Learning Difficulties in Children with Dysgraphia and Dyslexia under Grandparental Care: A Holistic Education Perspective

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk memahami lebih dalam tantangan anak dengan kesulitan belajar disgrafia disleksia yang diasuh oleh kakek-nenek. Metode penelitian ini yaitu melalui observasi langsung dengan 16 peserta didik dan wawancara dengan 1 guru/wali kelas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 3 siswa memiliki kesulitan belajar, hal ini mempengaruhi proses belajar, dan perilaku siswa. Pengasuhan kakek-nenek memberikan dukungan emosional yang berharga, namun juga memunculkan tantangan terkait pemahaman kebutuhan khusus anak dan koordinasi dengan sekolah yang menjadi isu malasalah pada penelitian ini.

Kata kunci: *Disgrafia; Disleksia; Pengasuhan Kakek-Nenek; Pendidikan Holistik; Kesulitan Belajar*

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by children with learning difficulties, specifically dysgraphia and dyslexia, who are cared for by their grandparents. The research method used was direct observation of 16 students and interviews with 1 teacher/class guardian. The results of the study show that 3 students experience learning difficulties, which affect their learning process and behavior. Grandparental caregiving provides valuable emotional support, but also presents challenges related to understanding the child's special needs and coordination with the school, which emerged as the main issue in this study.

Keywords: *Dysgraphia; Dyslexia; Grandparental Caregiving; Holistic Education; Learning Difficulties.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most important and complex skills that children learn (Lopez, 2019). At school, writing is a primary activity (Adjiovski et al., 2024). Writing requires good skills, including the ability to control kinesthetic, ergonomic, cognitive, perceptual, and graphic knowledge aspects (Morello García et al., 2021). However, this complexity causes some children to experience learning difficulties in writing (Fletcher-Flinn, 2020). Students with writing difficulties tend to have illegible handwriting and avoid writing tasks, such as copying or composing sentences (Anda & Kavya, 2023). Writing difficulties or dysgraphia can often be detected early in formal schooling through initial writing assignments (Kalenjuk, Subban, et al., 2024). Parents are a child's first teachers, and education starts within the family. Moreover, the parents' level of education influences the quality of their child's education (Kedua et al., 2023). Therefore, children diagnosed with dysgraphia can be supported early if parents are actively involved in home education (Abed, Abbas, & Dawood, 2023).

Unfortunately, some children lose parental involvement in education as they are raised by their grandparents. This situation may reduce emotional support and affection (Gaspar et al., 2022). Under grandparental care, children receive less encouragement to learn. Parental or caregiver attitudes towards learning directly influence a child's motivation, such as when a child observes their parents reading, studying, and writing (Chen et al., 2024). Parents can collaborate with schools to enhance their involvement in addressing learning difficulties (Ozyildirim, 2024). For children who lack parental support, alternative learning approaches, such as holistic education, are essential. This approach not only focuses on cognitive skills but also on motor, psychological, and practical skills (Billah et al., 2023).

According to Henzell-Thomas (2004), cited by Hidayatullah (2024), holistic education balances all aspects of a student's development, including spiritual, ethical, cultural, emotional, and physical dimensions, aiming to enhance learning motivation. To create a holistic learning environment, teachers should incorporate character education and classroom management that involves social and moral aspects of students (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2024). What students do not receive at home, such as motivation for learning, should be provided by teachers through emotional engagement and support (Ummah, 2019). Holistic education aims to help individuals discover their identity, purpose, and meaning in learning (Tri Herlambang & Abidin, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to examine how children with dysgraphia raised by grandparents can develop through a holistic education approach.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative case study approach, which allows researchers to explore and deeply understand whether students experience specific learning difficulties related to dysgraphia and dyslexia. The findings confirm the presence of these difficulties, allowing researchers to assess each individual, process the data, and present complete information. A literature review of similar studies was conducted to provide recommendations for the studied students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

In this section, the researchers interviewed one teacher and assessed 16 regular students in an inclusive school over two meetings. The field data results are as follows:

Teacher Interview

The researchers interviewed a homeroom teacher using a structured interview guide. The results are as follows: "I identified three of my students experiencing

learning difficulties, though I do not classify them as having disabilities. The three students are A (see Table 1 No.5), R (see Table 1 No.11), and Z (see Table 1 No.15). A is often perceived as illiterate, but he actually can read, though several factors hinder his progress, such as a lack of family support. A is raised by his grandparents as his parents live far from the school. He is still unable to read about 90% of the time, even when letters are dictated to him. A cannot narrate stories in writing but can do so verbally due to his reading struggles. When given assignments, if the teacher is not present, he copies his friend's work or asks for their help in writing his answers. However, he can recognize numbers up to 75% accuracy and perform simple arithmetic calculations involving single and double digits. He can solve word problems by counting and arranging numbers. Z has a shy personality. He is capable but is overly pampered, leading him to always seek assistance during lessons. However, after receiving treatment, he has begun to understand teacher instructions better. During letter dictation, he now gets most of them correct. Z can also recognize numbers (75%) and solve word problems in arithmetic."

Furthermore, the researchers assessed all 16 second-grade students. The following data presents the assessment results:

Table 1. the scores obtained by the students

No	Student Name	Score	Precentage (%)
1	W	13	65
2	Z	15	75
3	M	12	60
4	B	17	85
5	A	8	40
6	A	17	85
7	N	19	95
8	R	15	75
9	A	13	65
10	B	13	65
11	R	10	50
12	A	15	75
13	K	12	60
14	E	13	65
15	Z	5	25
16	A	14	70

More specifically, based on the assessment results (see Table 1), three students fall into the category requiring further intervention. The following section provides a detailed comparison and analysis of students A, R, and Z.

Name	Score	Percentage (%)	Behavior	Analysis
A	8	40%	Tends to be confused when working on problems. Lacks confidence and often copies answers from peers instead of attempting to complete tasks independently.	A's difficulties are primarily in reading and writing, likely caused by challenges in letter recognition, word formation, and sentence structuring. His reliance on peers indicates the need for strengthening independence and confidence.
R	10	50%	Requires assistance to start tasks; without it, he tends to leave assignments incomplete. Frequently asks questions even when capable of completing the task independently.	R has moderate difficulties in basic reading and spelling. However, he can comprehend material if given additional guidance. His potential for independence can be improved with structured teaching methods.
Z	5	25%	Passive in learning, lacks initiative in asking questions, and waits for teacher instructions to begin tasks.	Z's challenges reflect limitations in basic skills that affect his ability to comprehend material independently. This may be due to delays in mastering fundamental concepts early in education.

The comparison of students identified as A, R, and Z in graphical form is as follows:

Based on the results, R has the highest score among the three, followed by A, while Z has the lowest score. This comparison is based solely on academic performance and does not include behavioral or background factors.

DISCUSSION
Dysgraphia

Writing difficulties are a learning disorder characterized by struggles in one or more aspects of writing instruction and related skills such as listening, speaking, and reading (Moss et al., 2024). Writing difficulty or dysgraphia is a learning disorder marked by difficulties in expressing thoughts in written composition (Gargot et al., 2021). According to the American Psychiatric Association, common symptoms of dysgraphia include messy handwriting, inconsistency in letter spacing and capitalization, discomfort or pain while writing (Shea et al., 2022), fine motor skill challenges, difficulty with spelling, and trouble structuring written work (Gouraguine et al., 2023). Children who struggle with writing are at a disadvantage in daily learning as most subjects rely heavily on writing (Kalenjuk, Wilson, et al., 2024). Between 12% and 33% of children have illegible handwriting and struggle to express their thoughts in writing (Ghouse, Paranjothi, & Vaithiyanathan, 2022).

Holistic Education Perspective

Holistic education is based on three fundamental principles: balance, inclusion, and interconnectedness (Hidayatullah, 2024). Its purpose is to balance individual and group learning, content with process, knowledge with imagination, rationality with intuition, quantitative with qualitative assessment, and competition with collaboration (Mustaqim, 2024). Citing the article "The Restorative and Reconnective Power of Holistic Education," the primary goal of holistic education is to provide inspiration, motivation, and various practical tools for the entire learning community (Rappeport, 2024).

The researchers identified key findings worthy of discussion and further study. Special attention was given to Student A due to his lack of confidence, declining academic performance, and limited family support. Since A lives with his grandparents and is far from his parents, his learning support in the classroom is significantly affected, as confirmed by his homeroom teacher.

To address A's case, the researchers sought to propose intervention recommendations based on a literature review of relevant studies. By comparing

previous similar studies and their recommendations, the proposed interventions are expected to be more optimal and empirically supported.

No	Tittle	Year	Methode	Result
1.	Enhancing Educational Technology in Lectures for School Students with Learning Disabilities: A Comprehensive Analysis	2024	The method used is a quasi-experiment with a pretest-posttest design.	The results show that students identified as having potential learning difficulties experienced a significant improvement in their scores after technology-based instruction. Students without indications of learning difficulties maintained their normal performance levels.
2.	It's the "Generic School System That Is Expected on All the kids": Dysgraphia Through the Lens of	2024	Utilizing a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach.	The results indicate that children with dysgraphia experience various writing difficulties, including issues with handwriting, spelling, and composition. Parents, especially mothers, face significant challenges in supporting their children both at home and in school.
3.	It's the "Generic School System That Is Expected on All the kids": Dysgraphia Through the Lens of Australian Mothers	2023	This study uses a phenomenological approach aimed at gaining a deep understanding of the subjective experiences of mothers.	The research results show that children with dysgraphia face various writing challenges both at home and at school. Mothers reported that communication with the school is often difficult due to teachers' lack of knowledge about dysgraphia.

4.	Disorder of written expression and dysgraphia: definition, diagnosis, and management	2023	This article is a literature review that explores various theories and approaches to understanding dysgraphia.	The results show that dysgraphia is often undiagnosed and may be associated with learning disorders or other psychiatric conditions. Dysgraphia affects motor skills, visual perception, and linguistic processes.
5.	Social and academic factors influencing progression of upper primary learners with dysgraphia: A study of selected schools in Mongu district	2024	This study uses a mixed-methods approach involving surveys, interviews, and observations.	The research results show that dysgraphia has a significant impact on students' academic progress, affecting both classroom performance and emotional well-being. Social factors such as peer support, social acceptance, and stigma influence student motivation, while academic factors such as inadequate teaching strategies and limited access to assistive technology hinder their academic advancement.
6.	Learning Disability (Dysgraphia): A Case Study on a Second Grade Student at Elementary School	2020	**Method:** This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data was collected through direct observation, interviews with teachers, parents, and students, as well as an analysis of academic documents.	The research results show that students experience difficulties with fine motor skills, which affect their writing ability. Students appear frustrated and lack confidence when completing writing tasks.

CONCLUTION

Based on the research findings, A's background—being raised by grandparents—has significantly impacted his learning process. More specifically, this

has resulted in a lack of self-confidence, confusion in following lessons, and insufficient learning support, leaving A nearly illiterate. This conclusion is supported by both the conducted activities and teacher interviews.

A limitation of this study is the lack of extensive field data, as it relies solely on one teacher interview and the assessment of 16 students. The study also primarily emphasizes theoretical aspects and only provides intervention recommendations that have not yet been implemented. Additionally, two other subjects, R and Z, have not been fully examined. The researchers hope that future studies will continue investigating the cases of R and Z.

RECOMMENDATION

Relevant stakeholders should adopt the proposed interventions and explore how teachers can effectively support their students to ensure that both the learning process and academic outcomes are properly monitored and optimized.

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