities consisting of good character and are raised by individuals to deal with certain conditions, such as when experiencing difficulties. The study aimed to see an illustration of the strength of character possessed by ABK teachers in educating ABK. This study uses a qualitative approach. The sample in the study numbered two people who were willing to become research participants by collecting data using interview techniques that were conducted online and the data obtained was analyzed thematically. The results showed that the typologies possessed by ABK teachers were creativity, judgment, and teamwork. Even so, each teacher also has several different strengths.</p>

Keywords: character strengths; teacher; ABK.



Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International

Introduction

The progress of a nation is when the government and every citizen are aware of education because education is an important foundation that is the basis of the milestones of a nation's progress. Weak education will lead to the destruction of a nation rooted in the intellectual, moral, and personality weakness of every citizen. Education is any situation that lives and affects a person's growth (Musanna, 2017).

Education is any situation that lives and affects a person's growth. In the educational process, teachers have an existence in helping the development of students to realize student learning goals to perform optimally (Pristiwanti, Badariah, Hidayat, & Dewi, 2022). Teachers must pay attention to students both individually and in groups because fellow students have very basic differences, from intelligence, talent, interests, and other psychological states that can affect student performance in school. Teachers must encourage, guide and provide learning facilities for their students to achieve learning goals. Teachers have the responsibility to see everything that happens in the learning process in the classroom to monitor the progress of their students (Rahmi, Rachman, & Sembiring, 2021). The delivery of subject matter given to students is only one of the various activities in learning as a dynamic process in all phases and

processes of student development (Sari & Yustiana, 2021). Getting an education is a right for everyone, including students with special needs, or called Children with Special Needs (ABK). In the learning process, students in the ABK category require different services than non-ABK children (Ningrum, 2022).

Data from SUSENAS BPS in 2012 shows that the number of school-age ABK in Indonesia amounted to 532,130 people, or about 14.56% of the total population with disabilities in Indonesia in 2011 amounted to 3,654,356 people. In Indonesia, ABK is constitutionally regulated in the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 article 5 paragraph 2 concerning ABK also has equal rights with other Indonesian citizens, including in proper special education services (Kadir, 2015). ABK is a term for those who have deficiencies or experience various abnormalities in physical, psychological, social, and moral aspects as well as deviations that are not experienced by people in general (Rezieka, Putro, & Fitri, 2021). ABK needs education, social services, guidance, and counseling services, and various other services of a special nature to develop human potential perfectly (Desiningrum, 2017).

In the learning process, students in the ABK category require different services than non-ABK children. Based on interviews with two ABK teachers, they realized that there were limitations in teaching and communication skills so there were concerns if their students could not achieve learning goals and perform optimally (Ni'matuzahroh, 2016). In addition, another difficult factor possessed by ABK teachers is the lack of parental or family intervention in educating ABK so that ABK education only relies on teachers at school. Lack of teacher knowledge about handling ABK usually occurs because teachers do not come from the special education department (PLB). In line with (Azzahra & Dhona, 2023) which states that class teachers at SDN X are not ready to handle children with special needs. Lack of teacher readiness because there are several factors such as lack of teacher acceptance of ABK, negative attitude of teachers, and lack of knowledge and understanding of teachers about the handling and implementation of special guidance programs for ABK. This is a challenge for teachers who teach ABK. It is the strength that exists in the teachers that seems to make them generally continue to perform their duties even though they do not have a PLB background (Saihu, 2019).

Character strengths refer to psychological qualities or mechanisms manifested in thoughts, feelings, and motivations that are ultimately reflected in behaviors that are evident in (Suralaga, 2021). In their theory, (Kusumaputri, 2018) focus on character strengths and virtues. Virtue is a core trait valued by philosophers and religious scholars that is universal and essential for survival. Virtue is classified into six categories, namely wisdom and knowledge, determination, humanity, and love, justice, simplicity, and transcendence. While the strength of character is a psychological element that forms virtue.

Character strength is a positive trait consisting of good character and raised by individuals to face a certain condition, for example when experiencing difficulties. Good character is an individual quality that makes him morally good and can be seen in

feelings, thoughts, and behavior. Character strength is an inherent strength that is realized and often displayed in everyday life to perform optimally. One way to recognize yourself is to identify character strengths. In addition to identifying strengths and weaknesses, character strengths can also provide information that individuals have signature strengths, namely the highest character that exists in each individual. Teachers need to know and realize their strengths and develop signature strengths that can support them in dealing with ABK students.

(Susanto, 2021) divide character strengths into six virtues profiles, including 1) Wisdom and knowledge, namely the ability of individuals to analyze and synthesize knowledge, how to obtain and use the knowledge they have for good. It consists of aspects of creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, and perspective. 2) Determination, which is a strong drive to achieve a goal. It consists of aspects of courage, perseverance, integrity, and vitality. 3) Humanity and love, namely the ability of individuals to involve themselves in good interpersonal relationships with others, which includes caring and caring for others. It consists of aspects of love, kindness, and social intelligence. 4) Justice, namely the ability of individuals to do justice to all people and be able to recognize and respect the rights and obligations of each individual. It consists of aspects of membership in the group, fairness and equality, and leadership. 5) Simplicity, which is the ability of individuals to control themselves not to do everything excessively, and consider everything before acting to avoid adverse consequences that may occur in the future. It consists of aspects of forgiveness, humility, wisdom, and self-regulation. 6) Transcendence, which is the ability of individuals to establish contact with the universe and be able to maintain it and be able to live meaning in their lives. It consists of aspects of appreciation of beauty and perfection, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality.

Some studies say that strength of character correlates with academic success and quality of life. (Rahmat, 2021) say that character strength provides a positive relationship to classroom behavior that can ultimately predict children's success in school. Park said that strength of character contributes to good outcomes such as school success, leadership, tolerance, kindness, and altruism. So it can be concluded that the strength of character possessed by a person is very useful to support daily life. The purpose of this study is to see an overview of the strength of character possessed by teachers of Children with Special Needs (ABK).

Method

The research method used in this study uses qualitative methods. The data collection method used was a semi-structured interview that was analyzed thematically and observationally. Before the interview, the researcher asks for informed consent from participants as a sign of willingness to be involved in the research and tells the purpose and purpose, confidentiality guarantees, and possible consequences of the research. The interviews were conducted via Zoom for 50-60 minutes and recorded after obtaining permission from the participants. The results of the Zoom recording will be used to write

a transcript of the interview and will be analyzed to find out what themes emerged in the research by coding following the guidelines of Braun & Clarke., (2006). In this study, there were two coders, namely the researcher as the first coder and the co-author as the second coder.

The preparation of the interview guideline made refers to theoretical concepts from Seligman and Peterson (2014) with simple and easy-to-understand questions. The questions asked contained 6 themes, namely wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. In each theme, there are several character powers and a total of 24 powers.

The participants in this study were two teachers from Children with Special Needs (ABK). The sampling technique is convenience sampling with the criteria of being a teacher for children with special needs. The participants who participated were one man and one woman and had become ABK teachers over 5 years old.

Results and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews with two ABK teachers, namely N (30) and O (29), an idea of the strength of character that emerged in each participant was obtained.

Table 1
Wisdom and Knowledge Dimension Overview

Aspects	Mrs. N	Mr. O
<i>Creativity</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide lessons by introducing movement through visuals (video) 2. Have a method that can attract students' attention so that students want to learn 3. Looking for other learning alternatives so that students continue to learn even at home 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try other teaching methods that suit the child's needs 2. Using learning media that aims to increase student knowledge 3. Has its way of evaluating and staging programs that have not existed before
<i>Curiosity</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have curiosity and find information about ABK by observing ABK learning in class 2. Have curiosity and try to find answers to his 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have curiosity and want to find information 2. Have a curiosity to get to know ABK

ignorance		
<i>Judgment</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider various conditions in deciding the right teaching teacher for ABK students 2. Collect evidence that students have certain special needs through assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Able to look at things from another point of view by considering evidence or characteristics of autistic children 2. Able to see things from another perspective if you cannot use the same approach at different ages of crew 3. Considering conditions, especially during Covid-19 3. See other people's points of view and seek information first
<i>Perspective</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide teaching according to student needs and focus on talents and interests. 2. Thinking about the circumstances and needs of others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Willing to listen to other people's input and think about the needs of ABK 2. Provide the view that if the child studies in a special school it will be more focused and effective

The dimension of wisdom and knowledge is the ability of individuals to analyze and synthesize the knowledge they have and how to obtain that knowledge. In this dimension, all aspects of character strength appeared in all participants except the love of learning aspect. In the curiosity aspect, namely the desire to find information and be interested in dissecting something, both subjects have a curiosity to find information related to ABK, and handling it can be through observation in class, asking more expert teachers, or looking for references from the internet. In the aspect of creativity, namely,

the ability to generate ideas that can be used in everyday life, these two participants have various learning methods for ABK students according to student needs. Mrs. N usually uses visual aids (videos) to teach new material and immediately practice it while Mr. O usually uses visuals in the form of pictures such as flashcards to introduce something to students and has a unique way of evaluating student progress in class, namely by taking small notes and making stages to achieve programs that did not exist before.

In the judgment aspect, namely the ability of individuals to look at things from various sides or consider various existing evidence and be able to be critical. Mrs. N always considers the condition of ABK through the results of assessments and looks for teachers who can handle ABK in the hope that ABK students feel comfortable with their teachers. Mr. O can look at things from various points of view with the evidence he collects either through the Internet or from experts. If you cannot use one approach in dealing with ABK, you will look for other alternative treatments according to student needs.

For the perspective aspect, namely the ability to understand yourself, think about the needs of others, and be able to listen to other people's input. Mrs. N tends to focus ABK students on their interests and talents, while Mr. O can listen to other people's input regarding the condition of ABK and give the view that ABK students will focus more on learning if they enter special schools.

Table 2
Overview of the Courage Dimension

Aspects	Mrs. N	Mr. O
<i>Bravery</i>	1. Dare to tell parents if parents are not in line with school or do not only rely on school for children's education problems. 2. Dare to ask others for explanations and dare to argue.	1. Dare to tell parents about taboos that should be avoided for the good of ABK students 2. Dare to express an opinion
<i>Perseverance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dare to take on the challenge 	Have the desire to take challenges outside the field of education and be able to persevere until they can handle ABK
<i>Honesty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to speak honestly 	1. Honestly said that it feels more

	about the situation that is being experienced	comfortable teaching ABK 2. Be honest in expressing your true desires
<i>Zest</i>	1. Have a passion for improving the school and students 2. Have a passion for activities	Have the spirit to achieve student success indicators

The dimension of courage is the values contained in individuals who have a strong desire to achieve a goal. In this dimension, all character powers appear, namely bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest. The bravery aspect is the courage to say or do something right, even if it doesn't apply in general. Both participants dared to express their opinions to others, either parents or worthy parties. The perseverance aspect is the desire that individuals have to take challenges in working on difficult tasks and complete them according to the plan that has been made. Mrs. N makes handling ABK a challenge and motivates herself to try to optimize the potential of ABK students to be useful for others, at least beneficial for herself, such as becoming a more independent student. As for Mr. O, he dared to enter the world of ABK even though he did not have an ABK educational background but tried to survive as an ABK teacher even though he initially felt desperate and wanted to stop.

The aspect of honesty is that individuals can speak the truth to others, appear as they are, and have a sense of responsibility for the thoughts and feelings of others. Both participants had an honest attitude toward their condition. Mrs. N feels that she is more comfortable when teaching ABK and prefers to teach ABK than students in general. Mr. O felt that he would have a greater chance of becoming a civil servant if he became an ABK teacher and said that in addition to helping ABK, the reason for becoming an ABK teacher was to prosper himself and his family.

The aspect of honesty is that individuals can speak the truth to others, appear as they are, and have a sense of responsibility for the thoughts and feelings of others. Both participants had an honest attitude toward their condition. Mrs. N feels that she is more comfortable when teaching ABK and prefers to teach ABK than students in general. Mr. O felt that he would have a greater chance of becoming a civil servant if he became an ABK teacher and said that in addition to helping ABK, the reason for becoming an ABK teacher was to prosper himself and his family.

Table 3
Overview of the Humanity Dimension

Aspects	Mrs. N	Mr. O
---------	--------	-------

<i>Love</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel happy to help ABK students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have a feeling of pleasure when seeing *changes siswa ABK compliant Targets achieved *Have positive feelings when educating ABK
<i>Kindness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting ABK through teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have a desire to do good to others *Willing to help others voluntarily
<i>Social Intelligence</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Able to realize the feelings of ABK students and find ways to restore the mood of ABK

The dimension of justice is the ability of individuals to do justice to all people, able to recognize and respect the rights and obligations of each individual. In this dimension, all aspects or strengths of character emerge, namely teamwork, fairness, and leadership. The teamwork aspect is the ability of individuals to work hard as members of a group, be loyal to the group, and carry out obligations as members of the group. Both participants had good cooperation with group members, namely teachers. Whenever there is a problem, always coordinate and decide a decision by deliberation, especially related to the condition of the crew.

Fairness is an individual's ability to give everyone an equal opportunity. The distribution of duties among teachers is considered fair because it is by the expertise and ability of the teacher. The leadership aspect is the ability of individuals to be good leaders, be able to organize activities in the group, and ensure that everything goes well. This aspect only appears in Mrs. N. Mrs. N can lead the course of meetings and can make decisions based on the opinions of other teachers.

Table 5
Overview of Temperance Dimensions

Aspects	Mrs. N	Mr. O
<i>Prudence</i>	*Used as an exercise for patience	
<i>Self Regulation</i>	*Able to divide time	*Able to refrain from making decisions quickly

The dimension of temperance is the ability of individuals to control themselves not to overdo everything and consider everything before acting. The aspects that appear in this dimension are prudence and self-regulation, while those that do not appear are forgiveness and humility. Prudence is an individual's ability to manage themselves to

achieve their long-term goals. This strength of character only appears in Mrs. N. Mrs. N makes the experience of teaching ABK used as a form of training for patience. Self-regulation is an individual's ability to restrain himself, emotions, passions, and other impulses within himself. Both participants had self-regulation in managing their activities and could divide time between work and family matters.

Table 6
Transcendence Dimension Overview

Aspects	Mrs. N	Mr. O
<i>Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence</i>		*Giving appreciation to the success of ABK students when doing something
<i>Gratitude</i>	*Feel grateful for the child's development from not being able to become can. *Able to be grateful for the experience gained	*Giving thanks for the progress of child development even though the process is long. *Able to be grateful and enjoy being an ABK teacher
<i>Hope</i>	*Have hope for the future of ABK students *Hope that ABK students will not trouble others	*Expect that ABK can match the expectations of parents and be able to socialize like students in general *Have hope that ABK students achieve success indicators in school
<i>Humor</i>	*Seeing the positive side of something	*Giving jokes to researchers
<i>Spirituality</i>	*Believe in getting back if you do good *Awareness of worship	*Make confidence the basis for teaching *Having the belief that belief (religion) leads to something better

The temperance dimension is the ability of individuals to establish relationships with the universe and be able to maintain it and be able to live meaning in their lives. In

this dimension, all aspects or strengths of character emerge, namely Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality. The aspect of appreciation of beauty & excellence is the ability of individuals to realize and give appreciation for beauty and perfection. In this aspect, Mr. O gave appreciation to ABK students for their success in doing something like "You are great" so that students want to repeat the same thing and be more enthusiastic when learning. The gratitude aspect is the ability of individuals to realize and be grateful for everything that has happened in their lives, and always take the time to express gratitude. Both participants were aware and felt grateful for the things that happened to them, both themselves and about the development of ABK.

Hope is an individual's ability to achieve goals or desires and adapt to challenges in life. Mrs. N hopes that ABK students can be useful to others, especially to herself, and hopes that if ABK students have graduated they can work in schools such as guarding the cafeteria, cleaning, or at least can teach skills to underclassmen or other ABK students in school such as painting. Mr. O hopes that ABK will be able to achieve the success target by the expectations of his parents. Humor is a pleasant thought, a happy outlook that allows the individual to see the positive side of things. In this study, Mrs. N was able to see things from a positive perspective, such as "doing good to anyone if it is evil, it's okay, we must do good. Just do good, there are still people talking about it, so just take the positives". While humorous aspect of Mr. O occasionally gives jokes to researchers that make researchers smile.

Spirituality is the belief that individuals have about the existence of something larger than this universe. Mrs. N has a belief that in religion if we do good, we will get the same reward as well as the desire to make ABK students better such as reminding them to pray five times a day, throwing garbage in its place, praying before starting lessons, and so on. While the aspect of spirituality that arises in Mr. O is believing that one must be able to educate, teach and practice his knowledge. Mr. O also wants to instill religious values in ABK students by shaping their morals to be better and courteous.

Conclusion

This study explains the picture of character strength possessed by teachers of Children with Special Needs (ABK) who still survive to become ABK teachers despite the obstacles they experience, one of which is because participants do not have special educational backgrounds and cannot handle ABK students. Both participants admitted that they felt comfortable teaching ABK even though at first becoming an ABK teacher was not of their own volition but a factor of support from the environment. All dimensions of character strength appear in this study, but some aspects do not appear. The dominant character strengths that often appear in both participants are creativity and judgment in the wisdom and knowledge dimension and teamwork in the justice dimension. The most dominant character possessed by Mrs. N is bravery because she is brave in expressing opinions, daring to talk to parents if parents are not in line with the

school in educating children such as disciplining autistic children in learning to sit, being able to make decisions based on the results of deliberation, daring to refute others who demean ABK and so on. While the strength of character that appears in Mr. O is creativity because he has various ways to invite ABK students to learn, use various learning methods, make child evaluations by writing in small notes and given to other teachers as discussion material, and make stages of program achievement that did not exist before from school.

Bibliography

- Azzahra, Salsabilla, & Dhona, Holy Rafika. (2023). Eksklusi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus di Sekolah Inklusi:-. *Media Komunikasi FPIPS*, 22(1), 46–58.
- Desiningrum, Dinie Ratri. (2017). *Psikologi anak berkebutuhan khusus*. psikosain.
- Kadir, Abd. (2015). Penyelenggaraan sekolah inklusi di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)*, 3(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2015.3.1.1-22>
- Kusumaputri, Erika Setyanti. (2018). *Komitmen pada perubahan organisasi (perubahan organisasi dalam perspektif islam dan psikologi)*. Deepublish.
- Musanna, Al. (2017). Indigenisasi Pendidikan: Rasionalitas Revitalisasi Praksis Pendidikan Ki Hadjar Dewantara. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 2(1), 117–133. <https://doi.org/10.24832/jpnk.v2i1.529>
- Ni'matuzahroh, Ni'matuzahroh. (2016). Peningkatan Kompetensi Mahasiswa Dalam Penyusunan Program Pengajaran Individual Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus di Kelas Inklusif. *Jurnal Psikologia*, 1(1), 15–36.
- Ningrum, Nila Ainu. (2022). Strategi Pembelajaran pada Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus dalam Pendidikan Inklusi. *Indonesian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 181–196. <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijhass.v3i2.3099>
- Pristiwanti, Desi, Badariah, Bai, Hidayat, Sholeh, & Dewi, Ratna Sari. (2022). Pengertian Pendidikan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling (JPDK)*, 4(6), 7911–7915. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpdk.v4i6.9498>
- Rahmat, Pupu Saeful. (2021). *Psikologi pendidikan*. Bumi Aksara.
- Rahmi, Fitria, Rachman, Firza Abdul, & Sembiring, Lala Septiyani. (2021). Kekuatan Karakter pada Guru Honorer Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB) Kota Padang. *Borobudur Psychology Review*, 1(1), 22–28. <https://doi.org/10.31603/bpsr.4844>
- Rezieka, Dara Gebrina, Putro, Khamim Zarkasih, & Fitri, Mardi. (2021). Faktor Penyebab Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Dan Klasifikasi Abk. *Bunayya: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 7(2), 40–53. <https://doi.org/10.22373/bunayya.v7i2.10424>
- Saihu, Saihu. (2019). Komunikasi Pendidik Terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Di Sekolah Khusus Asy-Syifa Larangan. *Andragogi: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 1(3), 418–440.
- Sari, Yunita, & Yustiana, Sari. (2021). Efektivitas bahan ajar cerita bergambar bemuatan religius terhadap prestasi belajar siswa kelas 1 sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 8(2), 175–185. <https://doi.org/10.30659/pendas.8.2.175-185>

Suralaga, Fadhilah. (2021). *Psikologi Pendidikan: Implikasi dalam Pembelajaran*. PT Rajagrafindo Persada.

Susanto, Ahmad. (2021). *Filsafat ilmu: Suatu kajian dalam dimensi ontologis, epistemologis, dan aksiologis*. Bumi Aksara.