

The Principal's Efforts to Improve Learning Quality in Inclusive School at SDN 4 Palangka, Palangka Raya City

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the principal's efforts to improve learning quality in an inclusive school at SDN 4 Palangka, Palangka Raya City. The study focuses on three aspects: the principal's strategies, the effectiveness of facilities and infrastructure, and supporting and inhibiting factors in improving learning quality. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The research subjects were the principal, one homeroom teacher, and three fourth- and fifth-grade students. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation and analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the principal has implemented several strategies, including teacher competency development, teacher training, and adjustments to learning methods to accommodate students' needs. However, the utilization of facilities and infrastructure remains limited due to inadequate resources. Supporting factors include the commitment of the principal and teachers to providing equitable learning opportunities, as well as collaboration with Palangka Raya University through socialization and the development of an adaptive learning environment. Inhibiting factors include limited facilities and difficulties in adapting the curriculum to inclusive education.

Keywords

Principal, Learning Quality, Inclusive Education, School Management, Students with Special Needs



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental process that shapes human development and determines how individuals grow, participate in society, and develop their potential. For students, education provides opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, values, and experiences that support their personal and social development. For educators, education involves a commitment to creating learning experiences that recognize the dignity, uniqueness, and potential of every learner. Therefore, education should not merely focus on academic achievement but also ensure that every student receives meaningful and equitable opportunities to learn and develop. In this context, the quality of education and learning

becomes an important indicator of the extent to which schools are able to fulfill their educational responsibilities.

Learning quality is closely related to the effectiveness of teaching, teacher competence, curriculum implementation, learning resources, school management, and the learning environment. Improving learning quality requires systematic efforts involving various components within and outside the school. Among these components, school leadership has a strategic position because the principal is responsible for directing school programs, developing teachers, managing resources, and creating conditions that support effective teaching and learning. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008), based on a meta-analysis of studies concerning school leadership, found that instructional leadership has an important relationship with student outcomes. Leadership practices that focus on teaching and learning, teacher professional development, curriculum planning, and the provision of appropriate resources can contribute to better educational outcomes.

The responsibility of improving learning quality becomes more complex in inclusive schools. Inclusive education is based on the principle that all learners, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or disabilities, have the right to participate in quality education. UNESCO emphasizes that inclusion requires educational systems to identify and remove barriers that limit students' access, participation, and achievement in education (UNESCO, 2020). Thus, inclusive education should not simply be understood as placing students with special educational needs in regular classrooms. Rather, it requires schools to adapt curriculum, pedagogy, learning environments, assessment, and support systems according to the diversity of learners. Ainscow (2020) argues that inclusion should be understood as a process of developing schools so that they are increasingly capable of responding to learner diversity and removing barriers to participation and achievement.

The implementation of inclusive education also requires strong leadership and collaboration among school principals, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders. School leaders have an important role in developing an inclusive culture, facilitating teacher development, allocating resources, and ensuring that school policies support equitable learning opportunities. Ainscow (2020) emphasizes that leadership for inclusion should focus on identifying contextual barriers, developing collaborative practices, and strengthening the capacity of schools to respond to diverse learners. In Indonesia, the principle of inclusive education is also supported by national regulations. Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities recognizes inclusive education as education that enables students with disabilities to learn together with students without disabilities in regular schools. Indonesia's inclusive education framework further recognizes the roles of principals, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders in developing an educational environment that enables children with disabilities to develop their potential.

SDN 4 Palangka, Palangka Raya City, is one of the elementary schools that provides an inclusive educational environment. The implementation of inclusive education at the school reflects a commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for students with and

without special educational needs. Through inclusive learning, students with special needs can participate in social interactions with their peers, while regular students can develop empathy, tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity. However, achieving high-quality learning in an inclusive school presents practical challenges. Differences in students' abilities, learning styles, developmental conditions, and educational needs require teachers to adjust learning strategies and, in some cases, modify curriculum and learning materials.

The challenges are also related to the availability and utilization of facilities and infrastructure. Inclusive schools may require accessible physical environments, appropriate learning media, assistive resources, and other supporting facilities to accommodate diverse learning needs. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes that inclusion involves strengthening the capacity of education systems to overcome barriers to learners' presence, participation, and achievement. Therefore, limited facilities and resources can become significant barriers if schools do not have appropriate strategies for managing and utilizing the resources available. In this situation, the principal's role becomes particularly important. The principal is expected not only to administer school programs but also to provide instructional direction, facilitate teacher professional development, coordinate the use of resources, and build collaboration with parents and external institutions. Effective leadership should therefore respond to the specific context and needs of the school rather than relying solely on general administrative procedures. This is consistent with the argument that efforts to promote inclusion and equity need to consider the particular context, available resources, school culture, and barriers experienced by learners (Ainscow, 2020).

Despite the growing discussion of inclusive education, empirical studies focusing specifically on the efforts of elementary school principals to improve learning quality in inclusive schools remain important, particularly in the local context of Palangka Raya. The specific challenges faced by SDN 4 Palangka, including teacher capacity, curriculum adaptation, facilities, and collaboration with stakeholders, require examination from the perspective of school leadership. Therefore, this study focuses on the principal's efforts to improve learning quality at SDN 4 Palangka. Specifically, it examines the strategies implemented by the principal and school, the effectiveness of facilities and infrastructure in supporting inclusive learning, and the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing efforts to improve learning quality. The study is expected to contribute empirical insight into the development of effective and context-sensitive leadership practices for improving the quality of inclusive education at the elementary school level.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the principal's efforts to improve learning quality in an inclusive elementary school. A qualitative approach is appropriate for investigating social and educational phenomena in their natural settings by emphasizing participants' experiences, meanings, perspectives, and interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than measuring variables quantitatively,

qualitative research enables researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of how educational practices are implemented and experienced by participants. The case study design was selected because the study focused on a specific institution, namely SDN 4 Palangka, and examined the phenomenon of school leadership and learning quality within its real-life context. Yin (2018) explains that a case study is particularly useful when researchers seek to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its actual context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly separated.

The research was conducted at SDN 4 Palangka, located on Jalan Kinibalu, Jekan Raya, Palangka, Palangka Raya City, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The research was carried out for five months, from February to June 2026. The participants were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives. The primary participants consisted of the school principal, homeroom teachers, special education teachers or accompanying teachers for students with special educational needs, parents of students with special needs, and regular students in Grades IV and V. These participants were considered capable of providing information concerning school leadership strategies, learning practices, facilities and infrastructure, and supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing inclusive education. Purposive sampling enables researchers to select information-rich participants who can provide detailed information relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected directly from participants through observation and interviews, while secondary data were obtained from relevant school documents, archives, photographs, learning materials, and other documents related to inclusive education and learning quality. Data collection employed three complementary techniques: observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine the actual implementation of learning activities, the interaction between teachers and students, the principal's role, the use of learning facilities, and the inclusive learning environment. Observation allows researchers to understand behavior and social interactions in their natural context (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to obtain detailed information about the principal's strategies, teacher development, curriculum adaptation, utilization of facilities, and challenges in improving learning quality. Documentation was used to strengthen the findings by examining relevant written records, photographs, school programs, and other supporting documents.

The collected data were analyzed interactively through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organizing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. The condensed data were then displayed in descriptive and thematic forms to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships

among the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the emerging patterns and continuously verifying them against the collected evidence. Data credibility was strengthened through triangulation of data sources and data collection techniques by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This process was intended to ensure that the findings accurately represented the implementation of school leadership and efforts to improve learning quality in the inclusive educational context of SDN 4 Palangka.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies to Improve the Quality of Inclusive Education Instruction at SDN 4 Palangka

The findings of this study indicate that improving the quality of inclusive learning at SDN 4 Palangka requires a combination of school leadership, teacher competency development, learning adaptation, parental involvement, and continuous professional development. The principal plays an important role in coordinating these components because inclusive education requires schools to respond to differences in students' abilities, learning needs, interests, and developmental characteristics. In this context, improving learning quality cannot be separated from the capacity of teachers and the school's ability to create a learning environment that accommodates all students. Inclusive education is not simply the placement of students with special educational needs in regular classrooms, but involves efforts to remove barriers to participation and learning and to provide appropriate support for diverse learners (UNESCO, 2017; Ainscow, 2020).

One of the most important strategies identified in this study is the improvement of teacher competence. The principal of SDN 4 Palangka encourages regular classroom teachers to participate in inclusive education technical training because the availability of special education support teachers is limited. This strategy demonstrates that the school does not rely entirely on special education teachers but attempts to strengthen the capacity of regular teachers to respond to students with diverse needs. Teacher competence is a critical element in inclusive education because teachers are directly responsible for designing learning experiences, managing classroom interaction, adapting learning materials, and providing appropriate assistance. Smith (2018) emphasizes that the success of inclusive education is strongly influenced by teachers' pedagogical competence and their understanding of students with special educational needs. Therefore, investment in teacher competence represents an important form of school leadership for improving learning quality.

The principal's organization of thematic training, particularly inclusive classroom management and diagnostic assessment, further demonstrates that teacher development is directed toward practical classroom needs. Inclusive classroom management requires teachers to establish clear routines, develop positive relationships, anticipate disruptive behavior, and provide differentiated support. In an inclusive classroom, students may demonstrate significant differences in communication, concentration, academic ability, social interaction, and emotional regulation. Consequently, teachers need classroom management

strategies that are flexible but remain structured. Sapon-Shevin (2007) argues that effective inclusive classrooms require clear structures, consistent routines, positive relationships, and proactive approaches to student behavior. The training provided at SDN 4 Palangka can therefore be interpreted as an effort to strengthen teachers' practical capacity rather than merely fulfilling administrative requirements.

The provision of adaptive learning materials, such as tactile letter cards and picture cards, also reflects the principal's effort to support teachers in implementing inclusive learning. Learning media can provide alternative ways for students to access information and express their understanding. However, the use of learning media should not be based solely on assumptions that every student has a particular learning style. Rather, teachers need to consider students' individual characteristics, learning barriers, strengths, and instructional objectives when selecting appropriate media. In this regard, differentiated instruction provides a more relevant framework because it encourages teachers to adjust content, process, product, and learning environment according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2001). Thus, the adaptive media found at SDN 4 Palangka can be understood as part of a broader attempt to create more accessible learning experiences.

Clinical supervision is another significant practice identified in the findings. The principal applies a non-judgmental approach by providing teachers with opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices and receive constructive feedback. Such supervision is important because teachers may face difficulties when implementing inclusive learning, particularly when they have limited experience with students with special educational needs. Supervision that emphasizes collaboration rather than judgment can encourage teachers to identify their own challenges and develop appropriate solutions. Glickman (2002) explains that effective clinical supervision involves a collaborative process through which supervisors and teachers examine instructional practices and develop strategies for professional improvement. Therefore, the principal's supervisory approach at SDN 4 Palangka represents instructional leadership that supports continuous teacher development.

The establishment of teacher learning communities also strengthens the professional development process. Teachers who have participated in external training can share their knowledge and experiences with colleagues, allowing professional knowledge to circulate within the school. This practice is consistent with the concept of a Professional Learning Community, in which teachers collaborate continuously to examine teaching practices and improve student learning (DuFour, 2004). In an inclusive school, such collaboration is particularly important because teachers may encounter complex cases that cannot always be addressed individually. Collective reflection enables teachers to exchange strategies, discuss student progress, and develop shared solutions to instructional challenges.

Another important finding concerns the adjustment of learning methods according to students' needs. Teachers at SDN 4 Palangka apply differentiated learning by considering students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Regular students may participate in

group discussions, experiments, and presentations, while students with special educational needs may require more structured routines, visual schedules, quiet learning areas, or additional sensory breaks. Such differentiation does not necessarily mean separating students permanently. Instead, it represents an attempt to provide equitable learning opportunities within the same inclusive environment. Tomlinson (2001) argues that differentiation enables teachers to respond to student diversity while maintaining common learning goals. This principle is particularly relevant to inclusive education because equality should not be interpreted as providing identical treatment to all students, but as providing appropriate support according to individual needs.

The use of visual schedules and structured routines for students with autism also demonstrates the importance of predictability in learning. Students who experience difficulties with communication, attention, or sensory regulation may benefit from clearly structured activities and visual representations of classroom routines. However, these strategies should be implemented based on individual assessment rather than generalized assumptions about disability. Initial or diagnostic assessment is therefore essential because it provides information about students' strengths, difficulties, interests, and learning needs. Salvia, Ysseldyke, and Bolt (2013) explain that assessment in special education should support instructional decision-making rather than merely classify students. The finding that teachers at SDN 4 Palangka use initial assessment before determining learning strategies is therefore consistent with the principle of individualized educational support.

The implementation of learning stations and peer support further illustrates the school's effort to accommodate differences while maintaining social interaction among students. Students may remain in the same classroom while receiving different tasks or levels of assistance. Peer tutoring can also provide academic and social benefits when appropriately structured and supervised. Carter and Kennedy (2006) found that peer-mediated approaches can support the academic and social participation of students with disabilities. In the context of SDN 4 Palangka, peer support can contribute not only to learning but also to the development of empathy, cooperation, and acceptance of diversity among regular students.

Parental collaboration is another important component of the school's inclusive learning strategy. The use of daily communication books and regular meetings enables teachers and parents to exchange information concerning students' progress and difficulties. Such communication can help ensure greater consistency between learning support provided at school and assistance provided at home. Epstein (2011) emphasizes that meaningful school-family-community partnerships can contribute to students' academic, behavioral, and social development. Therefore, parental involvement should be viewed not as an additional activity but as part of the support system for inclusive education.

The findings concerning teacher training and its relationship with student participation are also important. Increased student participation and reduced disruptive behavior suggest that when learning activities are adapted to students' needs, classroom engagement can

improve. Nevertheless, these changes should be interpreted cautiously because qualitative findings cannot establish a direct causal relationship between training and student achievement. The reported improvement in literacy and numeracy assessment results provides an important indication of positive learning development, but such improvement should be examined together with other contextual factors. Ruijs and Peetsma (2009) found that inclusive education does not necessarily reduce the academic achievement of regular students and may provide broader social and educational benefits. This supports the view that inclusive education can be designed to benefit the wider school community rather than being treated solely as a service for students with special educational needs.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the improvement of learning quality at SDN 4 Palangka is closely associated with the principal's ability to build teacher capacity, encourage differentiated instruction, facilitate professional collaboration, support adaptive learning resources, and strengthen cooperation with parents. At the same time, the school continues to face limitations related to facilities, specialized personnel, and the complexity of curriculum adaptation. These challenges indicate that inclusive education requires not only individual teacher commitment but also sustained institutional support. The experience of SDN 4 Palangka demonstrates that learning quality in an inclusive setting should be understood in terms of meaningful participation, accessibility, responsiveness, and the development of each student's potential. In this perspective, the success of inclusive education is not determined by uniform treatment or identical outcomes, but by the extent to which the school creates conditions that enable every learner to participate, learn, and develop according to their potential.

The Effectiveness of the Use of Facilities and Infrastructure in Supporting the Improvement of Learning Quality in Inclusive Education at SDN 4 Palangka

The findings of this study indicate that the effectiveness of facilities and infrastructure in supporting the quality of inclusive learning at SDN 4 Palangka remains relatively low. This condition reflects a gap between the principles of inclusive education and their implementation at the school level. Inclusive education requires not only the acceptance of students with special educational needs into regular classrooms but also the provision of an accessible learning environment, appropriate instructional resources, and adequate support systems. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes that inclusion and equity require education systems to identify and remove barriers that prevent learners from accessing, participating in, and benefiting from education. Therefore, the availability and effective utilization of facilities and infrastructure should be considered an integral component of inclusive school quality.

The findings demonstrate that teachers at SDN 4 Palangka have attempted to compensate for limited facilities through creativity, improvisation, and manual adaptation of learning materials. Although such initiatives demonstrate teacher commitment, excessive dependence on individual teacher creativity may create an unsustainable burden. Teachers are expected to perform their primary instructional responsibilities while simultaneously modifying materials, managing students with different needs, and providing additional

assistance to students with special educational needs. Hamalik (2014) argues that learning effectiveness is influenced by the availability and appropriate use of instructional media and learning facilities. Consequently, when essential facilities are unavailable, teachers may face difficulties in creating learning experiences that are accessible and meaningful to all students.

One of the most significant findings is the absence of adequate spaces for students who require intensive support. Students with attention, sensory, behavioral, or emotional regulation difficulties may sometimes require a quieter environment or temporary separation from excessive classroom stimulation. The absence of a resource room or calm area limits teachers' options for providing individualized support without disrupting the learning activities of other students. However, this does not imply that students with special educational needs should routinely be separated from their peers. Rather, flexible support spaces can function as complementary environments where students receive short-term individualized assistance before returning to the shared classroom. This approach is consistent with the principle of inclusive education, which seeks to maintain participation in the common learning environment while removing barriers that interfere with meaningful engagement (Ainscow, 2020).

The limited availability of adaptive instructional media is another major challenge. The findings indicate that the school does not have sufficient specialized resources such as Braille materials, hearing assistance devices, visual learning materials, tactile resources, and other assistive technologies. Such limitations can make it difficult for students with specific sensory, cognitive, or communication needs to access the curriculum through the same instructional materials used by other students. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that inclusive education requires education systems to provide appropriate resources and support to ensure that learner diversity does not become a barrier to participation and achievement. Thus, the issue at SDN 4 Palangka is not simply the quantity of facilities but also their suitability for the diverse needs of learners.

The availability of learning media is particularly important because students do not always respond to instructional information in the same way. Adaptive materials can provide alternative representations of concepts and enable students to interact with learning content through visual, tactile, auditory, or concrete experiences. However, the selection of media should be based on individual educational needs and instructional objectives rather than on disability labels alone. Salvia, Ysseldyke, and Bolt (2013) explain that assessment should provide information that assists educators in making instructional decisions and designing appropriate educational interventions. Therefore, the development of adaptive learning media at SDN 4 Palangka should be connected with systematic assessment of individual students' strengths, barriers, and learning requirements.

Physical accessibility represents another important issue identified in this study. The absence of ramps, appropriate handrails, accessible toilets, and safe pathways creates barriers for students with physical or mobility limitations. Accessibility is not merely a matter of physical convenience but is closely related to students' independence, dignity,

safety, and equal participation. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes accessibility as an essential condition for persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in society (United Nations, 2006). In the Indonesian context, Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities also establishes the right of persons with disabilities to accessibility and equal opportunities, including in education. Therefore, the physical conditions identified at SDN 4 Palangka demonstrate the need for further development of an accessible school environment.

The findings also reveal that the school does not yet have sufficient supporting spaces, including a resource room, counseling room, calm corner, and flexible learning areas. These facilities can be particularly useful in an inclusive setting because learning needs are not limited to academic instruction. Students may require emotional regulation, counseling, individual assistance, or small-group instruction at particular times. A flexible school environment can enable teachers to respond to such needs without excluding students from the broader school community. Ainscow (2020) emphasizes that developing inclusion requires schools to identify contextual barriers and strengthen their capacity to respond to learner diversity. From this perspective, the development of supporting facilities should be viewed as part of institutional capacity building rather than merely as physical infrastructure development.

The study further identifies teacher preparedness as an internal factor affecting the effectiveness of inclusive facilities. Not all teachers have participated in workshops or training related to inclusive education. Consequently, even when certain resources are available, teachers may not always possess sufficient knowledge to use them effectively. This indicates that infrastructure development and teacher professional development should proceed simultaneously. Facilities without competent users may not produce their intended benefits, while competent teachers may face substantial limitations when essential resources are unavailable. This relationship reinforces the need for an integrated approach to inclusive school management in which human resources and physical resources are developed together.

Financial limitations also constitute a significant internal barrier. The school has limited capacity to procure specialized learning materials, assistive devices, accessibility infrastructure, and other supporting facilities. This situation means that the school often relies on existing resources and teacher improvisation. While resourcefulness is valuable, sustainable inclusive education requires institutional and governmental support. UNESCO (2020) notes that inclusion requires systemic transformation rather than isolated interventions. Consequently, adequate budgeting and resource allocation should be incorporated into school development planning to ensure that inclusive education does not depend primarily on individual initiative.

Another issue concerns school policies and program management. The findings indicate that individualized educational programs and clear standard operating procedures for supporting students with special educational needs have not yet been optimally

developed. Effective inclusive education requires clear procedures for identification, assessment, planning, intervention, monitoring, and evaluation. Individualized planning can help teachers establish realistic learning objectives and appropriate forms of support based on students' needs. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue that inclusive pedagogy should extend learning opportunities for all students rather than creating separate approaches that unnecessarily marginalize particular learners. Thus, school policies should support flexible instructional planning while maintaining students' participation in common learning experiences.

External factors also influence the effectiveness of inclusive education at SDN 4 Palangka. Limited governmental support in terms of funding, training, supervision, and technical assistance can constrain the school's ability to develop inclusive facilities and teacher capacity. Inclusive education is a shared responsibility that involves schools, families, government institutions, higher education institutions, and the wider community. Collaboration with external institutions can therefore provide additional expertise and resources. At the same time, parents and community members need adequate understanding of inclusive education so that they can contribute positively to children's development. Epstein (2011) emphasizes that meaningful school-family-community partnerships can strengthen educational outcomes and create a more supportive environment for students.

Overall, the findings indicate that the low effectiveness of facilities and infrastructure at SDN 4 Palangka is not caused by a lack of commitment from teachers and school leaders alone but by the interaction of resource limitations, teacher capacity, school policies, and external support. The school has demonstrated efforts to maximize existing facilities, but these efforts need to be supported by systematic improvements in accessibility, adaptive learning media, specialized spaces, teacher training, budgeting, and institutional procedures. Improving inclusive learning quality therefore requires a comprehensive approach in which infrastructure, human resources, curriculum adaptation, and stakeholder collaboration are developed simultaneously. In this context, facilities and infrastructure should not be viewed merely as physical components of the school but as essential instruments for ensuring that every student can participate, learn, and develop their potential in a safe, accessible, and supportive educational environment.

Factors Supporting and Hindering Efforts to Improve the Quality of Inclusive Education Instruction

The improvement of learning quality in inclusive education at SDN 4 Palangka is influenced by a combination of internal strengths and structural challenges. The findings indicate that the school has several important supporting factors, particularly the commitment of the principal and teachers, collaboration with higher education institutions, parental support, and student achievement. At the same time, the implementation of inclusive education continues to face obstacles related to limited facilities and funding, teacher competence, the availability of special accompanying teachers, and curriculum adaptation. These factors are interconnected and demonstrate that improving the quality of

inclusive learning requires not only individual commitment but also systemic and institutional support.

The commitment of the principal is one of the most important supporting factors identified in this study. The principal of SDN 4 Palangka demonstrates a strong commitment to developing inclusive education by encouraging teachers to understand that every child has the right to receive appropriate and quality education regardless of individual differences or limitations. Such leadership is essential because inclusive education requires changes not only in classroom practices but also in school culture, policies, resource allocation, and relationships among members of the school community. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) emphasize that leadership plays a central role in developing inclusive school systems because school leaders can mobilize teachers, establish shared values, and create organizational conditions that support participation and learning for all students. The principal's commitment at SDN 4 Palangka is also strengthened by a moral and spiritual awareness that inclusive education represents a responsibility toward government policy, parents, students, and God. This orientation corresponds to Fullan's (2001) concept of moral purpose, which suggests that effective educational leadership requires a clear commitment to improving the lives and learning opportunities of others.

The commitment of teachers is another important factor supporting inclusive education. Teachers at SDN 4 Palangka demonstrate an effort to avoid separating students with special educational needs from regular students and instead provide opportunities for them to learn together in regular classrooms. This practice reflects the fundamental principle of inclusive education, in which diversity is recognized as a normal characteristic of the student population rather than as a reason for segregation. Teachers' attitudes are particularly significant because their beliefs and expectations directly influence classroom interaction, instructional decisions, and the opportunities provided to students with special needs. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) explain that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are influenced by their experience, training, perceived competence, and the support available to them. Positive attitudes therefore need to be accompanied by professional development and institutional support so that teachers can transform their commitment into effective instructional practices. The willingness of teachers at SDN 4 Palangka to participate in training and professional learning activities demonstrates an important foundation for continuous improvement.

Collaboration with Universitas Palangka Raya also strengthens the school's capacity to develop inclusive education. The socialization program entitled "Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusif yang Aman, Ramah, dan Menyenangkan bagi Semua Peserta Didik," which involved more than 150 participants, illustrates the potential of cross-sector collaboration in promoting inclusive educational awareness. Although the collaborating study program is not directly focused on special education, its involvement demonstrates that inclusive education can become a shared social responsibility beyond the formal education sector. Partnerships with higher education institutions can provide schools with

access to academic knowledge, professional development, research-based practices, and broader networks. Epstein (2011) argues that school-community partnerships can strengthen educational outcomes by connecting schools with families, communities, and external institutions. In the context of SDN 4 Palangka, university collaboration therefore represents not merely an additional activity but a potential source of capacity building and social support for sustainable inclusive education.

Parental support is another important factor. The findings indicate that parents of regular students do not object to their children learning together with students with special educational needs. This acceptance is important because parental attitudes can either facilitate or constrain the development of inclusive school cultures. Positive parental attitudes can reduce stigma and create a social environment in which students feel accepted regardless of their abilities or limitations. Stainback and Stainback (1996) emphasize that successful inclusion requires the participation of the broader school community, including parents. At SDN 4 Palangka, communication through daily communication books and regular meetings provides an important mechanism for maintaining cooperation between school and family. Such cooperation is particularly valuable because parents possess information about children's behavior, learning needs, and development that can complement teachers' observations.

Student achievement provides another indication of the positive outcomes associated with the school's inclusive efforts. The achievement of a student from SDN 4 Palangka as First Runner-Up in the 2024 Basic and Secondary Education for Students with Special Needs competition represents an important source of motivation and recognition. Achievement can strengthen students' self-confidence and demonstrate that students with special educational needs have opportunities to develop their talents when they receive appropriate support. Bandura (1997) explains through the concept of self-efficacy that successful experiences can strengthen individuals' beliefs in their ability to perform successfully in future situations. From an institutional perspective, student achievement can also strengthen public confidence in inclusive education and encourage the school community to maintain and improve its programs.

Despite these supporting factors, the implementation of inclusive education at SDN 4 Palangka remains constrained by several significant barriers. The first is the limited availability of facilities, infrastructure, and financial resources. The school serves 24 students with special educational needs alongside approximately 180 other students, creating a need for facilities that support accessibility, safety, and differentiated learning. Protective fencing, educational play areas, adaptive learning media, and other accessibility features are particularly important for students who require additional environmental support. Limited funding from school operational assistance and school committee resources means that the school must prioritize only the most urgent needs. Previous research has similarly identified limited financial resources and inadequate infrastructure as major barriers to inclusive education in Indonesia (Rahayu, 2019). Sustainable improvement therefore requires stronger

governmental support as well as partnerships with universities, communities, and other stakeholders.

A second major obstacle concerns teachers' competence and access to continuous professional development. Some teachers still experience difficulties in understanding the characteristics of students with special educational needs, developing individualized learning plans, modifying instructional materials, and selecting appropriate strategies. This challenge is understandable because many teachers in inclusive schools were initially trained primarily to teach regular students rather than students with diverse educational needs. Forlin (2010) notes that teachers may experience uncertainty and low confidence when they are required to respond to increasingly diverse classrooms without adequate preparation. Training should therefore not be limited to occasional workshops. Teachers need continuous professional development that includes practical classroom strategies, assessment, curriculum adaptation, classroom management, and opportunities to reflect collaboratively on their experiences.

The limited number of special accompanying teachers (GPK) further complicates this situation. GPKs are expected to provide specialized support while also assisting classroom teachers in planning and implementing appropriate learning. At SDN 4 Palangka, however, the number of teachers who have received specialized training remains limited compared with the distribution of students with special educational needs across different classes. Consequently, regular classroom teachers may have to design and implement adaptations with insufficient specialized support. Friend and Bursuck (2012) emphasize that collaboration between general education teachers and special education professionals is important for ensuring that students with diverse learning needs receive appropriate educational services. Increasing the availability of GPKs is therefore an important policy priority, while strengthening the competence of regular teachers can serve as a complementary short-term strategy.

Finally, curriculum adaptation remains a substantial challenge. Teachers report difficulties in determining appropriate learning targets, modifying materials, and designing individualized services because not all teachers have received sufficient training in curriculum adaptation. This problem becomes more complex at the elementary school level, where classroom teachers are responsible for teaching most subjects while simultaneously addressing the diverse needs of students with special educational needs. Effective curriculum adaptation requires teachers to understand both curriculum objectives and individual student characteristics. Van Kraayenoord (2007) argues that inclusive education requires curriculum flexibility so that differences in students' abilities and learning needs can be accommodated without eliminating their participation in the common curriculum. Simplified administrative procedures, practical curriculum adaptation guides, and ready-to-use examples of individualized learning plans could reduce teachers' workload and allow them to focus more on instructional quality.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the quality of inclusive learning at SDN 4 Palangka is supported by strong leadership commitment, teacher dedication, university collaboration, parental acceptance, and student achievement. Nevertheless, these strengths operate within structural limitations involving infrastructure, funding, teacher competence, GPK availability, and curriculum adaptation. The sustainability of inclusive education therefore depends on transforming individual commitment into a stronger institutional system. Strengthening continuous teacher development, increasing specialized support, improving accessibility and adaptive learning resources, simplifying curriculum administration, and expanding partnerships with government, universities, families, and communities are important steps toward ensuring that inclusive education is not merely a policy commitment but a sustainable practice that provides meaningful learning opportunities for every student.

Conclusion

This study concludes that SDN 4 Palangka has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the quality of inclusive education through strategic school leadership and adaptive learning practices. The principal has implemented several strategies, including improving teacher competence through inclusive education training, providing learning support, conducting clinical supervision, implementing differentiated learning, and encouraging continuous professional development through seminars and teacher learning communities. These efforts have contributed to increased student participation and more responsive learning practices.

However, the effectiveness of facilities and infrastructure remains limited. The school still faces inadequate disability-friendly physical facilities, including ramps, handrails, and accessible toilets, as well as limited adaptive learning media and assistive devices for students with special educational needs. Consequently, teachers often need to make manual adaptations and provide additional support during learning activities. The main supporting factors include the principal's commitment, teacher dedication, parental support, collaboration with Palangka Raya University, and student achievements. Meanwhile, the major barriers are limited facilities and funding, insufficient teacher competence and training, an inadequate number of special education support teachers, and difficulties in adapting the curriculum. Overall, SDN 4 Palangka has developed an inclusive, humanistic, and adaptive learning environment, although further improvement in resources, teacher capacity, and curriculum adaptation is needed to ensure equitable and optimal learning outcomes for all students.

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