## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND STUDENT SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

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### Rina Wijayanti \*1

Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang rinawijayantipsi@unikama.ac.id

#### Irda Suriani

UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan irdasuriani@uinsyahada.ac.id

#### Abstract

Inclusive education is an approach to the education system that aims to bring students with special nee <u>ds</u> and other students together in the same learning environment. It advocates for modifications in curriculum, teaching methods and school facilities to meet the diverse needs of all students. In essence, inclusive education seeks to create equal learning opportunities for every student, respecting differences and integrating support that enables each individual to reach their potential. The study conducted in this research used the literature research method. The results show that schools that successfully implement inclusive programs tend to have strong governance, support continuous professional development for teachers and involve active collaboration between school, home and community. The findings also confirm that effective implementation of inclusive education not only helps students with special needs but also reinforces the values of inclusiveness within the school community thus fostering a more harmonious and productive learning environment.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education policy, school management, student special needs services

#### Introduction

Education is a right for every individual, including those with special needs. Based on this universal principle, the concept of inclusive education emerged as a solution to ensure that all children, without exception, can get a quality education in the same environment (Sitopu et al., 2024); (Guna et al., 2024). The concept promotes settings where students with and without special needs learn together in one conducive environment.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Correspondence author.

Inclusive education is an approach in the education system that aims to bring together students with special needs and students without special needs in the same learning environment. The concept focuses on providing equal opportunities for all students to gain access to curricula, learning methods, facilities and educational resources, without differentiating based on ability, need or background (Ackerman-Barger et al., 2020). This approach emphasizes the importance of adaptations and modifications in the education system in order to respond to the diverse needs of all students, so that each individual can develop optimally and feel accepted in their educational community (Agaton & Cueto, 2021).

In the context of modern education, inclusive education plays a significant role in realizing educational equality for all individuals. This concept is an important foundation in adapting an education system that can respond to the diverse needs of each student, so that educational equity is no longer a neglected issue (Hairiyanto et al., 2024); (Tubagus et al., 2023). Inclusive education encourages the creation of a conducive learning environment for all, regardless of differences in physical, mental, social abilities or economic conditions (Agran et al., 2020). Thus, inclusive education is a solution to address the demands of the times that require every individual to have equal opportunities to develop and contribute to society. This spirit of inclusiveness is in line with the sustainable development goals that prioritize inclusion and equality as the main foundation in every aspect of life, including education (Ainscow, 2020).

Furthermore, inclusive education also has a significant impact on the dynamics of teaching and learning in schools. Teachers and educators are invited to innovate and adapt learning methods that meet the needs of diverse students, making the learning process more dynamic and comprehensive (Andrews et al., 2021). In addition, interactions between students with different backgrounds support better character building and social skills, such as empathy, tolerance and cooperation. This approach not only benefits students with special needs but also enriches the learning experience for all students, preparing them to become members of society who are able to appreciate diversity and work together with others from different backgrounds (Artiles et al., 2021). As such, inclusive education is not only relevant but also necessary in a modern educational context that seeks to create an inclusive and sustainable future generation.

However, the implementation of inclusive education policies in the field is often faced with various challenges, both in terms of infrastructure, human resources and the mental readiness of the school community. In this case, school management plays an important role in strategizing and facilitating the special needs of each student so that the principle of inclusiveness can be effectively implemented (Azorín & Ainscow, 2020).

In recent decades, many countries have introduced inclusive education policies in their national curriculum. However, not all schools have successfully

implemented it. There are gaps in understanding, attitudes and skills between schools in implementing inclusive education (Baglieri, 2022). Problems include the lack of training for teachers on how to teach in inclusive classrooms, limited resources and the availability of supportive infrastructure (Baltodano, 2023).

A review of the literature on inclusive education policy, school management and special needs services is needed to understand the various dimensions of this issue. Through this review, it is hoped that factors contributing to the success or failure of inclusive education implementation can be identified and strategies and solutions found that can be applied to optimize school management and services for students with special needs.

With a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, strategies and best practices in implementing inclusive education policies, policy makers, school administrators, teachers and education activists can work together to create a truly inclusive learning environment where every student can learn and develop according to their potential.

#### Research Methods

The study conducted in this research uses the literature research method. The literature research method is a systematic approach to collecting, reviewing, and analyzing publications relevant to a particular topic. The main purpose of literature research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic under study through synthetizing existing information. (Abdussamad, 2022); (Nguyen et al., 2024).

# Results and Discussion Theory of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is an approach to the education system that ensures all students, regardless of ability, disability, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, language or other factors, have equal opportunities to learn, develop and reach their maximum potential in a supportive and inclusive learning environment. This approach is based on the values of equality and diversity, providing quality education that is accessible to all students in the same learning environment (Beninghof, 2020). Inclusive education targets not only students with special needs but also all students to ensure they benefit from diverse and rich learning experiences in a supportive environment (Billingsley et al., 2020).

The main principles of inclusive education include recognizing student diversity as normal and enhancing the value of learning, respecting and valuing individual differences, equal learning opportunities for all students, and adapting the learning environment to meet the various needs of students in both academic and social-emotional aspects (Boyle et al., 2020). Inclusive education also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between teachers, parents and communities to support

each child's learning needs. Thus, inclusive education aims to build a more equitable education system and promote social inclusion for all students, ensuring they are not only accepted but also valued and able to contribute fully in society (Bradley, 2021).

Inclusive education models can vary based on their approach and implementation in the education system. One common model is the inclusive classroom, where students with and without special needs learn together in the same classroom. In this model, teachers generally receive additional support from specialists, such as special educators or therapists, to meet the diverse needs of students (Bunbury, 2020). Classroom settings are usually designed to support collaborative and participatory learning, with an emphasis on modifying the curriculum and adapting teaching methods to make them accessible to all students. Individualized approaches to teaching and assessment mark this inclusive model, allowing students to succeed according to their capacities (Burbules et al., 2020).

Another model of inclusive education involves using specialized schools or classrooms as resource centers, offering specialized support for students with more specific needs. This model sometimes refers to centers for early intervention or support services that help students gain certain skills necessary for success in regular inclusive settings (Burden, 2020). All of these approaches are guided by the principle that students should participate in the same educational experiences as their peers as much as possible. Transition phases and professional development programs for educators are therefore critical components in the implementation of an inclusive education model, ensuring that the education system as a whole adapts to support the needs of each student (Campbell, 2021).

#### **Inclusive School Management**

Inclusive school management requires a holistic and integrated approach that ensures all aspects of the school environment support inclusion and learning for all students (Chan, 2023). It is not just about providing specialized resources or support for students with special needs, but also about creating a school culture that accepts diversity as a richness and promotes respect and acceptance of differences among all members of the school community. This approach includes developing inclusive policies, careful planning and implementing culturally and pedagogically responsive learning practices (Chen et al., 2020).

Engagement and collaboration with families and communities is crucial in inclusive school management. Families are key partners in education, and cooperation between schools and families can strengthen support for students, especially for those with special needs (DeMatthews et al., 2021). Schools should strive to be welcoming community centers, where information and resources can be shared, and everyone feels they have a voice in the educational process. Arrangements such as regular meetings with parents, community forums and

collaborative programs with local organizations can increase community involvement and encourage wider support for inclusive programs (Demchenko et al., 2021).

On the resource management side, inclusive schools need effective strategies to allocate and utilize resources efficiently to support all students. This includes teacher recruitment and capacity building, selection and adaptation of learning materials, and the design and use of flexible and accessible classrooms (Dube, 2020). Professional development is crucial, where teachers and other education staff are trained in inclusive education, differentiated learning strategies and early intervention techniques. A focus on continuous improvement helps schools identify areas for improvement and implement innovative solutions (Ferri et al., 2020).

Finally, evaluation and measurement of success is an important component of inclusive school management. This includes not only the academic assessment of students, but also the evaluation of the learning environment, attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion, and the effectiveness of special education programs (Finkelstein et al., 2021). With the collected data and feedback, schools can make adjustments to their programs and practices to better meet the needs of students and promote success for all. A continuous improvement cycle approach, where assessment is used to inform and guide school development, is key in realizing the vision of effective inclusive education (Florian & Camedda, 2020).

#### **Services for Students' Special Needs**

The types of services for students with special needs vary depending on the spectrum of the individual's needs. Services may include special education support in regular classrooms, where curriculum modifications and differentiated teaching techniques are applied. There are also physical, occupational and speech therapies designed to help students overcome physical or communication barriers (Francisco et al., 2020). For behavioral or emotional needs, services may include counseling or behavioral therapy by school psychologists or other professionals. In addition, assistive technology provides tools that support learning and access to information. Early intervention education programs are also very important to identify and address possible learning barriers early on. All these services should be coordinated in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP), which specifically outlines the goals, educational strategies and supports needed by the student (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022).

The integration of specialized services in the regular curriculum involves an inclusive approach where all students, including those with special needs, follow the same school curriculum with appropriate support and adaptations. This includes the use of differentiated learning strategies by teachers, where they customize instruction to meet the different learning styles, comprehension levels, and learning

speeds of students (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2022). The application of assistive technology, such as reading and writing software or hearing devices, enables students with physical or learning disabilities to access and participate in the subject matter. Collaboration between regular teachers and special education specialists is also important, where students' individualized education plans (IEPs) are developed and implemented. Integration also includes flexible classroom arrangements, making the classroom a welcoming and accessible place for all students. The goal is to create an educational environment that encourages all students to pursue their full academic potential, while ensuring they receive the support they need to succeed (Johnson & Seaton, 2020).

Cooperation with parents and the community plays a vital role in creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment. Involving parents in the educational process helps to ensure that students receive consistent support both at school and at home, allowing for the implementation of coordinated educational strategies (Jones & Jones, 2020). Parents can contribute by providing important information about their child's needs and preferences, as well as by supporting the implementation of individualized education programs. Schools can also increase community engagement through collaboration with local organizations, health services and other educational institutions, to access additional resources and specialist support. Such partnerships not only enrich students' learning experiences through extracurricular programs and activities but also help in building awareness and acceptance of diversity within the community (Kumar et al., 2021). Through open dialogue, regular meetings and joint initiatives, collaboration between schools, parents and communities contributes to the creation of an environment that supports all students to develop fully (Kuyini et al., 2020).

The conclusion of the discussion on inclusive education and special education services emphasizes the importance of adaptation, integration and cooperation in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students. The integration of specialized services in the regular curriculum along with the application of assistive technology and differentiated learning strategies enable students with special needs to access subject matter and participate fully in the learning experience. Close cooperation between schools, parents and communities is key in ensuring consistent support and effective educational strategies for students, thus creating a base for the development of their full potential. Awareness and concerted efforts to promote inclusivity and acceptance of diversity within the educational environment not only help students with special needs but also enrich the experience of the school community as a whole, fostering personal and academic growth for every student.

#### Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy

Implementing an inclusive education policy is a multidimensional process that requires a shared commitment from various stakeholders in the education system. The first step in this implementation is the development of a clear strategic framework, which includes teacher training on inclusivity, curriculum revision to ensure accessibility for all students and support for individualized learning (Lambert, 2020). It also includes investment in educational resources, such as assistive technology, as well as the establishment of student support teams to help with special needs. Early identification of student needs and prompt intervention are key elements to ensure that all students can enjoy the benefits of inclusive education (Letzel et al., 2020).

Furthermore, engagement and cooperation with parents and communities is crucial in the implementation of inclusive education policies. Building effective communication bridges between school and home is important to ensure that support for students continues beyond the classroom. Schools should strive to instill inclusive awareness within the community through joint activities and initiatives that celebrate diversity and promote understanding. Through this collaborative approach, schools and communities can work together in supporting the learning, physical, social and emotional needs of each student (Lieberman et al., 2024).

Finally, regular evaluation and review of inclusive policies and practices is critical to ensure that the strategies implemented are effective and responsive to the changing needs of the student population. This includes using data and feedback from teachers, students and parents to inform and improve education policies (Lindner & Schwab, 2020). Policy adaptations and adjustments should be made with the aim of creating a truly inclusive learning environment and encouraging all students to reach their potential. Successful implementation of inclusive education policies requires a holistic, flexible and student-centered approach, placing their needs and rights in every aspect of education (McClellan & Kiyama, 2023).

The conclusion of the discussion on the suitability of education policies to the needs of student diversity and the implementation of inclusive education policies is that inclusive education is a holistic and necessary approach to addressing diversity in educational contexts. Policies should be proactively designed to recognize and support the varied needs of students, including those with special learning needs, diverse cultural backgrounds and differences in economic capacity. Implementing these policies requires cooperation and commitment from all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students and communities. Training for educators, adequate resources and effective communication are key factors for successful inclusive education. Continuous exploration and adjustment of educational practices are needed to respond to the dynamic needs of students, thus creating a learning

environment that respects differences, provides equal opportunities and allows each student to flourish according to his or her own potential.

#### **School Organization Management**

Adapting schools to inclusive education policies requires a series of changes in both mentality and physical structure and curriculum. This starts with developing awareness and a deep understanding of what inclusive education is among all school staff. Schools should adopt inclusive values, ensuring that they are reflected in the school's mission, vision and values (Zhang et al., 2022). In terms of structural, adaptations may include improving physical facilities to ensure accessibility for students with special needs, such as the creation of ramps for wheelchairs, accessible toilets, and labels in uppercase or Braille. Beyond the physical aspects, curriculum changes to include more inclusive materials and the development of teaching tactics that can adapt to students' diverse ways of learning are also vital (Zeeshan et al., 2022). These adaptations aim to create a supportive learning environment where all students feel accepted, valued and have equal opportunities to learn and grow (Winter et al., 2021).

In addition to internal changes, schools also need to strengthen cooperation with parents, community organizations and other supporting institutions to effectively implement inclusive education. Initiatives such as training for parents and caregivers on involvement in inclusive teaching and how to best support learning at home can improve education outcomes (Wilson et al., 2020). Schools can also work with specialists such as therapists, counselors and educational researchers to enrich resources and expertise in supporting students with special needs. Through close collaboration between schools and their communities, adaptation of inclusive education policies becomes a dynamic ongoing process, responding to the real needs of students and ensuring high quality learning for all (Weidman & DeAngelo, 2020).

Inclusive school management faces a distinctive set of challenges, ranging from mentality to logistical issues. One of the biggest challenges is raising awareness and understanding of the importance of inclusive education both among teaching staff and within the wider school community (Vincent-Lancrin & Vlies, 2020). Stigma and prejudice against people with disabilities and other differences often persist, creating significant social barriers to the full integration of students with special needs. In addition, another significant challenge is the capacity building of teachers to be able to teach in heterogeneous classrooms. Teachers need to be equipped with flexible teaching strategies and methods to be able to adapt to the various learning needs of students, which requires continuous professional training and adequate support (Tull et al., 2023).

In terms of resources, ensuring that schools have adequate facilities and equipment to support the needs of all students is also an important challenge. This

includes learning resources that are accessible to students with different types of special needs, from assistive technology to modified learning materials (Tohara, 2021). Limited budgets can make it difficult for schools to provide such resources. Furthermore, integrating students with special needs into mainstream learning environments also poses challenges in balancing inclusive teaching with high academic standards. This demands a comprehensive and responsive management approach, able to navigate the complexities between propriety and excellence and ensure that every student gets a quality education that enables them to thrive (Thomas & Loxley, 2022).

## **Services for Students with Special Needs**

Services for students with special needs in inclusive schools involve a variety of strategies and approaches designed to ensure that all students can access quality education on par with their peers. These services begin with a thorough individualized evaluation and assessment to identify the specific needs of each student (Taylor et al., 2020). This process often involves a multidisciplinary team consisting of teachers, parents and other professionals such as psychologists, occupational therapists and special education specialists. Once needs are identified, schools can create an individualized education plan (IEP) or individualized development plan (IDP) that tailors learning approaches and resources to support the academic and social growth of the student (Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2021).

One of the key services in inclusive education is the customization of curriculum and teaching methods. This may include the use of assistive technology, alternative learning materials, or differentiated teaching strategies that allow students with different abilities and learning styles to participate fully in the classroom (Stenman & Pettersson, 2020). For students who experience difficulties in traditional learning environments, services may include one-on-one or small-group support, enriched learning sessions, and specialized therapies according to their needs. The use of technology in the classroom, such as tablets equipped with specialized educational apps, can greatly improve the accessibility and engagement of students with special needs in the learning process (Shotton et al., 2023).

Beyond the academic environment, students with special needs also receive support to develop social and emotional skills, as well as independence. This may include extracurricular activities designed for inclusion, group or individual counseling, and special education related to life skills (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Collaboration with parents and caregivers is key to ensuring that support for students happens not only at school, but also at home and in the community. Through this comprehensive and holistic approach, services for students with special needs seek to not only address barriers to learning, but also strengthen students' confidence and skills to participate actively and meaningfully in society (Shaturaev, 2021).

Through the joint efforts of schools, families, and communities, services for students with special needs can create a supportive environment where every student is given the opportunity to reach their potential. Effective communication and close cooperation between all parties involved are key factors in the successful implementation of the various services mentioned (Schwartz & Rothbart, 2020). In this way, professional development for teachers and staff, provision of adequate resources, and fostering positive relationships with students and parents all contribute to building an educational ecosystem that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children (Savolainen et al., 2022).

In conclusion, catering for students with special needs in inclusive school settings requires a holistic, flexible and student-centered approach to achieve success. This involves not only customized academic settings but also support for students' emotional and social development. When schools manage to implement these services effectively, they not only help students with special needs to thrive but also enrich the school community as a whole by promoting diversity, empathy and inclusion. In the long run, these efforts help shape a more inclusive society, where every individual, regardless of their special needs, has equal opportunities to contribute and thrive.

#### Conclusion

Services for students with special needs in inclusive education require an integrated and comprehensive approach that involves adjusting the curriculum, teaching methods and providing emotional and social support. Thorough individualized evaluations and assessments help in designing education plans that are tailored to each student's needs, involve the use of assistive technology, and differentiate teaching approaches. These adjustments are intended to accommodate different learning styles and paces, so that all students can participate and enjoy the same learning process.

Support for students with special needs also includes the development of social and independent living skills, with the goal of full integration in the academic and non-academic aspects of the school. Inclusive extracurricular programs, counseling and special education in life skills are essential in this process. Collaboration between school, family and community emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to support students' growth in various aspects of life, creating a more inclusive future and enriching the entire educational community with values of diversity and empathy.

As a result, effective implementation of inclusive services not only helps students with special needs reach their potential but also reinforces the value of inclusiveness within the school community. The key to successful inclusion lies in effective communication, adequate resources and professional preparation, all of

which contribute to building a supportive and interactive learning environment for all students. As such, inclusive education is an important bridge towards building a more inclusive society that values diversity.

The findings imply that school management must adapt to a more inclusive and collaborative approach in their policy settings and practices. This involves changes in teacher training, resource allocation and communication strategies to ensure that all students, especially those with special needs, get the support they need to succeed. School management needs to work closely with all stakeholders, including teachers, parents and special service providers, to integrate effective services and interventions into school routines, promoting a more inclusive and empathetic environment that actively recognizes and values diversity among students.

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