

SUSTAINABILITY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to find out the conditions of the sustainability of inclusive education during the pandemic in two different schools, namely Sekolah Citta Bangsa, Bekasi, and PAUD YPJ Tembapapura, Papua. Inclusive education is a challenge in the midst of a pandemic, especially for schools, parents, and students with special needs. Teachers are challenged to design learning strategies that are able to facilitate education for children with special needs in school. The research methods in this journal use qualitative research methods. The informants in the study were class teachers, special accompanying teachers, children with special needs, and parents/guardians of students, while the students of this study were children with special needs who were in two different schools. Data collection techniques are used through interviews, documentation, and observation. Qualitative data analysis is inductive, that is, research based on the data obtained.

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1. PENDAHULUAN

Inclusion is a practical change that gives children with different backgrounds and abilities the opportunity to succeed in learning. This change not only benefits children who are often excluded, such as children with special needs, but all children and their parents, all teachers and school administrators, and every member of society. Inclusion means that teachers are responsible for seeking assistance in screening and providing educational services to all children in the community, families, educational institutions, health care, community leaders, and others. Inclusion includes different children, such as children who have difficulty seeing, hearing, unable to walk, and are slow in learning.

Inclusion education is one of the solutions designed by the government in accordance with the slogan "Education for All", where inclusion education provides opportunities for children with special needs to learn together with regular children

at the same time and place. Inclusive education is echoed in order to build a generation that tolerates and embraces the differences and needs of each child. Education for children with special needs has been provided with educational facilities that are adjusted to the level or degree of disability called Special Schools (SLB), and with the education system in this SLB has unwittingly built a wall of exclusivity for children with special needs so that the process of getting to know each other between children with disabilities and non-disabilities is hampered (Achyar, 2018). As a result, children with disabilities in social interaction in society become communities alienated from social dynamics. Society becomes unfamiliar and moves away from them, whereas the disabled group itself feels that their existence is not part of an integral group in society. As is the case in general comment number 9 (2006) at the *Convention on the Right of the Child* (CRC) on the Rights of children with disabilities, it is stated in article number (2) that

the state's obligation guarantees the rights of children with disabilities without discrimination (CRC, 2006). One of the principles on the rights of the child contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child also states that children with disabilities should obtain an education (Nurusshobah, 2019). Inclusive education as a way out to bridge the gap that occurs between society and people with disabilities is an education that uses a strategic approach to expand access to education for all children with special needs, including children with disabilities. Inclusive education in a broader context can be interpreted as an education that emphasizes anti-discrimination attitudes, the struggle for equal rights and opportunities, justice, and the expansion of access to education for all, improving the quality of education, strategic efforts in completing compulsory education, and efforts to change people's attitudes towards children with special needs (Linda, F. et al, 2016).

The legal basis related to inclusive education in Indonesia is contained in the 1945 Constitution article 31 paragraph 1, which states that every citizen has the same opportunity to obtain an education. The opportunity for children with special needs to obtain education is also regulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System article 32 paragraph 1 which states that special education is education for students who have difficulty in following the learning process due to physical, emotional, mental, social disorders, and /or have the potential for intelligence and special talents. The government's efforts to provide educational services for children with special needs have also been stated in Government Regulation (PP) Number 72 of 1991 concerning special needs (Edukasi, 2018) education, Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009 concerning inclusive education for students who have disabilities and have the potential for intelligence and / or special talents, as well as Circular Letter of the Director General of Primary and Secondary Education Management of the Ministry of National Education Number 380 / C.C6 / MN / 2003, on January 20, 2003, each district/city is required to organize and develop inclusive education in at least four schools consisting of elementary, middle, high school and vocational schools. Reporting from databoks.co.id, until the 2020/2021 school year, Indonesia has had 2,250 schools for children with special needs at various levels of education. Of these, as many as 2,017 schools are in the form of a Special Schools (Schools for special needs students).

The big idea of inclusive education is an effort to open access to education for all children regardless of their condition (CAE, 2022). Inclusive education allows children with special needs to study with regular children at the same place and time. Inclusive education is an education service system that provides opportunities for all children to learn together in public schools by paying attention to diversity and individual needs, so that children's

potential can develop optimally (Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Luar Biasa, 2008). Inclusive education requires schools to adapt to the individual needs of different learners (Setianingsih, 2018). The curriculum in inclusive education is prepared by a team formed by the school, according to the needs and circumstances of children with special needs at school.

The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in Indonesia in early 2020 had a major impact on the sustainability of education in Indonesia, including inclusive education. The impact of the quarantine and restrictions on activities made schools have to be temporarily closed and learning takes place online (using video conferencing services such as Zoom or Google Meet). For inclusion schools, it is certainly very affected and experiences some difficulties in implementing learning for children with special needs. Inclusion education programs should be oriented towards services to children because the needs of each child will be met (Dewi, 2017). The pandemic has made inclusion schools have to readjust curriculum and learning methods for children with special needs with limitations and considering the existence of health protocols. There are several things that become obstacles to the learning process during the pandemic, namely the limited interaction of teachers in delivering material so that many students do not understand, as well as the unpreparedness of parents in guiding children to learn so that if this continues, it will interfere children's development (Handayani, Arif, & Syam, 2020). Pandemic has changed a lot of aspect in daily life, as well as the way our education system works.

Based on the Circular Letter of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture No. 4 of 2020 concerning the principles of implementing distance learning, there are two essential things that need to be considered, namely distance learning activities provide a meaningful learning experience for students without being burdened with completing all curriculum achievements and are focused on life skills education. Reporting from WHO, life skills have ten elements, namely critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, self-awareness, empathy, overcoming emotions and overcoming stress. All this aims to emphasize the learning process so that it prepares students or children with special needs to become more independent (Razumova, et. all, 2019). Based on the background that has been described, the author conducted this study to determine the condition of the sustainability of inclusive education during the pandemic in two different schools, namely Sekolah Citta Bangsa, Bekasi and PAUD YPJ Tembagapura, Papua.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research methods in this article use qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a type of research based on facts that look real without any form of calculation and data obtained by describing the process and meaning by utilizing the researcher as a key instrument so that the presence of the researcher in the research determines success. This research was conducted at the Sekolah Citta Bangsa Bekasi and PAUD YPJ Tembagapura, Papua. Informants in the study were class teachers, special accompanying teachers, children with special needs and parents/guardians of students. The subject of the study of children with special needs. Data collection techniques used through interviews, documentation and observation. Qualitative data analysis is inductive, that is, analysis based on the data obtained (Sugianto, 2015).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study based on observation, interview and documentation methods at the Sekolah Citta Bangsa Bekasi showed that there were major differences in teaching children with special needs in schools during the pre-pandemic and during the pandemic. SDS Citta Bangsa Bekasi is an inclusive school with a total of 9 class groups with 2 preparatory class groups (classes for children with special needs) in the 2021/2022 school year. Preparatory classes are classes created specifically for students with special needs who have not been able to enter or join regular children in regular classes. Students in the preparatory classroom have a variety of diagnoses, such as autism, psychosis, ADHD, dyslexia, and others.

The author conducted interviews with several teachers who were homeroom teachers from preparatory classes as well as regular inclusive-based classes. One of the teachers, Ms. Mayang Arum, S.Pd, who is the homeroom teacher and head of the inclusion division at the school, explained about the differences in the learning process during normal circumstances and during the pandemic, one of which was the learning strategy used. The strategies used when meeting face to face are individual learning (1: 1) and interactions that are established during kbm make it easier for teachers to carry out learning. When the pandemic progresses, children tend to focus on gadgets or be distracted by many things at home. Online learning media tends to be two-dimensional media such as images and videos, considered less effective because children with special needs need concrete media. Another obstacle encountered by teachers is that teachers have to find different methods for each child (depending on their needs) when teaching. The teacher should look for the right method for 5 children in one class with different special needs. Children with special needs also cannot be forced to study for a full 1 hour in front of the screen, because even during kbm before the pandemic, children with special needs did not

study for 1 full hour but were interspersed with ice breaking and eating together. However, the limitation of inviting children to play during online learning is also an obstacle in learning.

Teachers can realize this obstacle occurs due to children's restricted mobility during the pandemic. Children are prone to tantrums because while at home the child only plays with gadgets, and the child's desire to come to school and meet his friends which cannot be fulfilled affects the child's mood during learning. Not a few children with special needs have to temporarily quit therapy services. Even so, Ms. Mayang explained, the pandemic has made teachers more creative. Limitations during learning make teachers have to look for new innovations, especially in creating teaching media that are interesting for children. Teachers are trained to think out of the box, where with different special needs of children the teacher must be able to create media that adapts to the needs of each child.

Support from schools is also very influential in the implementation of inclusive education for children with special needs in schools. The Principal of Citta Bangsa School, Mrs. Sanggita Lahari, S.Pd facilitates teachers in schools to be able to take part in trainings, especially training in making digital media, both internally and outside of school. An individual program called PPI is designed to help children with special needs in school, to help them learn individually by coming to school separately but still consider the health protocol. PPI program designed individually and different for each special needs children so it can facilitate their different needs. Parents also provide support and continue to communicate with teachers so that learning can take place effectively. At the end of our interview, Ms. Mayang expressed her hope that school can take place 100% face-to-face so that children with special needs can learn as they should, can study in an open place and a large space for movement. Children with special needs can also meet their regular friends and can socialize with each other, and so that children with special needs can get therapy services comfortably and get the best service that suits their respective needs.

Meanwhile, the results of research conducted at the YPJ Tembagapura school, Papua based on the same method as carried out by the Sekolah Citta Bangsa Bekasi, namely by observation, interviews and documentation also showed the same results and looked very significant in teaching children with special needs during face-to-face at school by teaching during PJJ (Distance learning) during the pre-pandemic and during the pandemic. YPJ Tembagapura School is a public school under the auspices of PT Freeport Indonesia that provides facilities to the families of employees who indirectly accept all students with different conditions with a total of 5 children aged 2.5 - 3 years (*Toddler class*), 13 children aged 3 - 4 years (*Playgroup class*), 13

children aged 4 - 5 years (TK A class), 20 children aged 5-6 years (grade TK B). At YPJ Tembapapura children with special needs enter into regular classes according to their age. In this study, the authors only made studies on children in kindergarten A grade or children aged 4-5 years.

Just like what was done at Sekolah Citta Bangsa Bekasi, the author conducted interviews with several teachers who were homeroom teachers and accompanying teachers for children with special needs. The results of the interview explained that as long as children do distance learning (PJJ) the learning process experiences many obstacles, some children with special needs during the pandemic are still unable to do toilet training so that when it will be carried out face-to-face school, teachers remind parents to train children to do toilet training. In addition, some children experience problems that they have not been able to manage themselves, so when face-to-face school takes place these children are often angry because their space is limited, when at home they are free to do anything without any rules while at school they have to learn how to socialize with others, listen to instructions from teachers, and obey the rules. Meanwhile, the result of interviews with parents whose children have problems while at school is that they are happy that children can go to school face-to-face because they see many changes that appear in their children, for example about regularity, children already know that they are going to school and take the bus so they are not fussy when they get up, wash and eat breakfast, then communication can also be done both ways and the use of gadgets can be reduced.

YPJ Tembapapura School is a regular school located in the mining area of PT Freeport Indonesia so that to deal with children with special needs the school collaborates with psychologists from outside to deal with these children. Meanwhile, the *student support* team owned by the school followed up in accordance with the direction of the psychologist by working with parents. The next direction from the school for parents is to be together with the school with the same method as is done in school so that the child has the same way of learning and with the same rules as well. An interview conducted with the principal of PAUD YPJ Tembapapura explained that the school facilitates education for all children including children with special needs by providing an IEP (*Individual Education Program*) so that the focus given to each child with special needs is different.

4. CONCLUSION

Basically, early childhood children learn by using their senses, they learn through what they see, hear, taste and touch. Through the senses they have the stimuli they get are instantly recorded by the nerves in their brain. Face-to-face schooling is needed by all children, especially children with special needs because by meeting teachers and being

exposed directly with various play equipment with different functions trains their senses.

Obstacles are felt not only by students, but also felt by educators and parents. Educators are required to be able to think critically by creating learning strategies that can support learning for children with special needs during the pandemic that suit the needs of each child. Cooperation between the school and the family is needed in responding to obstacles that occur in the implementation of learning and teaching activities in schools online or remotely. Schools can facilitate teachers with trainings, especially to create attractive digital media, especially for children with special needs, as well as learning programs tailor-made for children with special needs.

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