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Inclusive Education Mechanisms at UPI Cibiru Laboratory Elementary School

Acil Ridwan^{1*}, Amel Fitriani², Fani Widia Putri³, Fani Widia Putri³, Kania Syifa Azzahra⁴

Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Cibiru, Indonesia

*Correspondence: E-mail: acilprem@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is education provided for students with special needs. Every school is expected to implement inclusive education as stipulated in government regulations. The purpose of this study is to determine the mechanisms or processes of inclusive education in elementary schools. The research method used is a qualitative research method based on descriptive studies. Data obtained are the results of interviews and observations at SD Laboratorium UPI Cibiru. At the school, there are several students with special needs in each class. The school provides assistant teachers for students with special needs. The school also collaborates with teachers from Special Needs Schools to gain knowledge and methods to develop the potential of students with special needs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an education where students with special needs learn and are accepted in regular schools and participate in learning with other students in their area of residence. These students must receive education and receive support services and education according to their needs. As emphasized in the circular letter of Dikdasmen (2003), which states that inclusive education is education that includes children with special needs to learn together with other normal children (Darma & Rusyidi, 2017). In this inclusive education, students with special needs do not receive special treatment or special privileges, but the same rights and obligations as other students. The concept of inclusive education seeks to provide equal educational rights and services for students with special needs, allowing them to receive education together with their peers in the regular school setting (Karya et al., 2021).

Inclusive classes are a form of equal rights and obligations in the implementation of inclusive education without discriminating against students with special needs and students in general so that they receive the same education (Fitria, 2012). Cooperation from various parties, including the government, schools, and the community, is very influential in its implementation, because inclusive classes represent a new challenge for schools and the community (Djafri & Mujahidin, 2025; Suharyati et al., 2025). With the implementation of these inclusive classes, it is hoped that they will be able to create the next generation who can understand and accept all forms of differences and not create discrimination in the future of society (Zain et al., 2021).

In Indonesia itself, there is no specific data on the number of students with special needs. According to Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan And Perlindungan Anak, the number of children with special needs that have been successfully recorded is around 1.5 million. However, in general, the UN estimates that at least 10 percent of school-age children have special needs. In Indonesia, the number of school-age children, aged 5-14, is 42.8 million. Based on this estimate, it is estimated that there are approximately 4.2 million Indonesian children with special needs (Agustin et al., 2023). The number of Children with Special Needs (ABK) in Indonesia is quite large.

Education is a basic human need to ensure a dignified life. Therefore, the state is obligated to provide quality educational services to all its citizens, without exception, including those with special needs, as stipulated in (Lanawaang & Mesra, 2023). Unfortunately, the Indonesian education system has not yet accommodated diversity, resulting in the emergence of segmentation of educational institutions based on differences in religion, ethnicity, and even differences in physical and mental abilities possessed by students (Madi et al., 2023). Clearly, this segmentation of educational institutions has hindered students from learning to respect the reality of diversity in society. The Indonesian government has attempted to implement inclusive education through various programs and activities carried out by the Ministry of National Education and education offices at provincial, city/district levels. In practice, the implementation of inclusive education encounters various obstacles and challenges. These obstacles that are often reported are misunderstandings of the concept of inclusive education, inconsistent regulations or policies, an inflexible education system, and so on (Sahara et al., 2023).

This study aims to understand the inclusive learning process, with the problem formulation "Inclusive Education Mechanism at Upi Cibiru Laboratory Elementary School." The focus of the study is how the learning process in an inclusive setting, the obstacles faced, and the school's efforts to overcome obstacles related to the learning process.

2. METHODS

The research used is qualitative descriptive research. Suharsimi (2006) argues that "descriptive research is intended to describe something truthfully from a variable, symptom, or condition. In addition, Emzir (2012) states that data from qualitative research is data collected in the form of words or documentation and only a little in the form of numbers. The author conducted research at Labschool Cibiru Elementary School accompanied by the background that Labschool Elementary School has implemented inclusive learning for the past few years and collaborated with SLB Negeri Cileunyi. Therefore, the elementary school has an inclusive learning condition that is very interesting to study.

Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, interviews, and documentation techniques, using three different techniques aimed at obtaining authentic data and describing the actual situation. Observation or observation is focused attention on an event, symptom, or something Emzir (2012). The second technique used was an interview, namely a conversation that occurs between two people with a specific purpose, one party acts as an interviewer and one as an interviewee (source). Then the last is the documentation technique as concrete evidence of the data that has been collected.

Once data collection has been completed, the next step is data analysis. This systematic process of organizing the collected data to enhance understanding and reach new conclusions allows the author to present their findings to others.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools

An inclusive education program in elementary schools is a collaborative effort between students within the classroom and within the school environment. It can also be described as the same educational service provided by schools to both normal and special needs students, as this will have a very effective and constructive positive impact on integrating them into the school environment, which will then lead to social activities outside of school. Life outside of school can be challenging because the community environment often requires them to be able to mingle and interact with diverse social situations. This will feel easier if from the start, parents of children with special needs have already understood that learning at school is a child's obligation. Students with normal and special needs will be able to learn together despite various challenges, obstacles, and differences in ability of each individual.

Inclusive education is a solution for students with special needs, preventing them from experiencing psychological stress due to their circumstances. Upholding the dignity of children with special needs will encourage and enhance their enthusiasm for being more active, creative, and confident. Educational institutions or schools that embrace and accept diversity must reorient their curriculum, infrastructure, and learning systems to better meet the special needs of diverse children.

3.2. Implementation of Inclusive Education Program

According to Merilee S. Grindle, there are two variables that can be used to assess an educational program: the policy content variable and the implementation environment. The results found based on the results of the researcher's observations were the discovery of problems in the process of implementing the inclusive education program at SD Laboratorium UPI Cibiru Campus. The results of the study showed that the implementation of the inclusive education program had been running well according to the targets to be

achieved by the school from the principal, teachers, the education office, the community, and especially the parents of students.

Based on the results of observations and research, the involvement of schools, government, and the community is very influential for the sustainability of the inclusion program process in elementary schools. Where the school has involvement to facilitate children in the form of teachers who have the competence to handle children with special needs, then there is a BK teacher who plays a role as a companion to support child psychology at school but at the UPI Cibiru Laboratory Elementary School itself collaborates with special schools in the Cileunyi area, then the quality human resources in question are teachers and other GPK, other students or can be called peers of children with special needs. And finally, there is a special school curriculum for inclusive children, where this curriculum is specifically created so that it will later serve as a reference in the learning process in the classroom and at school. The curriculum used here is a curriculum that refers to government policy and later the school must be able to meet all the criteria of the curriculum provided by the government.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, community involvement is also crucial to supporting the implementation of inclusion programs in elementary schools. This includes parents of students at UPI Laboratory Elementary School, Cibiru Campus, both parents of children with special needs and parents of children with normal abilities. The general public, both those in their neighborhood and even those unfamiliar to the children, also plays a crucial role. This ensures that, despite their limitations and differences from their peers, children do not feel discriminated against by those around them.

3.3. Supporting Factors for Inclusion Implementation

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, it is clear that a supporting factor in the implementation of the inclusive education program at SD Laboratorium UPI Cibiru Campus is the strong collaboration between the principal, teachers, the education office, and the community to support the program. This collaboration is reflected in school policies that will ultimately encourage the implementation of an inclusive education program that is integrated into the learning process. Furthermore, the facilities provided by the school also support the development of inclusive children at SD Laboratorium UPI Cibiru.

3.4. Factors Inhibiting the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Based on the results obtained, the inhibiting factors for the implementation of inclusive education at Laboratory Elementary School include, namely 1) the community's paradigm that children with special needs must be handled so that sometimes there are complaints from several parents who object to their children being in the same class as children with special needs, especially when they are still in the lower grades. Another inhibiting factor is the limitations of teachers regarding the handling of children with special needs due to their educational background, most of whom are from Elementary School Teacher Education rather than Special Education.

3.5. Efforts Made by Principals and Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education

Based on the research findings resulting from supporting and inhibiting factors, efforts must be made by the school. Activities carried out at SD Laboratorium UPI Cibiru include conducting socialization together with the school committee as an effort to provide understanding and increase awareness to all parents of students at the beginning of the new school year, especially for parents of first grade students. There are workshops and

training on handling children with special needs that are intended to improve the quality of services in the implementation of inclusive education programs and teacher competencies carried out in collaboration with special needs schools in the Cileunyi area. The school continues to collaborate with the education office to conduct curriculum development training in an effort to reorient the curriculum for inclusive schools. Finally, there are monthly reports made by teachers or the school to parents of students with special needs as a form of responsibility for the school that has been trusted as a place of learning for children outside of their homes.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted using qualitative descriptive methods, it can be concluded that SD Labschool UPI Cibiru has implemented inclusive learning well. This is indicated by a supportive environment for students with special needs, teachers who have experience and knowledge in dealing with students with special needs, follow-up from the counseling department to develop student abilities, and collaboration with SLB Negeri Cileunyi which makes student handling appropriate. However, in this process, obstacles were still encountered in the form of rejection from parents of non-special needs students, but this has been addressed by the school by intensifying socialization regarding tolerance.

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