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## **INCLUSIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

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### **Abstract:**

The background of this study is to dive deeper into the management of inclusive schools as well as to understand how school management programs can be effectively implemented and their impact on the learning quality of children with learning difficulties. This study aims to describe and analyze how the management process in inclusive schools can help improve the learning quality of children with learning difficulties. The method used in this study is qualitative research with a literature study approach. The results of this study indicate that inclusive schools are institutions that provide educational services for all students, including those with special needs, in the same learning environment. Inclusive schools aim to provide opportunities for children with special needs to optimize their respective potentials through a quality learning process. To achieve this goal, there is a need for effective implementation of inclusive school management. The implementation of inclusive school management has an impact on the learning quality of students with learning difficulties.

**Keywords:** School Management, Inclusive School, Learning Disability

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Everyone has the right to receive education regardless of social, physical or cognitive background. This is stated in Article 31 Paragraph 1 of the Constitution, which states that "Every citizen has the right to education" (Saija & Simatauw, 2020). This statement was then reaffirmed in Law no. 20 of 2003, Article 5, which reads, "Every citizen has the same right to receive education, and citizens who have physical, emotional, intellectual, mental and/or social disabilities have the right to receive special education" (Yuantini, 2019).

Inclusive schools are a form of the Indonesian government's commitment to facilitating more equitable and fair education for all children, including Children with Special Needs (ABK). According to Stainback (1990), an inclusive school is a school that accommodates all students in the same class. Inclusive schools provide educational program services that are tailored to the needs of all students, including students with special needs. The basic principle in inclusive schools is that as long as possible, all children should learn together regardless of their differences and difficulties (Lattu, 2018).

The concept of inclusive schools was introduced in Indonesia in 2000 and is regulated in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Then, in 2009, the government issued Minister of National Education Regulation No. 70, which regulates the implementation of inclusive education at the primary and secondary education levels. The implementation of inclusive schools aims to provide opportunities for children with special needs (ABK) to optimize their respective potential through a quality learning process (Abdussamad & Muhtar, 2023).

One of the categories of students with special needs is children with learning difficulties. Learning disability is a condition where individuals have difficulty digesting lesson material as they

should and can even experience difficulty mastering basic life skills (Purboyo Solek, 2015). Based on KEMENDIKBUD RISTEK's Guide to Implementing Inclusive Education (2022), in general, students with learning difficulties can be divided into two. First, those related to development (developmental learning disabilities) include motor and perception disorders, language and communication, memory and social behaviour. Second, those related to academics (reading, writing and arithmetic). Students with this condition can follow the standard curriculum but must make adjustments (adapted curriculum).

To achieve optimal learning quality, good and effective inclusive school management is needed. Management or school management determines the success of achieving quality and the quality of a school. Management in inclusive schools acts as a pathway to facilitate achieving the vision and mission of school institutions, starting from the planning, organizing, actuating, controlling and evaluating stages (Bahri & Arafah, 2020). By carrying out good school management, schools will be able to create better programs because the resources owned by the school can be optimally processed according to student needs (Ridwan, 2018; Matwaya & Zahro, 2020)

However, in practice, inclusive school management in Indonesia is still faced with various obstacles, such as a workforce that does not have sufficient capabilities in teaching ABK (teacher competency), a lack of classroom assistant teachers (appropriate human resources), schools not being ready to run inclusive programs, the process of Teaching and learning activities are not running optimally, there are too many students in one class. There is intimidation of ABK by their classmates (Tarnoto, 2016). Apart from that, there are also problems with the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure and weak collaboration between related parties (teachers, experts, schools, parents, and government). All of these problems can certainly hinder the learning process and quality of children with learning difficulties at school.

People learn through the process of learning. Teachers and other education professionals, whose aim is to make learning easy and enjoyable for learners, are essential to obtaining high-quality education (Teguh, 2019). According to Innayah (2020) learning quality can be defined as the degree to which teachers, students, curriculum, media, facilities, and learning systems work together in a systemic and synergistic way to produce the best possible learning outcomes and processes that meet curriculum requirements. Process and outcome are two ways to assess the quality of learning. When it comes to the educational process, it is considered successful when learners, or the majority of them, are able to actively participate in it on a physical, mental, and social level. Learners have a strong sense of enthusiasm and confidence in themselves, as well as a strong desire to study. Meanwhile, if there is a positive shift in the behaviour of children, the learning process is considered successful (Vera, 2020).

The quality of student learning can be seen from the student learning culture at school. Learning culture is how students cultivate learning within themselves. Cultivating learning is stating in their attitudes and actions that learning is their need and students desire to continue to change for the better and improve themselves. Learning culture is an environmental management effort that contributes 30% to student learning outcomes (Kholis, 2022).

Inclusive schools have a learning culture where all students are taught to understand and appreciate human differences. Learning support from all school components, especially from peers, is the main factor in learning strategies to develop the potential of children with learning difficulties (Fitriyani et al., 2019). It is hoped that a collaborative learning culture like this can build students' character traits related to morals, which can foster affection between friends, tolerance and helping each other.

Based on the background above, researchers are interested in studying more deeply inclusive school management to find out how school management programs can be implemented effectively and their impact on improving the quality of learning for children with learning difficulties. With a better

understanding of how inclusive schools are managed, it is hoped that it can help design more effective strategies in supporting the learning of children with learning difficulties at school.

## **METHOD**

This study aims to explain and examine the inclusive school management process and its role in improving the quality of learning for children with learning difficulties. This study uses qualitative research methods with a literature study approach. The data sources and analytical references used in this study come from various scientific article references such as journals, textbooks and statutory regulations that are relevant to the topic to be discussed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Inclusive School Management**

The English word "inclusion," which signifies unification, is where the word "inclusive" comes. The phrase "inclusive education," which originally appeared by UNESCO, is derived from the phrase "education for all," which refers to education that is accessible to all and takes an all-inclusive approach. Children with moderate, severe, and mild disabilities are fully integrated into regular courses through inclusive education (At-Taubany, 2022). Therefore, inclusive education, as a method of delivering education, gives all children with disabilities and potential for special intelligence the chance to learn among their peers in ordinary classrooms or schools.

An almost identical definition was put forward by Eggen and Kauchak (2004) in (Ariani, 2019), explaining that inclusive education is a service for children with special needs (ABK) with a comprehensive learning approach and implemented systematically, totally and coordinated. More details concerning inclusive education are provided in Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009, Article 1. This article defines inclusive education as an educational delivery system that gives all students the chance to participate in education or learning in an environment along with other students, including those with disabilities and those who are potentially intelligent or have special talents. Education is provided by providing facilities and infrastructure, educators, educational staff and a curriculum that is tailored to the individual needs of students.

Based on these various definitions, it can be concluded that inclusive education is an education system that provides educational services tailored to the needs of all students, including students with special needs, in the same learning environment.

In Indonesia itself, the number of inclusive schools continues to increase from year to year. Based on basic education data (Dapodik), as of December 2022, as many as 40,928 schools have implemented inclusive education at the elementary school (SD), junior high school (SMP), senior high school (SMA), and state and vocational high school (SMK) levels. Private. Of the total number of educational units, as many as 135,946 students with special needs have carried out learning in them (Budiono & Yeriesca, 2011). This data shows an increase from the previous year. Based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture's Dapodik in 2019, Indonesia has 29,317 inclusive schools at the elementary, middle school, high school and vocational school levels (Wibowo & Prihatin, 2020).

In order to achieve the implementation of education that respects diversity and is not discriminatory for all students, inclusive schools are designed to give all students, whether they have physical, emotional, mental, or social disabilities or the potential to be intelligent and gifted, the widest range of opportunities to receive a quality education tailored to their needs and abilities (Baiti et al., 2021).

To realize this goal, it is necessary to implement good, inclusive school management. School management is a series of processes for managing school resources based on management functions, namely through planning, organizing, implementing and controlling activities to achieve school goals effectively. Therefore, it can be interpreted that inclusive school management is the implementation of management functions and aspects in schools providing inclusive education (Yusuf, 2019). The functions in question are the functions of planning, organizing, implementing and controlling.

Inclusive school management includes institutional management, curriculum and learning management, student management, facilities and infrastructure management, employment management (HR), financial management, and management of school relations with the community. The processes carried out in inclusive school management include planning, organizing, managing and evaluating. Determining goals and formulating and managing the utilization of humans, finances, methods, equipment and all existing resources for the effective achievement of goals is carried out at the planning stage. Then, the distribution of tasks to each member of the school is regulated in the organizing stage. Activities at the management stage include leadership, implementation of supervision, and management of school and community relations. After that, evaluation activities are carried out, namely to assess whether all the activities carried out have achieved the stated objectives. Through evaluation activities, the sustainability of the program and the obstacles faced will also be known, and then the results of the evaluation can be used to formulate strategies for the next program improvement.

### **Children with Learning Difficulties**

A disorder in one or more fundamental psychological processes, such as the comprehension and application of spoken or written language, is known as a specific learning disability. Imperfections in speech, reading, writing, spelling, math, listening, and thinking are some ways this issue might appear. These limitations cover ailments such as developing aphasia, dyslexia, brain trauma, and perceptual disorders. This limitation excludes children with learning disabilities whose primary cause is a barrier related to their hearing, vision, or motor function; intellectual disabilities resulting from emotional disorders; or environmental, cultural, or financial poverty (Supriatna & Ediyanto, 2021; Onwubiko, 2022).

Apart from that, according to NJCLD (*The National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities*) what is meant by learning difficulties is a generic limitation that refers to a group of difficulties which are manifested in the form of real (*significant*) difficulties in the ability to listen, converse, read, write, reasoning or ability in mathematics. ACALD (*The Association of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities*) states that learning difficulties not only affect children when they are school age but also affect them into adulthood.

Particular learning difficulties manifest as a true disability in individuals with average to superior intelligence, a good sensory system, and adequate learning opportunities. The manifestation and degree of these illnesses vary. Throughout life, this illness may impact socialization, employment, education, self-esteem, and daily activities.

The different definitions of learning difficulties lead to the conclusion that children with learning difficulties are people who suffer from neurological disorders, central nervous system dysfunction, or disturbances in basic psychological processes, which manifest as real failures in comprehension, listening, reading, speaking, spelling, thinking, writing, arithmetic, or social skills. These difficulties do not come from mental retardation, emotional disorders, hearing problems, vision problems because of poverty, environment, culture, economics or mistakes in learning methods made by teachers. Children with learning difficulties cannot be equated with mental retardation, emotional disorders, visual impairments, hearing impairments or poverty and social culture (Wardhani, 2023).

Learning difficulties can be experienced by anyone, both students with average intelligence and students with high intelligence. Learning difficulties can have an impact not only on aspects of academic achievement but also on aspects of personality development. Learning difficulties can be handled with an integrated professional approach.

The following are the characteristics of children with learning difficulties:

1. Suspected brain dysfunction
2. Having normal and even superior intelligence but achieving learning achievements that are much lower than his intelligence capacity.
3. Children may only have difficulty learning in certain areas but are quite superior in other areas.

Children who experience learning difficulties in certain areas are called specific learning *disabilities*. People who have specific learning difficulties in the area of reading are called dyslexics. People who have learning difficulties in writing are called dysphagia, while those who have learning difficulties in counting are called dyscalculia (Supriatna & Ediyanto, 2021).

Broadly speaking, learning difficulties can be classified into 2 types, namely:

- a) Learning difficulties related to development ( *developmental disabilities* ) or preacademic learning difficulties ( *preacademic learning disabilities* ).

There are 4 types of learning difficulties related to development, namely:

1. Difficulty in language
2. Difficulty in adjusting social and emotional behavior
3. Perceptual disorders
4. Cognitive impairment

- b) Academic learning disabilities ( *academic learning disabilities* )

Academic learning difficulties lead to failure to achieve academic achievement in accordance with the expected capacity. These failures include:

1. Reading skills (dyslexia)
  - Difficulty distinguishing shapes.
  - The ability to understand reading content is low.
  - Often make mistakes in reading.
2. Writing skills (dysphagia)
  - Very slow at copying writing.
  - Often incorrectly write the letters b with p, p with q, v with u, 2 with 5, 6 with 9 and so on.
  - The resulting writing is poor and illegible.
  - Write the letters in reverse position (p is written with q or b).
3. Math/numeracy skills (dyscalculia)
  - It is difficult to distinguish between the signs: +, -, x, :, >, <, =.
  - Difficult to operate counting/numbers.
  - Often incorrectly said sequentially.
  - Often people confuse the numbers 9 with 6, 17 with 71, 2 with 5, 3 with 8 and so on.
  - Difficult to distinguish geometric shapes.

Academic difficulties in general can be easily identified by teachers and parents when children cannot demonstrate one or more academic abilities. Their research shows that there are many factors that can influence learning difficulties. Factors that cause learning difficulties can also cause other conditions of disability such as mental retardation and emotional disorders. Causes of learning difficulties include:

1. Genetic factors
2. Brain injury caused by physical trauma or lack of oxygen before, during or after birth.
3. Biochemicals are missing, for example chemicals needed to function the central nervous system.
4. Biochemicals given to children include dyes
5. Environmental pollution, for example lead pollution, and psychological and social influences, for example differences in cultural background, inappropriate learning and parental poverty.

Of the various causes of learning difficulties above, there is not a single cause that can be considered the main cause. These factors are interrelated with each other which can cause a disability. To identify children who are called children with special needs can be done in two ways as follows:

a) Simple way

By using a check list based on the characteristics of ABK mentioned above, teachers or parents can carry out observations, interviews, assignments or simple tests on children. If signs like those above are found then the child can be indicated as a child with special needs.

b) Professional way

This method is carried out by competent personnel in their fields such as doctors, psychologists, therapists, etc. The test is carried out using standardized test equipment and the results of the examination can determine whether a person has certain disorders, including ABK or not ABK. Therefore, inclusive schools need to collaborate with other parties who are competent in their fields to optimize services for ABK.

### **Learning Quality**

Learning is synonymous with the word teaching which comes from the basic word "*ajar*" which means instructions given to people so that they know (follow) plus the prefix "*pe*" and the suffix "*an*" becomes "*pembelajaran*" in bahasa which means the process, action, way of teaching or teach so that students want to learn. Learning is the process of student interaction with educators and learning resources in a learning environment. Learning is assistance provided by educators so that the process of acquiring science and knowledge, mastering skills and habits, as well as forming attitudes and beliefs in students can occur. In other words, learning is a process to help students learn well.

The student learning culture referred to in this research is how students cultivate learning within themselves. Cultivating learning in this sense means stating in their attitudes and actions that learning is their need. Thus, this also states that students want to continue (changing) to be better and improve themselves. This research, as will be seen, will map indicators of student learning culture and their causes. In other subsections, this research, as will be seen, will also describe the supporting factors for this.

Based on these key words, it can be concluded that learning is an individual activity in gathering facts that leads to better mental changes. Learning is an environmental management activity to bring individual conditions towards learning activities. Teaching is an interactive activity of student subjects in transferring knowledge and values in the context of instilling cultural values in students' objects.

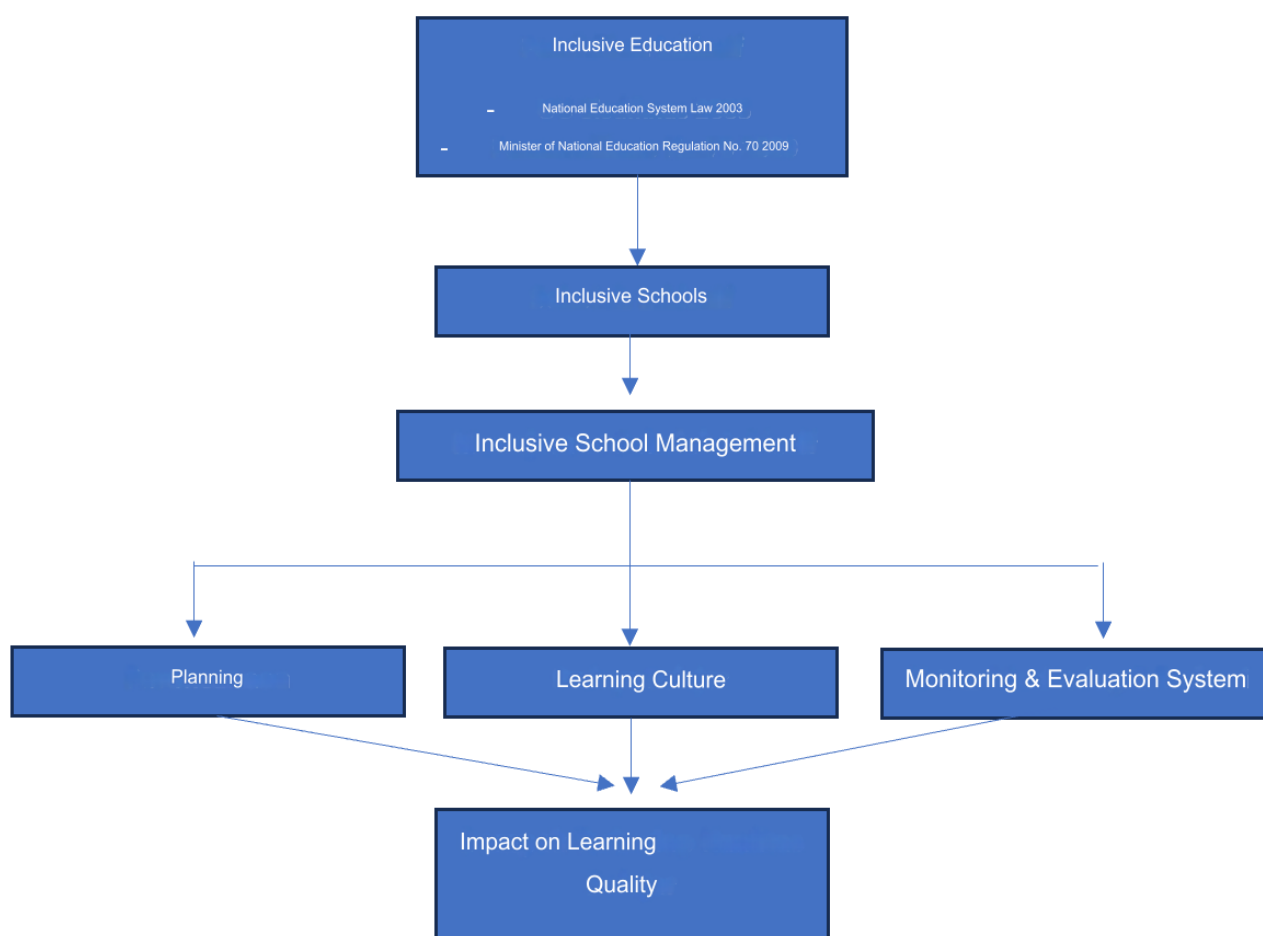
Inclusive schools not only need to change the physical shape of the room in the classroom, but teachers need to modify teaching methods to suit students with difficulties in the class. In learning activities, teachers must adapt learning materials, methods and tools, so that students with learning difficulties can participate in the learning process in class together with other students. This can be realized if the inclusive school management process is carried out well.

The process of implementing inclusive school management which is not yet optimal has an impact on the student learning process, resulting in program products that are less than optimal, namely in terms of the development of cognitive aspects and self-development abilities that are not up to standard.

However, the program product, namely the development of social attitudes, is in accordance with standards and is an aspect that develops more optimally than cognitive aspects and self-development abilities (Ariani, 2019).

In line with the results of this research, Novianti (2019) also stated that implementing inclusive education can expand access to education for all groups, including children with special needs. By implementing a collaborative, inclusive school culture, children with special needs can experience normal education and develop their potential and talents. To be able to create a supportive learning culture, an optimal school management strategy is needed.

Based on the discussion above, the role of school management in the quality of learning for children with learning difficulties can be seen in the following chart:



**Figure 1. Role of Inclusive School Management**

## **CONCLUSION**

Every individual has fundamental rights, one of which is to obtain education regardless of social, political or cognitive background as stated in the Indonesian Constitution which is organized in the form of inclusive schools. The implementation of inclusive schools aims to provide the widest possible opportunities for students with various needs to be able to develop their potential without discrimination. To achieve this goal, inclusive school management is key because it includes various functions and aspects of management which include planning, organizing, managing and evaluating processes to achieve educational goals. By implementing optimal inclusive school management, it is hoped that it can help improve the quality of learning for children with learning difficulties.

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