



EDUTECH

Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan

Journal homepage <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/edutech>



The Role of Transformational Leadership In The Implementation of Individualized Educational Program (IEP) AT XYZ Inclusive School In Makassar

Widuri Gito Rumjati & Khoe Yao Tung
Universitas Pelita Harapan

Email: widuri.rumjati@gmail.com

ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>Inclusive education is essential for students with special needs, ensuring they receive education tailored to their individual profiles. To support these needs, specialized strategies and programs are required. One such program is the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which is currently being implemented at XYZ school in Makassar. This study aims to assess the implementation of the IEP, and the challenges teachers face in carrying it out, determine the teachers' needs, and explore the role of transformational leadership in the program's execution. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Ten respondents from the inclusion team participated, including one leader, one counsellor, and eight homeroom and subject teachers. Data collection methods included interviews, observations, and document reviews, with data triangulation used to ensure validity. The findings revealed that teachers had limited knowledge of inclusive education, faced time constraints in exploring necessary accommodations, and experienced suboptimal cooperation from parents. School leaders played a key role in guiding the inclusion team to embrace change by offering motivation and inspirational leadership, reinforcing the school's commitment to inclusive education, and facilitating professional development through internal training.</p>	<p>Article History: <i>Submitted/Received 9 Jan 2025</i> <i>First Revised 5 Feb 2024</i> <i>Accepted 16 Feb 2025</i> <i>First Available online 20 Feb 2025</i> <i>Publication Date 20 Feb 2025</i></p> <p>Keyword: Transformational Leadership, Inclusion, Individualized Educational Program</p>
<p>ABSTRAK</p> <p>Pendidikan inklusif sangat penting bagi siswa berkebutuhan khusus, memastikan mereka menerima pendidikan yang disesuaikan dengan profil individu mereka. Untuk mendukung</p>	

kebutuhan ini, diperlukan strategi dan program khusus. Salah satu program tersebut adalah Rencana Pendidikan Individual (IEP), yang saat ini sedang dilaksanakan di sekolah XYZ di Makassar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai pelaksanaan IEP, dan tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam melaksanakannya, menentukan kebutuhan guru, dan mengeksplorasi peran kepemimpinan transformasional dalam pelaksanaan program. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Sepuluh responden dari tim inklusi berpartisipasi, termasuk satu pemimpin, satu konselor, dan delapan guru wali kelas dan mata pelajaran. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara, observasi, dan telaah dokumen, dengan triangulasi data digunakan untuk memastikan validitas. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa guru memiliki pengetahuan terbatas tentang pendidikan inklusif, menghadapi kendala waktu dalam mengeksplorasi akomodasi yang diperlukan, dan mengalami kerja sama yang kurang optimal dari orang tua. Para pemimpin sekolah memainkan peran penting dalam membimbing tim inklusi untuk merangkul perubahan dengan menawarkan motivasi dan kepemimpinan yang inspiratif, memperkuat komitmen sekolah terhadap pendidikan inklusif, dan memfasilitasi pengembangan profesional melalui pelatihan internal.

© 2025 Teknologi Pendidikan UPI

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, every citizen, including children with special needs, has a fundamental right to education. Indonesia's National Education Law (No. 20 of 2003) mandates that education be conducted democratically, fairly, and non-discriminatory, while upholding human rights. Everyone shares the responsibility for education, from the family unit to schools, the wider community, and the government. While the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology reports over 40,000 schools in Indonesia serving students with disabilities (Ihsan, 2024), research suggests a significant gap in service. Usup et al. (2023) estimate a much larger population of children with disabilities (around 2.2 million) than the number currently enrolled in special education or inclusive programs (approximately 270,000 according to 2021 Ministry of Education and Culture data). This discrepancy indicates that only about 12% of children with disabilities are receiving formal education services (Kalalo et al., 2022), highlighting a substantial unmet need.

Fakhiratunnisa (2022) highlights the unique needs of children with special needs, encompassing both physical disabilities (e.g., blindness, deafness) and psychological disabilities (e.g., autism, ADHD). While Kauffman (2018) acknowledges that most children with intellectual disabilities require special education, he points out that intellectual disability is not the most prevalent disability among students needing such services. Learning disabilities and communication disorders are more common. Therefore, special education must address the needs of all children with disabilities impacting their learning and development, including those with learning and communication difficulties, not just those with intellectual disabilities.

The data reveals a significant gap in appropriate educational services for children with special needs. While the Ministry of Education (2021) defines Inclusive Education (IE) as placing children with special needs in mainstream schools alongside their peers, the school where this research took place, XYZ school, although not officially designated as an inclusive school, has begun implementing some IE principles. They accept certain categories of students with special needs, based on the school's resources and teacher capacity. XYZ school's approach reflects key aspects of IE, including equality, meaningfulness, sustainability, and community involvement. Observations at XYZ School reveal that inclusive education implementation is facing challenges. The school's Inclusion Team, comprised of teachers, parents, and special education teachers has not yet been able to fully meet the needs of their special needs learners. A key obstacle is the ineffective implementation of programs like the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The team's limited understanding of inclusive education principles and the technical aspect of the IEP contributes to their difficulty in providing individualized instruction for each student.

The inclusion team has struggled to personalize instruction effectively, highlighting a need for increased teacher training in inclusive education and its practical classroom application. While the implementation process has encompassed planning, execution, and evaluation stages, it hasn't fully adhered to established guidelines, including the Christ-Centered Inclusive Education (CCIE) Policy and Handbook, as well as government regulations. Therefore, this research will investigate the IEP team's comprehension of implementation and explore strategies for improvement. The research entitles " The Role of Transformational Leadership in the Implementation of

Individualized Educational Program (IEP) at XYZ Inclusive School In Makassar” aims to provide guidance for school leaders and also the learning support team to overcome problems in order to be more effective in supporting special needs learners at school. In this context, transformational leadership style is one of the solutions to improve teacher performance in leading learners at school. Northouse (2016, 162) defines transformational leadership as a leadership style or approach that pays close attention to the needs and motivations of its followers and seeks to help them reach their full potential.

Given the preceding background above, the research questions can be formulated as follows: 1) How is the implementation of Individualized Educational Program (IEP) in XYZ school Makassar as a whole?, 2) Why do teachers still experience obstacles in implementing IEP?, and 3) How can transformational leadership play a role in helping (school) leaders and inclusion teams to maximize the implementation of IEP?. The aims of this research are to know the overall implementation of IEP which includes planning, implementation, and assessment, find out the reasons for the difficulties in implementing IEP, and identify transformational leaderships strategies in helping (school) leaders and inclusion teams to maximize the implementation of IEP.

2. METHODS

This qualitative case study aims to analyse and explore the implementation of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) and the influence of transformational leadership on that implementation. Creswell (2013, 97–99) definitively states that case studies are an essential qualitative research approach, allowing researchers to explore the real lives of informants. The research is conducted in one of the private schools on Jl. Gunung Agung 201, Tanjung Bunga namely XYZ Inclusive School. The subjects of this research are teachers, counsellor, and principal who work together as inclusive team.

Data analysis is used to describe data collected from respondent interviews, observations, and the learning process. Data derived from interview scripts, field notes, and documentation is described to provide clarity on the existing reality. Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out before, during, and after fieldwork. In this study, researchers used data analysis techniques based on the Creswell model.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of IEP in XYZ Inclusive School Makassar

The study was conducted on ten respondents, all members of the inclusion team running the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) at XYZ Inclusive School in Makassar. The data was collected using three techniques: interviews with homeroom teachers, counsellors, and subject teachers; observations of students with special needs during various activities; and documentation from the curriculum coordinator and principal. The third data source is documents related to the program's implementation, including the IEP design, student work/LKS results, and photo and video documentation. The XYZ School has a centralized management system, governed by a central foundation located in Jakarta. In the 2024/2025 school year, the IEP has been implemented more rigorously for the past three years or so, following the guidelines established by CCIE (Christ-Centered Inclusive Education) and its instruments. This program has been in practice for several years, predating the advent of the pandemic. However, it must be acknowledged that the program's implementation was not sufficiently thorough and consistent, and the teachers had not received adequate support.

Following data collection via interviews, observations, and document review, the researcher coded and thematically analyzed the data according to Creswell's (2018) methodology. This section presents findings from interviews with principals and teachers, which have been verified with relevant parties for accuracy. From the first theme, the implementation of the IEP begins with the identification of the students' needs. This identification is part of the three stages of IEP implementation, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning, after the teacher identifies the student's needs and informs the parents, the next step is the formation of an inclusion team consisting of teachers, counsellors, principals, parents, and other parties such as therapists and tutors.

After the inclusion team is formed, the next step is to develop the IEP program using a format from the guidelines developed by the head office in the CCIE Policy and Handbook. This format contains a description of the student's development, long-term and short-term goals to be achieved, curriculum taught, forms of accommodation provided, and development suggestions that parents can do. Based on the interviews conducted, it is very important for teachers to understand the meaning of PPI itself. Ms. MJA as a counsellor said:

"The IEP planning process must begin with a common understanding by all members because it is related to a document that must be compiled. They need to know what needs to be written, for example: learning targets, abilities, and what accommodations and modifications are needed."

From the interview results, it can be said that some teachers understand the usefulness of this program and what its purpose is. However, based on the researcher's observations, there are interesting findings in the field related to the IEP format where the filling is not fully uniform between one teacher and another, for example, there is no significant difference between short-term and long-term goals and the form of learning accommodations provided. This is certainly still an obstacle for some teachers. The implementation of IEP is based on the existing format by detailing it in a weekly plan to see the description of activities per week. Based on the observation, teachers provide various accommodations to meet the needs of students, including providing additional time, simplifying instructions, and providing more visual forms of questions. At the end of each semester, the inclusion team conducts a collaborative evaluation meeting. The evaluation results inform the development of the IEP for the following semester. Each teacher reports on the student's progress in their respective subjects, noting strengths, weaknesses, and any observed improvements. The inclusion team leader, typically the counsellor, then communicates these findings to the parents, also outlining ways parents can support their child's learning at home.

The second theme emphasizes the importance of teamwork for successful IEP implementation. All respondents agreed that a dedicated team, the inclusion team, is essential. At XYZ school, this team currently consists of counsellors, the principal, subject teachers, and parents. Interviews revealed that each member has distinct, yet complementary, roles and responsibilities. This team collaborates to execute the agreed-upon program, and effective leadership is crucial to ensure the team functions in alignment with the school's vision and established guidelines. The third theme is about how learning is adjusted in this IEP. Woolfolk (2016, 23) states regarding the level of treatment, children who use IEP need intensive intervention with certain diagnoses, so the curriculum needs to be adjusted. Wexler in the CCIE Handbook (SLH 2022, 46) also adds that only those with academic difficulties that affect academic performance need

this program. The last theme is about school and parent support in implementing IEP. Based on the results of the interviews, most teachers experience obstacles or barriers that require support from the school in its implementation. The obstacles faced by many teachers include: limited time for preparation, no previous background in inclusive education, and inconsistent parental cooperation.

Challenges in IEP Implementation

Teacher interviews revealed a limited understanding of inclusive education practices, particularly in addressing the diverse needs of students with disabilities. This knowledge gap sometimes necessitates the support of shadow teachers in the classroom. With class sizes exceeding 20 students, providing individualized attention is a significant challenge. The need for shadow teachers is supported by the CCIE handbook (SLH, 2022), which emphasizes their role in providing intensive support to develop academic skills and promote independent socialization. Regarding the second theme, teacher training, many respondents expressed a strong desire for specialized training led by experts in fields like therapy, medicine, psychiatry, or psychology. While internal training has been provided, it is considered insufficient and requires reinforcement from external specialists.

As far as the researcher observes, the trainings held by the school have not really answered the needs of teachers because they are still limited to theory. What teachers need more are concrete examples related to learning strategies that are suitable for PDBK so that teachers can directly practice based on the examples given. Indeed, the current obstacle is the team of counsellors who do not have high flying hours in providing training, in addition to the fact that the presenters only learn by themselves, either learning from videos or reading books.

The final theme is program evaluation. The school leader acknowledged the importance of evaluation for program effectiveness. While evaluations are conducted during routine semester meetings, they currently consist only of teacher reports on IEP implementation in their classrooms. A formal evaluation instrument (IEP format) is lacking. A key recommendation for the school is the development of a dedicated instrument, ideally provided by the central office, to objectively measure program effectiveness. This would also provide teachers with clearer guidance on working with children with special needs, providing accommodations, and documenting progress.

The Role of Transformational Leadership

The role of transformational leadership is examined through established theoretical indicators. Korejan and Shahbazi in Panggabean and Idawati (2023, 94) state that transformational leadership refers to leaders who seek to generate new ideas and perspectives to create a path of growth and prosperity for their organizations. By building commitment, passion, and loyalty among managers and staff, they move organizational members to make fundamental changes that prepare the organization to head in a new direction and achieve higher levels of success. Based on existing views, it can be concluded that transformational leadership includes Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The first indicator, idealized influence, emphasizes the leader's responsibility to provide the inclusion team with a clear vision and mission. Interview results overwhelmingly confirm the critical role of leadership in successful inclusive education implementation, particularly the PPI. The leader's guidance and oversight of the inclusion team have contributed to fostering an inclusive culture within the school community. Reinforcing this, Northouse (2016) emphasizes that leaders must serve as strong role models for their

followers, guiding them toward shared goals. Interviews indicate that the leader has consistently worked to cultivate a proper understanding among teachers, especially within the inclusion team, regarding children with special needs, encouraging sincere service based on the belief that these children are created in God's image. In terms of leaders as inspirational motivators, respondents felt that they were grateful for the encouragement or motivation given to them. This can be seen from the leader's efforts to participate directly in the inclusion team, build positive communication, and give trust to run the program without fear of being wrong. Furthermore, regarding intellectual stimulation, the respondents based on the results of the interview said that so far the leaders continue to encourage teachers to continue to want to innovate and be able to solve problems creatively. And when leaders make decisions to jointly implement IEP, teachers are also indirectly challenged to do their part, so that even though there are many limitations, there are still learning moments to equip themselves, for example by looking for the resources needed. Northouse (2016, 265) supports this by saying that leaders with this character will encourage their followers to think independently, especially in solving problems carefully. The last one is individualized consideration where it can be seen from how leaders try to meet the needs of teachers. From the interviews conducted, so far the school through the leaders has shown concern in developing teachers' competencies by providing internal training, providing schedules and support for providing a flexible curriculum, and trying to provide educational facilities and services that support PDBK learning activities.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion carried out, there are several conclusions that researchers formulate with reference to the problem formulation of the research.

a. Implementation of Individual Learning Program (IEP)

The implementation of the Individual Learning Program (IEP) at XYZ Makassar school has thoroughly tried to follow the steps given in the guidelines provided from the center, namely CCIE Policy and Handbook and teachers are struggling and trying to be responsible with the capacity they have. The stages begin with planning, implementation, and semester evaluation as a reference for the next semester. In planning, the inclusion team identifies the needs of students to be used as the basis for developing a program that involves parents, and the program follows the format provided by the Head Office. In its implementation, there are still various difficulties faced by teachers, including: limited understanding of inclusive education, insufficient time to find ideas related to accommodations that need to be provided, and parental cooperation that is still not optimal. Regarding the overall evaluation of the program, it would be better if a special instrument was provided that could help the inclusion team to see how far the program has been implemented.

b. Challenges in PPI Implementation

With reference to the implementation and limitations of the inclusion team, the school needs to accommodate the needs of teachers in handling students with disabilities at the current XYZ Makassar Inclusive School. The constraints faced, such as limited knowledge in handling PDBK, limited time, and unoptimal cooperation between schools and parents, affect the implementation in the field so that some short-term goals are not fully achieved. So the inclusion team really needs the role of the school, among others:

providing more intense training by involving experts who are more qualified in their fields, shadow teachers who can provide assistance in the classroom, cooperation between parents and schools that need to be made special policies to realize their duties and responsibilities, and infrastructure such as sensory rooms for children's learning readiness therapy.

c. **The Role of Transformational Leadership in Helping Inclusive Teams**

So far, the role of transformational leadership in helping the inclusion team implement IEPs has been running and can be seen from the presence of leaders to provide motivation and understanding of inclusive education, especially in accepting children with special needs in the classroom. Transformational leadership is also seen when leaders give teachers the trust to develop programs as long as they are within the right corridor, and leaders continuously remind them of the school's vision of inclusive education so that teachers have empathy for teaching children with various uniqueness. In addition, it is also seen from the school's support by providing internal training with existing counsellors, curriculum flexibility that is adjusted to the needs of students, school facilities that are comfortable for learning, and the provision of tools that can be accessed easily by the inclusion team to assist learning.

5. AUTHORS NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

6. REFERENCES

- Bass, B. M., Riggio, R. E. *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). NK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006.
- Creswell, J.D. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage Publishing, 2018.
- Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2013.
- Dasar, Direktorat Sekolah. *Buku Saku Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusif di Sekolah Dasar*. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2021.
- Ihsan, Dian. Kompas.com. April 2, 2024. <https://www.kompas.com/edu/read/2024/04/02/160427971/kemendikbud-40164-sekolah-di-indonesia-punya-siswa-disabilitas> (accessed November 5, 2024).
- Kalalo, Debie K.R., Henny Nicolin Tambingon, and Viktory Nicodemus Joufree Rotty. "Tingkat Penggunaan Teknologi Informasi dan Dampaknya pada Kreativitas Pembelajaran Guru-guru Sekolah Luar Biasa di Provinsi Sulawesi Utara Indonesia." *Journal on Teacher Education*, 2022: 41- 47.
- Kauffman, J.M., Hallahan, D.P., Pullen, P.C., & Badar, J. *Special Education: What It Is and Why We Need It* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315211831>, 2018.
- Kemendikbud. *Pelaksanaan Program Pendidikan Individual*. Jakarta: Kemendikbud RI, 2022.

- Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi. Panduan Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Inklusif. Jakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan, 2021.
- Khoe, Yao Tung. *Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Kristen: Gaya Kepemimpinan dan Inspirasinya dalam Pendidikan Kristen*. Tangerang: UPH Press, 2024.
- Kompas, Litbang. Kompas. September 16, 2020. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2020/09/16/hak-anak-berkebutuhan-khusus-belum-dipenuhi-optimal/> (accessed November 5, 2024).
- Panggabean, Dedy, and Lusiana Idawati. "Peran Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah dalam Formasi Spiritual Guru Sekolah Menengah di Tangerang." *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* Volume 7 Nomor 2, 2023: 16506-16515.
- Sahin, H. " The development of individualized educational program in Turkey IEP applications." *Procediasocial Behavioral Science*, 2012: 46: 5030 - 5034.
- SLH, SDH -, et al. *CCIE Policy Handbook*. Jakarta: SDH-SLH, 2022.
- Usup, Sumiany Mia Madi, Santi Hataul, and Cahyani Satiawati. "Pengaruh Teman Sejawat Terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus." *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 2023: 196 - 197.
- Woolfolk, A. *Educational Psychology* edisi 13. New York: Pearson, 2016.