

Research Article

Analysis of Inclusive Education Policy in Surabaya

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Abstract: This study analyzes the inclusive education policy in Surabaya and its impact on the performance of elementary school educators. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires, then analyzed using source triangulation. The findings reveal that educators show strong commitment and apply various learning strategies to accommodate students with special needs. However, significant challenges persist, including limited facilities, a shortage of qualified personnel, and insufficient specialized training. In addition, factors such as high workload and social stigma hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education. Despite these obstacles, the policy demonstrates promising potential through systemic support, collaboration with parents, and the contribution of special assistant teachers. To achieve greater effectiveness, improvements in school infrastructure, continuous professional development, and more inclusive educational environments are essential. Strengthening stakeholder cooperation between schools, local governments, and communities will further enhance the sustainability and success of inclusive education in Surabaya.

Keywords: Educator Performance; Inclusive Education Policy; Public Policy of Eddward III; Special Needs Students; Surabaya

1. Introduction

Education for every nation is an effort of transformation aimed at achieving its national goals. According to the Indonesian government in Law Number 20 of 2003, education is a deliberate endeavor to create learning conditions and processes that enable students to explore their potential. This includes spiritual development, self-mastery, character, intellect, noble morals, and practical skills beneficial to the individual, society, and the nation (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional 2003). Inclusive education is part of the government's effort to reduce educational inequality. The implementation of inclusive education is one of the mandates of Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 20 Tahun 2003, which ensures equal opportunities for all future generations, including students with special needs (Masnu'ah, Khodijah, and Suryana 2022). It is expected to eliminate negative stigma and prevent discriminatory attitudes in social environments toward students with special needs as future generations (Munajah, Marini, and Sumantri 2021).

Education in Indonesia has undergone transformation and reform to provide better learning experiences for students. Inclusive education is one of the significant changes in the national education system. Inclusive schools are the government's effort to help students with special needs gain equal learning experiences as other students (Anjarwati et al. 2022). As an alternative, inclusive education can also be implemented in general schools. Inclusive education in public schools is regulated under Ministerial Regulation No. 70 of 2009, which states that the inclusive education system provides learning access for all students, including those with special needs and those with exceptional intelligence or talents, allowing them to study together in the same environment (Susilowati, T. Trisnamansyah, S. Syaodih 2022).

However, the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia has not yet reached the desired level. For instance, at SMA Negeri 3 Bukittinggi, the practice is considered less effective due to the absence of an appropriate inclusive curriculum, lack of special assistant

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teachers (GPK), and insufficient teacher understanding of inclusive education (Pardede, P. F. D. Fernandes 2020). Another major obstacle is the limited number of qualified human resources. Special assistant teachers, who should guide students with special needs, remain inadequate to meet the demand in every school (Saradia Agustina, R. Rahaju 2021). This indicates that teachers play a crucial front-line role in the inclusive education process.

Today, teachers are required to be capable of providing appropriate learning experiences for all students, including those with special needs. For example, teachers at SMPN 30 Bandung serve as role models for inclusive education in the city. Teachers in Bandung are required to effectively handle students with special needs during the learning process (Musfira, Karlina, and Susanti 2022). Other perspectives also highlight that teachers must master the skills to manage inclusive education in general schools. The challenges faced by teachers are increasingly diverse and complex. Teachers act as facilitators who guide students from various backgrounds, including those with special needs, while creating classroom environments that promote participation, equality, social justice, and accommodation of diverse needs (Holmqvist and Lelinge 2021).

These conditions emphasize the importance of teacher performance as facilitators. Teacher performance significantly influences student learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers are key factors in improving students' achievements. Teacher performance has a positive and significant impact on learning outcomes when teachers have high work motivation (Amtu et al. 2020). The quality of teacher performance is crucial to study in efforts to enhance student achievement. School leadership, organizational culture, and teacher competence are significant factors that contribute up to 68.12% to teacher performance. This potential indicates that improving teacher performance requires policies that accommodate these influencing factors ((Kanya, Fathoni, and Ramdani 2021).

Based on the problems mentioned above, there has been limited discussion on the impact of policy implementation on teacher performance. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the impact of inclusive education policy on elementary school teacher performance in Surabaya using George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory. The research is expected to provide an overview of how government policies affect teacher performance conditions.

2. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research involves the collection of non-numerical data to understand social phenomena, focusing on meaning, experiences, and contextual details. Its purpose is to provide an in-depth understanding of specific cases, processes, or mechanisms rather than broad generalizations (Gerring 2025). The data collection techniques used include observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The questionnaire instrument was distributed to teachers in several public elementary schools in Surabaya. Data analysis was conducted using source triangulation to obtain answers to the research problems discussed. Source triangulation was applied to integrate the results of observations, interviews, and questionnaires in order to enhance the credibility of the analyzed data.

3. Results and Discussion

According to (Prabawati, Rahaju, and Kurniawan 2020), public policy is essentially everything announced by the government regarding what must be implemented and prohibited it represents the objectives of government programs. The formulation of educational policy is a governmental responsibility that takes into account existing issues and is inherently political in nature (Aziz et al. 2020). (Idrus et al. 2023) explain that, according to George C. Edward III, there are four key elements in analyzing policy: (1) communication, (2) resources, (3) disposition or attitude, and (4) bureaucratic structure.

Educational policy is a type of policy related to the education sector, aimed at realizing the vision and mission of education through strategic steps to achieve educational goals (Elwijaya, Mairina, and Gistituati 2021). In Indonesia, educational policy has undergone necessary transformations to accommodate changes in society, technological advancement, community needs, and the pursuit of educational quality (Lembong, Lumapow, and Rotty 2023).

The inclusive education policy implemented in regular elementary schools in Surabaya has had a significant impact on the city's education system (Febriannur Rachman 2020). The implementation of inclusive education policy is part of the public policy process that

determines whether a policy is relevant and acceptable to society. Even if a policy is well-designed, it will not yield optimal results if not implemented effectively (Munajah, Marini, and Sumantri 2021). In line with the Minister of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) No. 70 of 2009, which has been realized in Surabaya, this regulation emphasizes that education must provide equal access to all learners without exception, including those with special needs whether physical, emotional, mental, or social as well as those with exceptional intelligence or talents. Educational institutions are also required to respect learner diversity and avoid any form of discrimination (Permendikbud 2009).

This policy naturally brings new perspectives and needs for teachers, particularly in elementary schools. Policy decision-making involves various viewpoints to support implementation, application, and teacher capacity (Prabowo, Hafid, and Bayani 2024). Based on Edward III's theory, inclusive education policy can be analyzed as follows: (1) Stakeholder Communication; Successful implementation of this policy requires intensive communication among all stakeholders. Interviews revealed varying levels of understanding among teachers regarding inclusive education policies, indicating the need for a unified perception in addressing students with special needs in Surabaya's elementary schools. Communication and outreach efforts, especially for classroom teachers without special education assistants, must be strengthened. (2) Teacher Resources; A fundamental limitation of this policy's implementation lies in the shortage of qualified teachers—specifically, the lack of special education teachers (GPK) and appropriate facilities. Interviews and surveys showed that classroom teachers struggle to manage students with special needs without adequate assistance. While teachers attempt to apply specialized strategies, these often demand extra time and energy, making the process inefficient and less effective. This highlights the significant challenge posed by insufficient human and infrastructural resources. (3) Teacher Attitude and Behavior; The success of inclusive education policy depends greatly on teachers' attitudes and perspectives as the primary implementers. Interviews and surveys revealed a spectrum of teacher responses many showing enthusiasm and openness to inclusive education principles, recognizing its potential to create equality in learning. However, there are also concerns about their competence and readiness to manage diverse learning needs within one classroom. (4) School Bureaucratic Structure; For inclusive education policy to be effectively implemented at the operational level, schools need a strong organizational structure and supportive formal regulations. Many teachers expressed concerns about the lack of clear practical guidelines and structured administrative support, indicating that stronger institutional frameworks and regulations are needed. Without clear frameworks, standardized procedures, and responsive administrative support, inclusive education policy risks being hindered in practice, making it difficult for teachers to translate inclusive ideals into daily classroom activities.

Based on teacher surveys and interviews, several challenges were identified: (1) Increased teacher workload. Teachers must develop additional learning materials and specialized strategies, resulting in heavier workloads. (2) Non-conducive classroom environment. The presence of students with special needs can make the learning atmosphere less focused and effective. (3) Severity of student conditions. Certain disabilities make the learning process more complex. (4) Divided teacher attention. Teachers often struggle to give equal attention to all students, reducing instructional efficiency. (5) Negative stigma and community resistance. Teachers sometimes face societal stigma or rejection regarding inclusive education.

Despite these challenges, there are also key success factors in the implementation of inclusive education: (1) Role of Special Education Teachers (GPK). These teachers serve as crucial facilitators for students with special needs. (2) Parent-school collaboratio. Strong cooperation between parents and schools is essential for successful implementation. (3) Specialized teaching strategies. Teachers need tailored strategies to manage learning effectively for students with special needs. (3) Focus on behavioral and social outcomes. The success of inclusive education should prioritize behavioral and social development rather than solely cognitive achievement.

Based on interview and survey analysis, teachers in inclusive education demonstrate strong commitment and genuine effort, but face major challenges that require systemic support. Inclusive education policy emphasizes the need for adequate facilities, teacher training, and systemic reinforcement all of which remain obstacles for educators in the field. Teachers urgently need training in inclusive teaching strategies, adaptive technology, and more effective classroom management techniques.

5. Conclusion

The dedication of educators in implementing inclusive education policies is remarkably high and focused on ensuring the success of all students. The learning strategies implemented by teachers have been diversified according to the needs of students with special needs to achieve success both socially and behaviorally. However, challenges faced by educators such as heavy workloads, the need for additional support resources, and limited facilities significantly affect their performance. This emphasizes that the success of inclusive education greatly depends on systemic support from educational policies, including more specialized teacher training, improved facilities, and close collaboration with parents as well as all related educational staff. Therefore, to enhance the quality and impact of inclusive education, synergy between educators' commitment and sustainable policy support is essential so that students with special needs can develop optimally in accordance with their rights.

6. Suggestions

This study identified several obstacles as well as potential strengths that can be utilized as a foundation for developing relevant strategies, models, or training programs.

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