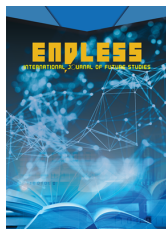


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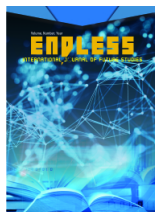
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## Experiences of Educating Blind and Deaf Children in The Study of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

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### Abstract

A blind and deaf child has a natural power to relate to other people even in situations and conditions of physical limitations. In relating and communicating with a blind and deaf child, teachers and caregivers need to recognize the child's modality. This study aimed to explore the experience of accompanying and educating a blind and deaf child. This qualitative research used an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach and a case study using the interview method to collect data. The case studied was the experience of a teacher in accompanying and educating a blind and deaf student at the Helen Keller Special School (SLB G/AB) Helen Keller, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta. Helen Keller's thoughts on relationships with children with special needs became the framework for analyzing research data. The results of the study showed that blind and deaf children related to other people by using the senses of touch, smell, and taste. These three senses were modalities and bridges for teachers to build relationships with blind and deaf children in the process of learning and to live together. Affective and empathic attention and relationships become the basis for assisting and educating blind and deaf children.

**Keywords:** *Communication, Education, Relation, Senses.*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Relationships and communication are part of the process of development and education of each individual. Every educational process is colored by intensive communication between educators and each individual being educated. It can be said that communication plays an important role in the educational process of every individual (Inah, 2015). Healthy and comfortable communication provides a positive experience to enhance the learning experience, create a positive learning climate, and develop student creativity (Wiratmo et al., 2021). Establishing communication and warm relations between educators and students facilitates a climate that is needed in the joint learning process (Tuhovsky, 2017).

Blind and deaf children experience barriers to building relationships and communication naturally, as can be experienced by most children (Diacon & Jim Vine, 2010). Children born blind and deaf have difficulty relating to other people and the

environment. The impact of difficulties in communicating and relating is the inhibition of development in socializing and psychological development (Winarni, 2016).

The Special School (SLB) G/AB Helen Keller, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta, which was established in 1996, is an institution that focuses its services on mentoring and educating children with special needs. SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia is called SLB G because it accompanies children with double tuna. The letter AB is a symbol for blind and deaf children. Warm communication and relationships are sought in mentoring and educating children with special needs, especially blind and deaf children (Neiman, 2004). A warm and intimate atmosphere is needed by children with special needs in the process of growth and development, and education.

Awareness of providing educational services for blind and deaf children grew rapidly in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, known as the Age of Enlightenment. In the Age of Enlightenment, which emphasized freedom, tolerance, and the work of the mind, the spirit of developing knowledge through reasoning and observation of the five senses was widespread. There is an awareness that education is the right of every individual, including children with special needs (Hallahan, 2014).

Along with the awareness of the importance of education for every citizen, Special Schools (SLB) began to emerge. SLB is designed to help students with special needs or experiencing physical and/or mental limitations to be able to develop attitudes, knowledge, and skills. As members of the community, children with special needs also need to be assisted in developing their potential as citizens, participating in cultural development, and equipping themselves for work and/or further education.

For children who are blind and deaf, education is a very important need considering they live in the dark or without information obtained from outside themselves. The ignorance and limitations of blind and deaf children are not because they are intellectually incapable (mind) but because of the non-functioning of the senses of sight and hearing. Helen Keller's achievements in education up to the university level prove that people with physical limitations do not close the door to developing and contributing to others. Helen Keller (1880-1968) was blind and deaf from the age of one year due to attacks of high fever. With the assistance of a teacher named Anne Sullivan, who is very warm, patient, and empathetic, Helen Keller could develop herself. She was able to undergo the educational process successfully. Helen Keller's relationship and communication with Anne Sullivan became a model of teacher-student relationships and communication, inspiring many teachers and students in various parts of the world.

Helen Keller's struggles and personal experiences have inspired teachers who educate children with special needs in various parts of the world. One school that uses Helen Keller's frame of mind and example to educate people with special school is SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta. Researchers are interested in exploring the experience of a teacher at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia in accompanying and educating blind and deaf children. Researchers did not find any

research articles published in the last five years with the theme of education for blind and deaf children.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Helen Adams Keller, popularly known as Helen Keller, is a prominent American writer and human rights defender for the blind and deaf (Schraff, 2008). His personal experience as a blind and deaf person moved his heart to become devoted to children with special needs. Based on her experience, Helen Keller found that a warm relationship is a basic thing a blind and deaf child needs. For him, relationships are doors to a light, friendship, brotherhood, love, and knowledge (Keller, 2003). Relationships are experiences of the presence of other people who open up space for life, give light and grow friendship and brotherhood full of love. This metaphorical expression shows how blind and deaf children need the presence of others in living their lives and developing themselves. The presence of other people, in this case, family members and teachers, is the door opener to meet the light of life after experiencing long darkness.

How is the teacher's relationship with blind and deaf children established, considering that blind and deaf children cannot see and speak? Blind and deaf children experience dysfunction of two senses at once, namely the sense of sight (eyes) and the senses of hearing (ears) or also called multi-sensory disorders (multi-sensory impaired). The consequences of blindness and deafness are the absence of receiving audio-visual information, limited communication, and limited mobility in the surrounding environment (Hodges, 2004). Helen Keller asserts, *"when I wake up and find that everything is dark and still dark, I suspect that it is night, and I ask why the day has come so long"* (Keller, 2003). Darkness is an experience that makes blind and deaf children unable to experience light. In addition to the darkness caused by malfunctioning the sense of sight, he discovered that darkness without light is darkness due to ignorance and insensitivity (Aiken et al., 2002). Darkness due to ignorance is like a ship sailing without a compass, without knowing its destination, without knowing when and where to lean (Keller, 2003). For this reason, the presence of other people is very important in opening the veil of darkness due to ignorance and insensitivity (Aiken et al., 2002).

Helen Keller emphasized that blind and deaf children have the capital to relate and communicate. A God-given body is the main capital for relating and communicating (Keller, 1955). The presence of others can be felt through the body. Blind and deaf children need others as teachers or mentors who faithfully and patiently open horizons from the darkness of ignorance through a loving presence that brings light and vision (Keller, 2003; Olives, 2017). The practice of illuminating love relationships and communication through the power of the senses of touch (hand), smell (nose), and taste (tongue). The faculties of the senses reinforce each other. The touch becomes sharper when the eye is blind (Keller, 2009). Communication practices and relationships between blind and deaf children further strengthen the sensitivity of the senses of touch, smell, and taste (Keller, 2009). It can



be emphasized that blind and deaf children interact with others and the environment through the sensations of the three senses that are still functioning properly. Each sense has a different function so that one sense supports the function of the other senses (Smith, 1969).

The hands of blind and deaf children are a substitute for the senses of sight and hearing. The hand is a link between blind and deaf children with the realities of the world (Keller, 2009). The hand is the executor of the act of holding, grasping, touching, and touching. These hand actions stimulate the sense of touch to recognize the taste or sensation of a particular object. It can be said that touching, touching, or holding hands is an action that presupposes a direct encounter or a real encounter between a subject and another subject and a subject with a certain object (Casiana Lestari, 2020). This further emphasizes that blind and deaf children need the presence and physical closeness through the touch of the hand in developing themselves and their educational process (Keller, 2009). The touch of the hand helps to recognize the real world that is alive, breathing, and pulsating even without color and sound (Keller, 2009).

The act of touching and feeling stimulates the brain to form a concept of an object being touched. This concept gives birth to the imagination in blind and deaf children as a means to identify objects. Imagination is the crown of the touch of the hand because, without imagination, the world of blind and deaf children becomes empty (Keller, 2009). Imagination gives birth to a memory that helps blind and deaf children to understand the world around them. Imagination makes blind and deaf children recognize other people through hand touch or body odor based on their memories.

For blind and deaf children, the touch of another person's hand is a means of relationship that forms imagination and memory. The touch of the hands of two people who love each other is an interaction and relationship without distance that conveys divine power (Keller, 2009). Ordinary people experience affection through the eyes. For the blind and deaf, the touch of a hand transmits vibrations of affection that become imagination and memory. The touch of a hand denotes all life force, energy, silence, hospitality, and bonding of the heart.

Relationships and interactions between blind and deaf children who rely on hand strength illustrate the power of affection or feeling. So, dealing with blind and deaf children first requires a heart, in a psychological sense, which is open to accepting blind and deaf children as they are. Blind and deaf children can feel the emotions of someone they interact with. The miracle of feeling in blind and deaf children is a fact that confirms that humans are not only creatures with a social dimension but humans are also creatures with a spiritual dimension. This spiritual dimension helps humans know themselves and experience themselves as a mystery to themselves and others (Keller, 2009).

In addition to interacting and constructing knowledge through the sense of touch or the hand, blind and deaf children interact through the sense of smell. Blind and deaf children are sensitive to smells. However, Helen Keller admits that there is



no adequate vocabulary to describe the smell, so she must return to a metaphorical sense (Keller, 2009). Scent or smell is a reminder and identification of a particular event or event or a particular individual. For Helen Keller, the smell of the universe made her dream of a world she had never seen before and made her remember in an instant all her wonderful experiences (Keller, 2009). This is understandable because blind and deaf children are also sensitive to an object's smell or smell. For example, the smell of perfume or someone's body is an identifier for blind and deaf children who have had experience with that person. Helen Keller testified that she knew her family members through body odor or hand touch (Keller, 2009). Recognition of blind and deaf children based on the sense of touch or smell makes blind and deaf children always remember their loved ones even though they haven't seen each other for a long time. Scents or smells that are caught by the sense of smell of blind and deaf children form a memory or memory in the minds of blind and deaf children. The memory forms the image of an object according to its smell. The formation of memory and imagination takes a certain period. With his memory and imagination, a blind and deaf child is helped to construct trust and the intensity of the relationship between a blind and deaf child and someone.

Due to the deafness and blindness experienced, blind and deaf children have limited language or vocabulary, phrases, and sentences. Blind and deaf children have difficulty communicating with other people. Based on the experience of accompanying and educating Helen Keller, Anne Sullivan emphasized that every object has a name, meaning, and meaning. He educates Helen Keller to understand the name, meaning, and meaning of each object (Keller, 2003).

Helen Keller admits that difficulties in communicating and people's misunderstanding of the language she uses to make her often angry (Keller, 2003). Helen Keller made every effort to convey her intentions and ideas well. The ability to find the right and communicative language opens the awareness that within each person, there is a cognitive power to find the right one (Charvet, 2019). Exploration of cognitive abilities to speak correctly makes him able to overcome the dysfunction of the senses of hearing and sight (Casiana Lestari, 2020). Helen Keller revealed that her close relationship with Anne Sullivan made her eager to find a communicative language. She learns language from shaking Anne Sullivan's fingers (Keller, 1995). For Helen Keller, Anne Sullivan has made words vibrate in her mind. The words he gets awaken his soul and give light, hope, and joy (Keller, 2003). The sensation of words can be felt in fostering a sense of security, comfort, and enthusiasm for self-development. The purpose of this research was to explore experiences and find the meaning of the experiences of teachers and caregivers of SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta in accompanying and educating blind and deaf children. SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia is an institution that focuses on mentoring and educating children with multiple disabilities. Children with multiple disabilities can be classified into several categories (Sunanto, 2013). The first is children who have visual impairments and intellectual disabilities. Second, which also includes children with multiple disabilities and those with visual and hearing impairments. The third

is children who have visual and motor impairments. Fourth are children who experience visual and behavioral barriers. Children in categories one to four can be categorized as children in a condition of multiple tuna (Andiwatir et al., 2021). There is also another category, combining categories one to four.

The results of this study are expected to provide an inspirational contribution to parents, teachers, caregivers, and people who have special attention to the education of children with special needs, especially blind and deaf children.

### **C. METHOD**

This qualitative research uses an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach to analyze the data (Kahija, 2017). The in-depth interview method was used to collect important data (Sugiyono, 2020). The research focuses on exploring and examining the experience of a teacher and a caregiver at the SLB G/AB dormitory Helen Keller, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta, in accompanying and educating blind and deaf children. SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia (HKI) Yogyakarta is an SLB to educate children with multiple disabilities, namely children who have more than one sensory dysfunction. For example, blind and deaf, blind with very limited hearing ability, and deaf with little vision (low vision).

The subject being interviewed was a teacher and caretaker of the SLB G/AB dormitory Helen Keller, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta, who accompanied and educated a child who was blind and deaf. Therefore, this research can be categorized with a case study method. The interview is an oral question and answer activity between the questioner and the respondent. They share ideas and experiences to discover the responses, thoughts, and knowledge of the teacher's relationship and communication process with blind and deaf children.

Three basic questions become the research instrument. First, how teachers and caregivers experience the process of educative relations and communication with blind and deaf children. Second, what memorable experiences were found in assisting and educating blind and deaf children? Third, what is the meaning found in accompanying and educating the child? The first and second questions become instruments to get experience data. Experience is important data in research with a phenomenological approach. The third question becomes an instrument to explore meaning which is one of the important characteristics of the scientific approach (Eatough, 2017; Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009).

### **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research data were collected from interviews with a teacher and caretaker of the SLB G/AB dormitory, Helen Keller, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta. The data were collected in April 2022. The subject of this study was a teacher (first respondent) and boarding housekeeper (second respondent) at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia. The first respondent has worked as a teacher at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia since 2006. The second respondent has worked as a caregiver at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia since 2012. For more than five years, the two respondents have been closely

acquainted with the blind and deaf children who were accompanied. The first respondent has intensively been a teacher for this blind and deaf child for more than two years. The second respondent has been the child's caregiver for more than five years since the child entered the Helen Keller G/AB SLB dormitory. The results of this study include the experience of accompanying Learning and Living in a Dormitory, various memorable experiences, and the meaning of these experiences.

The experience in assisting learning and living in a dormitory from the first respondent confirmed that he got his main inspiration about the spirit, model, and way of educating blind and deaf children from the story of the relationship between Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan. What is interesting for respondents regarding the relationship between Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller is that Anne Sullivan is not only a teacher and personal caregiver for Helen Keller but also a companion and friend to Helen Keller. Anne Sullivan accompanies Helen Keller's journey of life for 49 years. The first respondent emphasized that his presence and role as a teacher, colleague, and friend is an important part of his duties as a teacher and student companion. Affective and empathetic relationships with blind and deaf students are fundamental to mentoring and education (Bialystok & Kukar, 2018).

Like Anne Sullivan's mentoring experience with Helen Keller, the first respondent stated that the main thing that was given and developed in relationships with blind and deaf students was language (Keller, 1955; Charvet, 2019). In learning a language, the respondent puts each object in the student's hands and gives a name for each object. Putting things down by touching the palms of the hands expresses love and closeness. It helps foster attention and affective bonds that support building memory and imagination in students' minds about the object's name.

Anne Sullivan's close mentoring relationship with Helen Keller inspired the two respondents to assist and educate blind and deaf students. However, the first respondent added that at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia (HKI), the mentoring of a teacher for blind and deaf students was carried out for three years. After that, blind and deaf students will get personal assistance from other teachers. This policy was chosen to *"help blind and deaf children have the opportunity to interact widely with other teachers."* Different mentors and educators provide the student with a richer insight and experience.

The first respondent stated that *"blind and deaf children still have limitations to understand language, especially abstract language."* The vocabulary and concepts possessed and understood by blind and deaf children are more limited when compared to children who do not have multiple barriers. Therefore, in teaching, respondents try creatively to provide new vocabulary and concepts and a correct understanding of certain wrong objects and concepts. Appropriate and correct understanding of objects and language concepts supports blind and deaf children in interacting with other people. As emphasized by the first respondent, based on his experience, the concept and imagination of blind and deaf children influence the attitudes and actions of these children towards other people. In terms of increasing understanding of objects and concepts and developing the imagination of blind and

deaf children, the first respondent acknowledged that there were similarities with Helen Keller's experience of realizing herself as a dependent person. However, it should be emphasized that blind and deaf children have independence in terms of spirit and mind.

Based on experience, the first and second respondents emphasized that the close relationship of the teacher or caregiver with the student and the student's trust in the teacher or caregiver are important factors that support the successful learning and self-development of blind and deaf children. The creativity of teachers and caregivers in building a comfortable atmosphere and finding the right method also greatly supports the success of self-development for blind and deaf children. The main method of mentoring and educating blind and deaf children is a warm presence, a comfortable atmosphere, and creative ways that free blind and deaf children to explore and be creative. Respondents tried to find creative ways to make blind and deaf children willing and comfortable to learn. All learning for blind and deaf children is directed at equipping these students to be able to live independently, behave well, and be disciplined in living good habits. Although blind and deaf children are given the freedom to explore, blind and deaf children need to be helped to continue learning to develop language skills, relationship skills, and the basic skills needed to live independently.

Teachers and caregivers at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia design continuity of mentoring and learning processes at schools and dormitories. From the experience of the second respondent, parents often complain that when in the family, blind and deaf children are difficult to manage by parents. Blind and deaf children tend to be less disciplined and obedient to their parents. Therefore, dormitories are an alternative place to educate blind and deaf children in the discipline and good habits. Assistance and education in dormitories are intended to ensure that children with special needs (ABK), especially children who are blind and deaf, experienced mentoring and education that is integrated between cognitive learning, intensive relationships with teachers and friends, good habits on an ongoing basis, and improvement of life skills. (Anditha Sari, 2017). In addition, the blind and deaf children who live in the dormitory have a sense of caring for each other. They learn to care for each other and help in a strong spirit of brotherhood.

Helen Keller's experience while living in Perkins is similar to that experienced by the second respondent with the children in the Helen Keller Indonesia SLB G/AB dormitory. Blind and deaf children carry out shopping activities designed by teachers and caregivers such as shopping at a shop near the dormitory, attending invitations in the village, *tirakatan* (celebrate) August 17, taking a leisurely walk to the square, swimming, or recreation outside the school environment. and hostel. Dormitory activities are designed so blind and deaf children have a wider experience of relating to community members and the natural environment.

The second respondent said that blind and deaf children who live in dormitories have a lot of development in the ability to communicate, cooperate, and care for each other. Regarding communication, respondents said that children living

in dormitories had a fairly rapid increase in sign language development. The experience of interacting and communicating with caregivers and roommates provides space for the words and language that have been learned. It can be said that the encounter and interaction between blind and deaf children in the dormitory support the improvement of language skills, communication skills, and relationship practices. In addition, the introduction and relations of blind and deaf children with the community also provide space for the community to learn how blind and deaf children relate so that the community can seek ways to relate empathically to blind and deaf children (Bialystok & Kukar, 2018).

Furthermore, the second respondent added that the children were trained to live independently according to their ability level by living in a dormitory. The independence of blind and deaf children is the goal of the education and mentoring process at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia. The collaboration of teachers, hostel caregivers, and parents is very important so that the development of blind and deaf children is documented and appreciated (Zamista et al., 2020). This record of child development becomes material for dialogical communication between teachers, caregivers, and parents. The mentoring process with a collaborative character is very important in assisting children personally and developing their potential according to the principles of child-centered education (Andiwatir, 2021).

In addition, the two respondents emphasized several memorable experiences while accompanying and educating blind and deaf children. *First*, both respondents stated that accompanying and educating blind and deaf children involves the heart and feelings. At first, they just hoped to get a job. After relating and communicating intensively with blind and deaf children, they found that this task was a belief and a calling for humanity. This task is not just a job but a call to maintain and develop the life that God has given.

*Second*, in assisting and educating blind and deaf children, both respondents felt that it was a challenge to always find approaches and ways of mentoring creatively. The first respondent emphasized that the motivation to seek and find creative methods and ways was the encouragement to love and develop blind and deaf children so that they could develop optimally. The second respondent stated that he often experienced things he did not understand when being cared for in the dormitory. Once a blind and deaf child became quiet. At other times, blind and deaf children sometimes become more aggressive. Creating a comfortable and calm feeling is challenging in raising blind and deaf children.

*Third*, the two respondents emphasized that blind and deaf children experience physical limitations like children who have multiple disabilities. On the one hand, blind and deaf children must accept the situation and develop according to their modalities. Meanwhile, in the education process, blind and deaf children need to accept that they need to cooperate and admit that their lives depend on others. According to the first respondent, raising awareness and the ability to work together with blind and deaf children was a tough struggle in the early days of mentoring at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia. Building collaboration with teachers and friends



begins with the introduction stage, warm and affective relationships, communicating with each other, and then stepping into the stage of working together in carrying out tasks. The second respondent also admitted that blind and deaf children must be accompanied step by step to live a boarding life so that relationships, communication, and cooperation can be realized. Social skills in terms of relationships, communication, and collaboration are developed through a long process of getting used to living in dormitories.

*Fourth*, intensive communication with families through social media and family visits to dormitories is a memorable experience for teachers and educators because, on these occasions, blind and deaf children seem happy to welcome the presence of family members who love them. Both respondents emphasized that *"the joy of blind and deaf children becomes the joy of teachers and caregivers"*. The presence of parents in the dormitory is also a valuable opportunity for teachers and caregivers to convey the positive development of blind and deaf children.

The first and second respondents revealed that mentoring and educating blind and deaf children is a form of expression of affection for the person created by God. Both respondents emphasized that they live the task of assisting blind and deaf children based on love. In carrying out this task, they experience happiness and meaningful life in carrying out the call of humanity to accompany blind and deaf children.

An empathic relationship model that focuses on the strength of the heart is needed in personal assistance (Bialystok & Kukar, 2018). The effective approach emphasizes the importance of building a mood and feeling comfortable in relationships. Affective relationships produce a climate that supports the development of feelings of happiness (von Hildebrand, 1995). In assisting and educating blind and deaf children, the main thing is not the way and management of mentoring but the closeness of relationships and warm and empathetic bonds of heart so that blind and deaf children feel comfortable accepting their limited conditions and develop their potential (Wiratmo et al., 2021).

The relationship and heart-to-heart communication between teachers and blind and deaf students became a memorable and meaningful experience for teachers (first responders) and caregivers of the SLB G-AB hostel Helen Keller Indonesia. The two respondents agreed that a teacher and caregiver for blind and deaf children are individuals who attend, accompany and accompany with heart (love), patience, attention, creativity, and professionalism in educating and learning with blind and deaf children (Wiratmo et al., 2021). The ability to empathize is an important part of social and emotional development, affecting individual behavior towards others and the quality of social relationships. In addition, a good, pleasant relationship between teachers and blind and deaf students will make blind and deaf children feel comfortable and safe so that gradually blind and deaf children put their trust in their teachers (Wiratmo et al., 2021; Robbins, 1963). Trust in teachers and caregivers greatly supports the success of the learning process of blind and deaf children.

The different ways of interaction, treatment, and attitude of each teacher towards blind and deaf students at SLB G-AB Helen Keller Indonesia also help expand and complement the concept of language for blind and deaf children. According to Ibu Tanti, every teacher has a unique method and creativity to teach blind and deaf children to recognize the language. So, suppose many teachers accompany blind and deaf children. In that case, blind and deaf children will get a lot of information, get a lot of relationships and get a lot of communication capital. For Mrs. Tanti, if one teacher only accompanies one blind and deaf student, then the language concept obtained is limited from the perspective of the teacher concerned. So, blind and deaf students need to be introduced to other teachers so that both blind and deaf teachers and students learn to know and understand each other. In addition, blind and deaf students get the concept of understanding language from various teacher perspectives.

Based on the results of the discussion above, in assisting blind and deaf children, the most basic thing is to build a conducive atmosphere for relationships and communication that unites feelings and hearts. Warm and empathetic relationships need to be built (Tuhovsky, 2017). This is in line with the principle of learning that is impartial, centered, and implemented for the development of students (Suarjani, 2019). Education through personal assistance for blind and deaf children is carried out through the Extraordinary School education process in mentoring teachers and continued in the process of mentoring living in boarding schools with the assistance of hostel caregivers. Teachers have a major role in developing the ability to relate, communicate, and socialize. Dormitory caregivers play a major role in building the habit of living together through eating together, cleaning the body, arranging rooms, and doing household tasks in a guided manner. By living in dormitories, blind and deaf children experience development in the application of language through interactions with caregivers and friends who also have multiple disabilities. Caregivers also play a role in guiding blind and deaf children to relate to community members and the natural environment.

Becoming a teacher and caregiver for blind and deaf children requires strong attention and commitment. From the research, both respondents believe that being a teacher and caregiver for deafblind children is a human duty and a calling that makes life meaningful. In other words, being a teacher and caregiver for blind and deaf children is not enough just to have knowledge and professionalism but also requires mental and spiritual strength. For this reason, further research is still open on mental and spiritual resilience that needs to be prepared and developed to carry out the duties and vocations of being a teacher and caregiver for blind and deaf children. Researchers have not found publications of research results on mental and spiritual education for prospective teachers and caregivers of deafblind children.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Helen Keller's idea that heart-to-heart relationships and communication are doors to a light, friendship, brotherhood, love, and knowledge is shared by teachers



and caregivers of blind and deaf children. In general, relationships and communication are understood verbally. For blind and deaf children, verbal communication is not easy to implement because of the dysfunction of the senses of sight and hearing. Blind and deaf children have strong modalities in relating to the touch (touching) of the hand, which emphasizes the power of the sense of touch (skin), the sense of smell (nose), and the sense of taste (tongue).

Through education at the HKI SLB, relations and communication for blind and deaf children get programmed facilities and a conducive climate. Teachers help blind and deaf children experience empathic, loving relationships (Wiratmo et al., 2021). The teacher finds the meaning of his life in carrying out child assistance as a call and duty of humanity. Teachers and caregivers help blind and deaf children understand and believe in themselves as human beings equal to those who can see and hear. Through education emphasizing personal relationships and communication, blind and deaf children experience themselves as valuable and loved individuals. Heart-to-heart relationships and communication also occur in various educational activities for all children in schools and families so that parents, teachers, and students find the meaning of life.

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