



Enhancing teacher competence through principal managerial competence in the planning of inclusive education in elementary schools

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Abstract

Implementing an inclusive approach in elementary schools helps provide a learning environment that accommodates the needs of all students. This study aimed to examine the principal's competence when planning inclusive education programs to enhance teachers' performance in Ciamis Regency's elementary schools. The research methodology employed in this study was a case study approach, utilizing data collection approaches such as interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. The results of this study indicate that effective program planning necessitates the presence of a well-defined plan, and it is imperative for every principal to develop the strategic plan in order to execute the planned program successfully. There needs to be an individual responsible for overseeing the program implementation process and ensuring that the principal remains focused on the activities related to inclusion procedures. The principal's role as an educational planner in inclusive schools involves meticulous academic preparation for the annual program, semester program, and evaluation, which enables effective management. Principals oversee, advise, and administer human resources, facilities, and infrastructure. They cultivate a nurturing school climate, offer guidance to school staff, and implement engaging, inclusive learning approaches. At last, when it comes to educational planning, principals have effectively developed programs, services, infrastructure, and coaching to enhance teachers' performance in inclusive schools.

Keywords: managerial competence, teacher competence, inclusive elementary schools.

INTRODUCTION

The achievement of national education goals and the objectives of educational units serves as an indicator of success, making education a vital need. The benefits offered by educational institutions are regarded as a valuable selling point for clients seeking educational services. The leader has a crucial role in the execution of the education process (Tanjung et al., 2021). Effective supervision in inclusive schools is crucial for the education system since it plays a strategic role and encompasses several responsibilities. Supervision must be carried out by professionals who possess the necessary qualifications (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

According to the Salamanca Statement (1994), Article 2 asserts that every child is entitled to a fair and equitable education. The next argument emphasizes the need to provide children with special education needs access to inclusive schools that can effectively cater to their developmental requirements through a

child-centered pedagogical approach. Inclusive education refers to the educational approach that caters to the specific requirements of both children with special needs and elementary school students in general.

According to Mulyadi (2022), inclusive education is a viable option for children with special needs to receive education effectively and efficiently, especially in regions where special schools are not yet accessible at the elementary school level.

Based on educational attainment, inclusive elementary schooling is an educational effort that aims to equip children with the necessary skills and knowledge for advanced levels of education (Ariyanti, 2022). In addition, Mulyadi (2022) defines the inclusive classroom as a learning environment incorporating various strategies to support students with special needs. The goal is to promote their development through inclusive

education and provide opportunities for social interaction to enhance their social skills.

According to statistical data from 2020, there were a total of 2,491 individuals with disabilities in Ciamis Regency, including both those of school age and those who had already graduated. However, Rahman (2022) asserts that the actual rate of inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the school system is only 30%, with the other 70% not being provided with formal or non-formal education.

Tanjung et al. (2022) explain that children with special needs are not being accepted into regular schools because of several issues, such as the long and limited distance to special schools, parents who do not want to send their kids to school, and the uneven implementation of inclusive education in the Ciamis Regency to help these kids.

Ariyanti (2022) posits that in order to optimize the potential of children with special needs, students and institutions responsible for the learning process must be able to collaborate and have a synergy of responsibilities, both directly and indirectly. In the end, it will enhance students' preparedness to face higher education levels. Every educational institution must have a contingent of professionals or human resources to achieve national education's objectives. Professional leaders and educators are essential for schools, which are perceived as educational service institutions.

Hastowo and Abduh (2021) highlight the necessity for school principals to possess the authority to manage the situation in accordance with their competence. The principal is responsible for developing motivation and determining school objectives as an extension of national education goals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). In order to fulfill their responsibilities as principals, they must possess specific leadership skills (Eagle et al., 2015). It is impossible to separate the performance dimensions; therefore, performance should be assessed following all of them. It is evident that the dimensions of the implementation of one task will differ from those of another.

In 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture published a Principal's Work Guide outlining school principals' responsibilities and functions. These responsibilities included compiling and refining the school's vision, mission, and objectives; developing management information systems; compiling the school's organizational structure, medium-term work plan, and annual work plan; and compiling school regulations. The principal's duty as a manager is consistent with the four management functions identified by Mulyadi and Kresnawaty (2020): a) Planning, b) Organizing, c) Implementing, and d) Controlling. The principal must possess the ability to optimize human resources and resources in the learning environment, devise programs, and mobilize his staff as a manager.

The principal is the head who maintains direct contact with the school (Sutarti, 2021). The Education Protection Team is under the command of the principal, who is responsible for the supervision of a variety of educational activities and learning models (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). The fulfillment of a school's mission, its character, and its capacity to adapt to societal elements are all factors that contribute to its success (Cheng, 2022).

The managerial effectiveness of school principals is primarily influenced by three key factors: the leader, subordinates, and the current situation (Tuljannah et al., 2022). Therefore, a leader needs to possess a comprehensive understanding of fundamental leadership principles and a high level of proficiency in order to foster collaboration among subordinates and successfully achieve goals.

An individual's professional experience contributes significantly to their development and proficiency in fulfilling their responsibilities. This implies that an individual's experience has an impact on their performance. The professionalism of principals and teachers is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, professionalism ensures the protection of the wider community's interests. Secondly, professionalism serves as a mechanism for enhancing the teaching profession. Lastly, professionalism offers

opportunities for self-improvement and growth, enabling teachers to deliver the best inclusion implementation services and enhance their skills (Tanjung et al., 2021).

However, it is essential to acknowledge the irony in the educational process, which is that the principal's competence in school management directly impacts the quality of teacher performance. The correlation between the principal's managerial skills and teachers' performance must be carefully evaluated, as it will directly influence the effectiveness of the learning process, eventually affecting the quality and attainment of educational goals (Manik & Siahaan, 2021).

Sutarti (2021) identifies numerous factors that can contribute to the low managerial performance of principals and teachers. These include: 1) a significant number of principals who have not met the necessary requirements; 2) an insufficient level of education among principals; and 3) a lack of key competencies.

Previous studies conducted in inclusive schools in Ciamis Regency have shown that the effectiveness of learning in schools that implement inclusive education relies on teachers paying equal attention to the learning needs of both typical children and children with special needs in a democratic manner. This issue arises due to the absence of Special Assistance Teachers in certain schools. Therefore, in order to provide an equitable and balanced-inclusive learning environment, it is necessary to have teachers who demonstrate competent performance.

The evaluation of teachers' performance in education encompasses four essential competencies outlined in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 14 of 2005, article 8. These competencies include 1) pedagogical competence, 2) professional competence, 3) social competence, and 4) Personality competence. The enhancement and cultivation of these four competencies are significantly impacted by the managerial ability possessed by leaders in effectively implementing policies.

Managerial efficiency refers to the pursuit of predetermined objectives following a pre-established plan, considering the school's specific circumstances and conditions. This

includes effectively utilizing data, facilities, and time, as well as engaging in various activities, both tangible and intangible, to achieve optimal quantitative and qualitative outcomes (Susilowati et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Sirojuddin (2020) stated that effective teaching is closely linked to goal achievement, making goal analysis the initial step in teaching planning. According to Shumway and Harden (2003), learning is considered effective when learning objectives are achieved precisely as planned.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design refers to the systematic plan that outlines the procedure and methodology to be followed in conducting a research study (Ramdhan, 2021). The researchers employed a qualitative methodology in the present study. The qualitative approach is a research method that follows the postpositivist philosophy. Instead of conducting experiments, this method studies the conditions of natural objects. In this approach, the researcher plays a crucial role as the main instrument. Triangulation is employed to combine different data collection techniques. The analysis of the data is done inductively and qualitatively. The results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization. The case study method is commonly used in this approach (Sugiyono, 2019).

A case study examines issues related to specific situations and conditions and their interactions with the surrounding environment. The primary objective of employing the case study research method is to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of a specific object or case. These cases encompass various phenomena, such as concepts, activities, policies, social classes, regions, organizations, and others (Sugiyono, 2019).

The data collection methods employed in this study included direct observation of the field to identify issues and gather information about the principal's managerial competence in enhancing teacher performance. Additionally, interviews were conducted with teachers, principals, and students to obtain

representative insights. Finally, documentation was utilized as secondary data to supplement the study results and provide a secondary interpretation of events. The data obtained through documentation consisted of non-statistical records pertaining to the institution's profile, goals, vision and mission, objectives, teacher performance reports, and student achievements. The researchers employed a systematic approach to analyze the data, which involved the following steps: 1) gathering the data, 2) simplifying the data through reduction techniques, 3) presenting the data through data display, 4) drawing conclusions, and 5) verifying the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In carrying out their role as coordinators of the education system, elementary school principals carry out this task effectively. It is based on the author's research through an interview with Iwa Rustiawan, who stated:

"Regarding the role of the principal in the planning field, I, as the principal of this inclusive elementary school, have done many things, including planning an annual event at the beginning of the school year. And for the effectiveness of this plan, what is done is to make plans for various activities that are included in the implementation process. Then, to find out whether the program is planned according to the scheduled time, a checklist is also made."

The excerpt above clarifies that elementary school principals fulfill their duties by creating a program plan for each school year. According to the researchers, this position is very strategic because the director, as the head of the program, cannot carry out his duties properly without prior planning. In every program, there must be a plan, and every principal must plan the plan, act as the person in charge of the program implementation process, and remind the principal to stay focused on the organized activities. Moreover, to determine the work plan in the schedule, it is carried out according to a certain method.

As a response, the principal must make a checklist; this is very important as a control tool for the principal to determine whether the program is completed on time or not. Based on the results of the observation and the results of the researcher's interview with the principal, it was revealed that:

Managerial competence applied in inclusive elementary schools is essentially to improve the performance of education personnel in schools, especially in the aspect of teacher performance. Because of the managerial ability of the principal, the learning process can develop progressively from year to year by improving teacher performance and coaching in a conducive and pleasant atmosphere. To implement the principal's leadership effectively and efficiently, therefore, the principal needs to have knowledge and skills so that, in all planning and a broad view of schools and education, the principal is obsessed with improving teacher performance.

Principals are also responsible for managing the education planning process effectively in their role as managers. Arranging short-, medium-, and long-term programs as part of the principal's efforts to smooth the work steps taken with priority.

The principal's role as an educational planner in inclusive schools involves implementing effective management strategies, particularly in academic planning, which includes developing annual, semester, and evaluation programs. The principal's responsibilities include offering guidance, consulting on matters, managing human resources, managing facilities and infrastructure, fostering a supportive school climate, advising school members, and adopting engaging learning models. Principals are required to possess an in-depth understanding of the concepts and principles of inclusive education, as stated by Haug (2017). This includes understanding the various types of disabilities that students may have, as well as the inclusive teaching methods and support needed by both teachers and students.

The principal's management in this inclusive school is implemented through the involvement of parents via the school committee. This involvement includes making necessary arrangements in the school, monitoring classroom learning, assigning tasks based on the abilities of teachers and education personnel, considering grade level and skills, and forming committees during competitions. Principals must devise effective strategies to effectively introduce inclusive education in schools (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). This entails the identification of the requisite human, physical, and financial resources to facilitate inclusive education, along with the formulation of programs and curricula that suit the needs of students. Examine the specific needs of children and the difficulties that teachers have when implementing inclusive education, as outlined by Gray et al. (2017). Performing a needs analysis is essential for developing effective strategies to address challenges and enhance the performance of teachers (Avella et al., 2016). Principals should possess the ability to cultivate strong leadership skills and establish efficient management teams (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Within the inclusive education framework, this involves providing groups of educators with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively deal with the challenges associated with inclusion inside their classrooms.

Set performance indicators for measuring the effectiveness of implementing inclusive education and the performance of teachers (Capp, 2017). Regular monitoring and evaluation are conducted to identify successes and address emerging issues. Communicate openly and collaborate with all relevant parties, including teachers, school staff, parents, and communities (MacLeod et al., 2017). Engage them in the process of designing and carrying out inclusive education initiatives to foster greater support and understanding (Cobb, 2015). Principals who acquire advanced managerial skills can effectively drive change by enhancing teacher performance and successfully implementing inclusive education in elementary schools

(Wilson et al., 2020). According to Bovill (2020), when schools provide a learning environment that includes everyone, it increases the chances for all students to achieve their optimum potential.

CONCLUSIONS

Principals have effectively utilized managerial competencies to ensure optimal educational planning. This includes providing appropriate infrastructure facilities, student-friendly educational services for both typical and special needs students, and adapting lesson planning based on the evaluation of students' achievements. These efforts aim to enhance the effectiveness of future educational processes.

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