

Management of Education Implementation in Surakarta Inclusive Primary School

Andre Eksaputra Nugraha ^{1,*}, Minsih¹, Murfiah Dewi Wulandari¹, Laili Etika Rahmawati¹

¹Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: q200230021@student.ums.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri Bromantakan, Surakarta, by exploring its cultural, policy, and practical dimensions. It seeks to identify the progress and challenges in promoting inclusivity for students with special needs.

Methodology: A qualitative approach was employed, using interviews, observations, and document reviews to collect in-depth data. The Index for Inclusion was used as an evaluative framework to analyze school policies, cultural attitudes, and inclusive practices. Participants included teachers, school principals, and parents.

Results: The findings reveal that the school has taken significant steps toward inclusivity, such as increasing learning time for students with special needs and encouraging parental involvement. However, major barriers persist, including discriminatory attitudes, weak inter-stakeholder collaboration, a shortage of Special Education Teachers (GPK), and limited teacher training. Although the school has implemented group seating arrangements and student-centered strategies under the Merdeka Curriculum, these efforts require further development.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study underscores the need for enhanced teacher capacity building, deeper parental engagement, and policy refinement to support inclusive education. The research contributes valuable insights into the current state of inclusive practices in Indonesian primary schools and offers strategic recommendations for improvement.

Introduction

Education is a basic human need in life. Through education, individuals can survive and develop. Everyone, including children with special needs, has the right to education (Aulia et al., 2024). This is stated in Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, which sets out the goals and functions of education, including for children with disabilities. From this law, various education regulations emerged, one of which is Government Regulation No 19 of 2005 which sets the National Education Standards with eight standards. This policy emphasizes the importance of the general education system as a minimum benchmark for the quality of education services. The implementation of this policy can ensure that every education service achieves a minimum standard of excellence.

Inclusive education is an education system that integrates special education services with the requirement that all children with special needs must receive education in the nearest public school, interacting with their peers (Pereira et al., 2022). This provision is regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education (Permendiknas) Number 70 of 2009, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive education for students who experience abnormalities and have the potential for intelligence and/or special talents. In inclusive education, this system aims to create a learning environment that supports diversity and meets the individual needs of each student, so that all children can develop optimally in the same education (Oktavia et al., 2024).

Surakarta is one of the cities in Central Java that has demonstrated its commitment to organizing inclusive education with the aim of providing equal opportunities for all children, including children with special needs. This effort is realized through the opening of inclusive primary schools throughout the city. To date, there are 14 inclusive primary schools that specifically provide education services for children with disabilities. Although the number of schools is significant, the imbalance between the number of schools and the number of registered children with disabilities is still evident, with 233 children with disabilities in these schools (Yusuf et al., 2024). This imbalance poses challenges in terms of providing adequate educators and facilities, especially in relation to the role of shadow teachers who are needed to assist children with disabilities in the teaching and learning process. The quality of the implementation of inclusive education is also under scrutiny, as its success depends on the synergy between schools, teachers, parents and the support of the local government.

One example of the implementation of inclusive education in Surakarta City is at Bromantakan State Primary School, which currently accommodates 8 children with special needs. With a large number of children with disabilities, implementing inclusive teaching methods is a challenge. This challenge is not only related to the availability of supporting resources, such as accompanying teachers, but also learning methods that must be adapted to the individual needs of students (Owa et al., 2024). This can certainly have an impact on the quality of education received, both for children with disabilities and other students in the same class. Overcoming this challenge requires more adaptive and innovative strategies from schools and close cooperation between teachers, shadow teachers and parents.

Dan and colleagues revealed that there are still gaps in the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools, especially in terms of support for teachers and accessibility of facilities (Dan et al., 2024). Environmental factors and school culture influence the success of inclusive education programs (Turlubekova et al., 2024). Another study showed the importance of the role of parents and communities in supporting inclusive (Mann et al., 2024). These three studies highlight the challenges faced in managing inclusive education and the need for better strategies to improve program effectiveness in primary schools.

The novelty of this research lies in the emphasis on the management of inclusive education at SD Negeri Bromantakan, Surakarta City, especially through the implementation of learning that is more responsive to the needs of students with special needs. It differs from previous studies that focused more on aspects of structural support and accessibility, which highlighted gaps in support for teachers and limited facilities, as well as those that emphasized the role of the environment and school culture in supporting inclusion. This research prioritizes an in-depth exploration of the experiences of the main actors in the inclusive education process, namely teachers, students and parents. This focus provides a new, more holistic perspective in understanding how inclusive education is implemented and what challenges they face in its implementation.

This study aims to analyze the management of inclusive education in SD Negeri Bromantakan, Surakarta City. By exploring the experiences of teachers, students and parents in the inclusive education process, this study seeks to identify the challenges faced in its implementation. This research is expected to provide valuable input for policy makers and education practitioners to design more effective strategies to support the implementation of inclusive education. As such, this research can play an important role in ensuring that every child, without exception, including those with special needs, can gain access to quality, inclusive and appropriate education.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach because it aims to describe the facts or circumstances relating to the implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri Bromantakan Surakarta. In addition, the case study method was used to conduct this research. This study was conducted at Bromantakan State Elementary School in Banjarsari Sub-district, Surakarta City, Central Java, Indonesia. The research took place from July to September 2024.

The research involved the principal, the teacher who taught the fourth grade students, and one of the parents of the fourth grade students who had special needs at SD Negeri Bromantakan. Data Collection Techniques: Observation and interviews were used to collect data. In accordance with the theory of Miles Huberman and Saldana, data were analyzed using several steps, namely data condensation, presenting data (data display), and drawing conclusions or verification (Miles et al., 2014). Data condensation also refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming.

Data Condensation

First, the researcher conducted data condensation. At this stage, the researcher sorted out important field data. The data is sorted or summarized to collect important information about the research objectives. Using this data can help researchers make further decisions. The researcher used observation and interview techniques to gather important information from a diverse data set. The data was selected based on the required grid and the research objectives.

Data Presentation

At the data presentation stage, the data collected by the researcher is presented in narrative form. There is a possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action because of a set of data or information presented. because researchers find it easier to draw conclusions and reduce interpretation errors by presenting data in detail or detail. writing research data from general to specific (infuctive). This can help readers form a coherent thinking structure and focus on the results of the problem.

Conclusion Drawing

Drawing conclusions and verification is the final step in qualitative data analysis. This research must be able to answer the problem from the beginning. Field findings can be described or described in the form of theoretical relationships. The theories discussed in the theoretical research are related to the conclusions of this research. Qualitative research will find

new things that have never happened before. This research will draw conclusions through an inductive approach, where researchers will discuss various issues, each with evidence and examples of facts that have been found in the field before, and end with a general statement.

Result and Discussion

SD Negeri Bromantakan, Surakarta City, is one of the schools that offers inclusive education for students with diverse needs. Inclusive education in this school aims to create a learning environment that is welcoming, fair and supportive of diversity, so that all students can reach their full potential without discrimination. To measure the extent of the implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri Bromantakan, the index for inclusion can be a very relevant tool. The index helps researchers evaluate various aspects of implementation, such as policies, practices and school culture that support inclusion. By using this tool, researchers can provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness and challenges in implementing inclusive education so that strategic recommendations can be developed for future improvements.

Cultural Dimensions

Based on the findings in the field, it was found that the implementation of inclusive education is not all in accordance with the inclusion index (Mendoza & Heymann, 2022), there are several obstacles in the implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri Bromantakan, especially on the theme of acceptance, as the following findings.

"Sometimes children with special needs in my class are still teased or ignored by their friends. Although we have tried to invite them to accept each other, not all children can understand the importance of inclusion" (interview quote D, grade 4 teacher).

From the data, students with special needs who are registered at the school receive discriminatory treatment. This discriminatory treatment arises from the classmates of children with special needs. The form of discrimination received by children with special needs at SD Negeri Bromantakan is in the form of ridicule and being ostracized or silenced.

Yuliawati and team revealed that in inclusive schools in Indonesia discrimination against children with special needs is still often considered a natural thing (Yuliawati et al., 2023). This condition shows a lack of understanding and awareness of the importance of providing equal and dignified services for all children, including those with special needs. In fact, services available for children with special needs in Indonesia are often neglected or provided with a pity-based approach, rather than respect for their rights as equal individuals. This is similar to the situation in some other countries, where attention to special needs is minimal and tends to be inadequate. However, a fundamental difference is seen in the level of attention and approach given in overseas schools, which are generally much more advanced in providing inclusive services. Abroad, children with special needs are more valued as individuals with potential, with educational services that are more humanistic and oriented towards developing their abilities to the fullest (Golan & Levi, 2022). These differences reflect the urgent need for Indonesia to improve the quality of inclusive services, whether through teacher training, provision of facilities or changes in education culture and policy.

In Paju and team's research Paju et al (2021), teachers in inclusive schools collaborate to overcome such situations. Bromantakan State Elementary School collaborates with educators and parents or guardians. The person closest to the child who instills a positive attitude towards lessons and other things will help the child understand what is being taught (Moriña et al., 2020). Therefore, this collaboration is very important in schools that implement inclusive education.

"We have tried to involve parents in the effort to help children understand the importance of inclusion, but this collaboration has not been fully maximized. It still takes time and a better approach to get them really involved." (interview quote D, grade 4 teacher)

These opinions show that collaboration is not enough to deal with the problems of children with special needs. This is also due to the fact that schools and parents do not cooperate fully to accompany their children when they are at home to learn. The results show that children with special needs always forget the homework given by their teachers. Therefore, to make children feel more valued, parents or guardians are very important to give their attention (Symeonidou et al., 2020).

The school does not remain silent when situations like this occur. Giving advice to classmates with disabilities and monitoring them are actions taken by the school. This is done to encourage positive attitudes such as mutual respect and mutual help. According to Wulan & Sanjaya (2022), this perspective applies not only to peers but also to other teachers. Education in schools is not able to create graduates who as a whole can describe the character and culture of the nation. This is because education still focuses on students' cognitive achievement. This helps children's potential so that children can catch up and understand previous learning (Alimatu, 2024).

Policy Dimensions

According to research by Rejeki and team (Rejeki et al., 2022), children who need special education often experience significant negative impacts due to exclusion and rejection perspectives that exist in the surrounding environment, both in schools and communities. These perspectives reflect cultural dimensions that tend to view children with special needs as different or even less capable than their peers. These negative impacts not only affect their academic development but also

their self-confidence, socialization skills and psychological well-being. In an effort to overcome this challenge, schools have a strategic role to play in creating an inclusive environment by paying more attention to the learning needs of these children. One concrete step that can be taken is to add special learning hours designed to meet their individual needs.

"We add special learning hours for children with special needs so that they can catch up on material they may have missed. This is important to support their potential development in the classroom." (interview excerpt D, grade 4 teacher)

Another finding that emerged in the policy dimension was that the results of socialization related to inclusive education play an important role as a source of information that can be shared with various parties in the school environment. This information is not only relevant for educators but also includes school principals and parents as key stakeholders. Through this socialization, educators can better understand the concept and implementation of inclusive education, while principals can integrate this approach into school policies.

"Despite the socialization of inclusive education, we still see difficulties in building interactions between children, both with classmates and teachers. Our school tries additional programs such as changing seats and group learning to increase their confidence." (interview quote B, Principal of SD Negeri Bromantakan).

Based on this opinion, it shows that children do not feel burdened because inclusive education at SD Negeri Bromantakan has not been fully implemented. This is because building relationships is not going well at this point (Veradegita et al., 2021). Schools need additional programs to increase children's confidence and improve their ability to interact, such as changing seats and group learning, as children still have difficulty interacting with both their classmates and their teachers. This can reduce the level of bullying by forcing children to say what they think about what is being discussed.

Dimensions of Implementation

Special assistant teachers (GPK) play a very important role in the implementation of inclusive education, because their main task is to provide direct support to students with special needs so that they can participate in learning in regular classes. The role of the GPK is not only limited to assisting students in the learning process, but also includes developing learning strategies that suit the needs of these students, as well as providing assistance in managing student behavior and emotions (Opoku, 2022). GPK is the key to success in creating an inclusive educational environment, where every student, regardless of background or special conditions, can have equal opportunities to learn and develop. As stated by Webster & De Boer (2021), GPK have a contribution that cannot be underestimated in realizing the true goals of inclusive education.

"Currently, we only have one Special Assistance Teacher who is very instrumental in supporting students with special needs. Although his role is very important, ideally we need more GPKs to provide maximum support." (interview quote B, Principal of SD Negeri Bromantakan).

In implementing inclusive education, SD Negeri Bromantakan faces several problems. One of them is the shortage of special guidance teachers (GPK). In addition, there is one special GPK who handles children with special needs, but there are no psychology, guidance and counseling personnel. In addition, there is no socialization about inclusive education in the community around the school. Finally, ordinary teachers lack knowledge about children with special needs (Chow et al., 2023). This means that children with special needs are not well cared for in schools.

In inclusive schools, assessment plays a very important role in ensuring that all students, including those with special needs, have an optimal learning experience. In this case, assessment is not only limited to measuring academic learning outcomes, but also includes aspects of social, emotional and life skills development (Tai et al., 2021). Teachers in inclusive schools must adapt assessment methods according to the individual needs of students, taking into account their learning styles and abilities.

"At SD Negeri Bromantakan, we still find it difficult to carry out assessments independently because not all teachers have inclusive education skills. We cooperate with SLB Negeri Surakarta, although not on a regular basis, but still conduct assessments and follow-ups, such as additional learning hours. Although the results have not been maximized due to the lack of optimal support from parents." (interview quote B, Principal of SD Negeri Bromantakan).

From this opinion, not all teachers at SD Negeri Bromantakan have the ability to provide inclusive education. As a result, the school cannot implement the assessment policy independently. The school conducts assessments in collaboration with SLB Negeri Surakarta, but only for a certain time. After the assessment is completed, special services will be provided, one of which is the addition of learning hours for children with disabilities. The results of the additional learning hours are still not enough to develop the potential of these children because there is no optimal support from parents or guardians.

The final dimension of inclusive learning is the implementation or inclusive practice dimension. In this dimension, schools are required to develop practices that reflect an inclusive culture and regulations that support diversity. Based on the author's observations in the field, learning at SD Negeri Bromantakan is not fully child-centered. Child-centered learning is an approach that emphasizes optimal student activity to achieve balanced learning outcomes between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Jungjohann & Gebhardt, 2023). This learning process greatly assists teachers in planning learning that is responsive to the needs and differences of each child, as described by Ummah and team (Ummah et al., 2024). It aims to ensure that education is equitable, non-discriminatory and sensitive to various cultures and the relevance of children's daily lives.

The observation results also show that teachers at SD Negeri Bromantakan have tried to make learning responsive to the differences of each child. Among other things, teachers often take different approaches, for example in group formation, to ensure that all children feel valued, both those who have obstacles and those who do not. Learning components such as curriculum, learning process and evaluation are also adapted to inclusive principles (Alnaim & Sakız, 2023). The curriculum used in this school is Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, with uniform teaching materials, and learning evaluations that involve enrichment and remedial. In inclusive school practice, as exemplified in the Salamanca declaration, children's diversity in characteristics and needs must be valued and accommodated. Inclusive education prioritizes community participation, child-centered teaching and a flexible curriculum that supports this diversity, with appropriate resource support.

Conclusion

The implementation of inclusive education at SD Negeri Bromantakan, Surakarta City, shows various challenges that reflect the need for improvement in the cultural, policy and implementation dimensions. Although efforts have been made to create an inclusive learning environment, such as involving parents, adding special learning hours and implementing Merdeka Curriculum-based learning, there are still significant obstacles such as discrimination against students with special needs, a lack of support personnel such as Special Assistance Teachers (GPK), limited self-assessment and learning approaches that are not fully child-centered. These obstacles reflect the urgent need to improve teacher training, expand facilities, strengthen collaboration with parents, and develop more effective policies to ensure optimal inclusion. Through strategic efforts and holistic support, inclusive schools in Indonesia can achieve the goal of creating an educational environment that is welcoming, equitable and supportive of diversity, in accordance with the principles of inclusive education espoused in the Salamanca declaration.

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