

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PARENTS' NEEDS IN PREPARING INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN TARAKAN CITY

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Abstract

Inclusive education is a strategic effort to achieve equal access to education for all children, including those with special needs. However, its implementation in Tarakan City still faces various obstacles, particularly in meeting parents' needs for appropriate, child-friendly, and adaptive educational services to the diversity of student abilities. This study aims to analyze the primary needs of parents of students with special needs in the implementation of inclusive education in Tarakan City. The approach used is descriptive qualitative with research locations in several elementary and secondary schools that provide inclusive education in Tarakan City. Research informants included parents of students with special needs, accompanying teachers, and school officials selected by purposive sampling. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies, then analyzed using thematic analysis through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the needs of parents of students with special needs include five main indicators: school safety and comfort, teacher competence in handling students with special needs, curriculum flexibility that allows for learning differentiation, the availability of facilities and infrastructure that support inclusive learning, and social support and policies that favor children with special needs. These five indicators show that the ideal implementation of inclusive education requires not only equal access, but also a quality, adaptive, and equitable education system, with policy support and active collaboration between local governments, schools, teachers, and the community.

Keywords: parent needs, inclusion programs, students

Abstrak

Pendidikan inklusif merupakan upaya strategis untuk mewujudkan pemerataan akses pendidikan bagi seluruh anak, termasuk mereka yang memiliki kebutuhan khusus. Namun, implementasinya di Kota Tarakan masih menghadapi berbagai kendala, terutama dalam pemenuhan kebutuhan orang tua terhadap layanan pendidikan yang layak, ramah anak, dan adaptif terhadap keberagaman kemampuan siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebutuhan utama orang tua siswa berkebutuhan khusus dalam penyelenggaraan pendidikan inklusif di Kota Tarakan. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan lokasi penelitian di beberapa sekolah dasar dan menengah penyelenggara inklusi di Kota Tarakan. Informan penelitian meliputi orang tua siswa berkebutuhan khusus, guru pendamping, dan pihak sekolah yang dipilih secara purposive sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui

wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik melalui proses reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebutuhan orang tua siswa berkebutuhan khusus mencakup lima indikator utama, yaitu keamanan dan kenyamanan sekolah, kompetensi guru dalam menangani siswa berkebutuhan khusus, fleksibilitas kurikulum yang memungkinkan diferensiasi pembelajaran, ketersediaan sarana dan prasarana yang mendukung pembelajaran inklusif, serta dukungan sosial dan kebijakan yang berpihak terhadap anak berkebutuhan khusus. Kelima indikator tersebut menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan pendidikan inklusif yang ideal tidak hanya membutuhkan akses yang setara, tetapi juga sistem pendidikan yang berkualitas, adaptif, dan berkeadilan, dengan dukungan kebijakan dan kolaborasi aktif antara pemerintah daerah, sekolah, guru, dan masyarakat.

Kata kunci: kebutuhan orang tua, program inklusi, siswa

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of a child's education comes from parents, the closest people who can support, accompany, and facilitate their growth and development. Parents are primarily responsible for their child's education. Wherever a child receives and undergoes education, whether formal or informal, parents play a role in determining their child's educational future. Darlis (2017) explains that parents have significant involvement in their children's education and development, especially for parents of children with special needs. Parents play a crucial role in supporting and facilitating their children's education. This means that nurturing and guiding children is crucial for their well-being. The education a child receives naturally begins with the education instilled in them within the family.

Children with special needs are children with special characteristics that are different from children in general without always showing mental, emotional or physical disabilities, (Barlow, 2004; McNALLY, 2002). According to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia (2013), children with special needs are children who experience limitations or extraordinary physical, mental, intellectual, social or emotional disabilities which have a significant influence on the growth or development process compared to other children of the same age.

Children with Special Needs referred to in (Minister of National Education Regulation Number 70 of 2009 Concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and Potential for Special Intelligence and/or Talents, 2009) Article 3 paragraph 2, namely: blind, deaf, mute, mentally retarded, physically disabled, emotionally retarded, have learning difficulties, are slow learners, autistic, have motor disorders, are victims of drug abuse, illegal drugs and other addictive substances, have other disorders, and are multiple disabled.

Then, in terms of education, there are three paths available for children with limited special needs in segregated (exclusive) educational settings. There are 3 segregation services provided by Indonesian education, namely, (1) special schools that only serve students with the same type of needs, (such as: SLB/A, SLB/B, SLB/C etc.), (2) special

schools that facilitate various types of needs, (such as: SDLB, SMPLB and SMALB), and (3) integrated schools, namely regular schools (non-SLB) that accept students with special needs.

According to Rafferty & Griffin (2005) Parents of children without special needs often support an inclusive approach. Parents expect inclusive care to help their children strengthen their social skills and contribute to their overall personality development. Inclusive schools are a form of equality and the realization of non-discriminatory education for children with special needs, allowing them to study alongside other regular students at the same school. As mandated in Article 31, paragraph 1 and 2 of the 1945 Constitution, (Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, 2003) that the State guarantees that children with special needs will receive quality educational services. In inclusive education, children with special needs do not receive special treatment or privileges, but rather equal rights and obligations with other students. Cooperation from various parties, including the government, schools, and the community, is crucial in its implementation, as inclusive schools present a new challenge for both schools and the community.

Baxter & Jack (2008) conducted research related to the implementation of inclusive education with a focus on parental attitudes, the purpose of this study was to obtain an overview of the role of parents towards inclusive education, data taken from open-ended questions and in-depth interviews with respondents of 45 parents with special needs and 45 parents of regular students. The results showed that parents have a positive view of inclusive education. The attitudes of parents changed after receiving socialization from the school about inclusive education and have provided learning space for children with special needs. Inclusive education shows great hope that their children can learn in regular schools. The views of parents of students with special needs towards inclusive education they have great hope that their children can learn in regular schools.

To date, the phenomenon seen in children with special needs in special needs schools (SLB) is that they receive educational facilities tailored to the degree and type of their needs. However, this educational system has unwittingly built a wall of exclusivity because it can hinder the process of getting to know each other between children with special needs and children in general. As a result, in social interactions within the community, special needs groups become less familiar. The community becomes unfamiliar with the lives of special needs groups. Meanwhile, special needs groups themselves feel that their existence is not an integral part of the life of the surrounding community.

Furthermore, a common phenomenon in the field is that parents of children with special needs tend to disregard the importance of education for their children. This is due to a lack of understanding of the educational pathways for children with special needs, as well as a feeling of shame in their social environment due to the negative labels society places on children who attend special needs schools. This often leads to the discovery of school-

age children with special needs who do not receive an education. Based on this, it is felt necessary to form schools with inclusive programs so that children with special needs can learn together, socialize like other children without special needs, and parents do not feel inferior about their children's special needs, because every child has the right to receive education without discrimination.

METHOD

The research method used in this research study is a qualitative approach. Johnson, R. & Christensen (2014) With this combination, it is hoped that the research questions presented can be answered. The data collection techniques used were field observation, interviews, and documentation studies, including the collection of written literature such as books, scientific articles, and journals. The research was conducted in Tarakan City, North Kalimantan, with the data collection techniques used being observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis strategy in this study used three main methods according to Ian Dey (2005), These are: 1) Describing Data, where the researcher describes all the data obtained narratively. In this study, the researcher will describe all data related to identifying parents' needs; 2) Categorizing Data, where the researcher categorizes the data obtained through the decryption process. In this study, the researcher sorts out the factors that emerged during the interview process; and 3) Connecting Data, where the researcher connects the data that has been compiled according to their respective categories. Data Validity, namely determining the validity of data, requires auditing techniques (Moleong, 2016). Several criteria underlie these auditing techniques, including the degree of trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and certainty. Data validity is checked through data triangulation activities, which involve discussing the data with experts who thoroughly understand and can re-evaluate the data analysis. These activities are carried out to ensure the validity and validity of the data analysis results, ensuring that the data is not fabricated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interviews revealed that the majority of parents of students with special needs in Tarakan City strongly desire their children to attend mainstream schools. However, significant concerns arose regarding their children's social acceptance, physical safety, and the school's readiness to provide adequate educational services. Furthermore, psychological factors were identified as a major obstacle. Parents expressed concerns about their children being teased, experiencing social rejection, or even verbal and physical abuse from peers. These anxieties indicate a low level of public understanding of the concept of inclusive education in elementary schools. Interviews also revealed a need for a welcoming and open school environment. Parents emphasized the importance of a "welcoming school" that provides not only physical facilities but also a culture of acceptance and empathy within the school community. This concept reflects the need for children's emotional and psychological safety.

In the next stage, it was also discovered that parents expect teachers who possess professional competence and understand the characteristics of children with special needs. Teachers are expected to have special training in inclusive learning strategies, empathetic communication skills, and the ability to adapt to diverse student behaviors.

The curriculum aspect is another important concern. Parents consider the curriculum in public schools too dense and inflexible for their children. They hope for curriculum modifications to accommodate individual student abilities, in line with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principle, which emphasizes accessibility for all students. Parents also placed significant emphasis on facilities and infrastructure. They demanded ground-floor classrooms, disabled toilet facilities, and safe play areas. These facilities are considered reasonable accommodations as regulated by Government Regulation No. 13 of 2020 concerning Persons with Disabilities. Documentation revealed that schools in Tarakan lack specific guidelines for implementing inclusion programs. Most schools still rely on conventional approaches without adaptive strategies for special needs. This demonstrates the need for systemic planning involving local governments and education offices.

The above findings strengthen the welcoming school theory by (Corbett, 1999; Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2021; Maxwell, 2000; Padak & Rasinski, 2010; Zollers et al., 1999) that inclusive schools must be welcoming, open, and prepared to meet the needs of students with special needs. This readiness is not only physical but also cultural through strengthening social empathy and creating a supportive school climate. (Cowley, 2011; UNESCO, 2008) which emphasizes that the implementation of inclusive education is successful when there is synergy between teachers, parents, and the school community. Parental involvement is a key indicator of a child's successful adaptation to an inclusive and equitable education system.

The need for professional teachers in an inclusive context is also supported by research. (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021; Dickens-Smith, 1995; Sharma & Nuttal, 2016), who found that inclusive teacher training significantly improved pedagogical differentiation skills. Teachers who have a comprehensive understanding of students' cognitive and affective needs can create more adaptive and humanistic classrooms. Meanwhile, the findings on curriculum flexibility strengthen the research results. (Ainscow & Messiou, 2018), that an inclusive curriculum does not have to be different but must be able to be modified to suit individual student needs. This approach emphasizes that educational justice does not mean uniformity, but rather conformity to the potential of students.

From the infrastructure aspect, this study confirms the results of the study. (Collins, 2012; Moriña & Morgado, 2018), Disability-friendly infrastructure is a key prerequisite for successful inclusive education. Physical accessibility is an indicator of a school's readiness to fully embrace student diversity. In terms of policy, the results of this study are in line with (Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 13 of 2020 Concerning Appropriate Accommodation for Students with Disabilities, 2020; Minister

of National Education Regulation Number 70 of 2009 Concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and Potential for Special Intelligence and/or Talents, 2009), which affirms the right of children with special needs to receive equal education. However, its implementation in Tarakan demonstrates a gap between regulations and reality on the ground, necessitating a more applicable policy model.

Overall, the research results show that the needs of parents of students with special needs in Tarakan City encompass five main indicators: school safety and comfort, teacher competence, curriculum flexibility, supportive infrastructure, and supportive social and policy support. These five indicators are essential foundations for establishing an ideal inclusive school, which not only provides equal access to education for all children but also ensures an adaptive, welcoming, and equitable learning environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on research on the needs of parents of students with special needs in Tarakan City, it can be concluded that the success of inclusive education implementation depends heavily on the education system's ability to accommodate the emotional, social, and academic needs of children through comprehensive support from schools, teachers, and their social environment. Parents' needs encompass not only the physical aspects and school facilities, but also psychological, pedagogical, and interrelated policy dimensions. A safe and comfortable learning environment is a top priority because it directly influences parents' trust in educational institutions. Teachers are expected to be competent not only in general pedagogy but also in addressing individual student needs, including the use of differentiated approaches and adaptive assessments. Furthermore, curriculum flexibility is a crucial element that allows each child to learn according to their own abilities and pace, while maintaining national education standards. Adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as physical accessibility, specialized learning media, and technological support, are also basic requirements for an effective and inclusive learning process. Social support and supportive policies from the community and local government play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of equitable inclusive education programs. By fulfilling the five main indicators, namely school safety and comfort, teacher competence, curriculum flexibility, supporting infrastructure, and social support and supportive policies, the ideal inclusive school model in Tarakan City can be realized, reflecting an education system that is humanistic, participatory, and responsive to the diversity of students.

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