

The Impact of Curriculum Change and Parental Support on The Effectiveness of Inclusive Education in Indonesian Primary Schools

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Abstract: Although inclusive education has been widely promoted to ensure equal access for students with special needs, empirical studies examining the combined role of curriculum adaptation and parental support at the primary school level remain limited, particularly in rural contexts. This study aims to analyze the influence of curriculum changes and parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education in primary schools in Sirah Pulau Padang Subdistrict. A quantitative survey design was employed involving teachers, principals, and parents. Data were collected using validated and reliable instruments and analyzed through multiple regression analysis. The findings demonstrate that curriculum changes significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusive education, parental support also has a significant effect, and both variables simultaneously contribute positively and significantly to inclusive education outcomes. The novelty of this study lies in integrating institutional (curriculum adaptation) and familial (parental support) factors within a single empirical model in a rural primary education setting. These findings provide practical implications for policymakers and school leaders in strengthening adaptive curriculum implementation and fostering collaborative partnerships with parents to enhance inclusive education effectiveness.

Keywords: Curriculum Reformation, Inclusive Education, Parental Involvement, Primary Education

A. Introduction

Inclusive education is an educational approach that guarantees the right of every learner, including children with special needs, to receive equitable educational services within a supportive and non-discriminatory learning environment. This approach aligns with national education policies that emphasize equity, equality, and respect for diversity. At the primary school level, inclusive education plays a strategic role as it forms the foundation for students' academic, social, and emotional development. However, the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools continues to face various challenges, particularly related to curriculum readiness and parental involvement in supporting children's learning processes.

Recent curriculum changes in Indonesia, especially the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, have brought significant implications for the implementation of inclusive education. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes flexibility, differentiated learning, and student-centered instruction, which conceptually aligns with the principles of inclusive education. Nevertheless, in practice, curriculum changes have not always been accompanied by sufficient teacher readiness, practical understanding, and supportive learning environments, resulting in suboptimal effectiveness of inclusive education.

In addition to curriculum factors, parental support is a crucial component in the success of inclusive education. Parents act as partners of schools in supporting children, particularly those with special needs, through learning assistance at home, communication with teachers, and the provision of appropriate learning facilities. Previous studies indicate that parental involvement positively contributes to students' motivation, self-confidence, and academic development. However, the level of parental support varies and is influenced by socioeconomic backgrounds and parents' understanding of inclusive education.

Recent literature shows that studies on inclusive education tend to examine curriculum changes and parental support separately. Some studies focus on the role of adaptive curricula in improving participation and learning outcomes of inclusive students, while others emphasize the importance of parental involvement in supporting children with special needs. However, limited research has simultaneously examined the influence of curriculum changes and parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education, particularly within the context of primary schools in specific regions.

This study aims to: (1) analyze the effect of curriculum changes on the effectiveness of inclusive education; (2) examine the influence of parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education; and (3) assess the simultaneous effect of curriculum changes and parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education in public elementary schools in Sirah Pulau Padang District. The benefits of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of inclusive education studies and, practically, to provide input for schools, teachers, and parents in creating a more equitable, inclusive, and socially just learning environment for all children.

The curriculum is a central component of educational implementation as it determines the direction, content, and learning strategies. In the context of inclusive education, the curriculum must be flexible, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of all learners, including children with special needs (CSN). The curriculum not only encompasses subject matter but also reflects the values of equality, diversity, and social justice (Suratno, 2022; Santika, 2022).

The Merdeka Curriculum, as the most recent form of educational reform in Indonesia, emphasizes student-centered learning and allows for differentiation in learning strategies. However, the implementation of this curriculum requires teacher readiness in developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), mastery of authentic assessment, and a deep understanding of the characteristics of inclusive learners (Aprianti & Maulia, 2023). Common challenges include limited training opportunities, a lack of adaptive learning modules, and inadequate supporting facilities in elementary schools.

Studies by Wulandari (2021) and Suryadi (2022) indicate that although the new curriculum provides broader opportunities for inclusive practices, teachers still experience difficulties in designing appropriate learning activities for students with special needs due to the lack of practical implementation guidelines. Therefore, curriculum changes will only be effective if accompanied by improvements in teacher competence and differentiated instructional planning.

Parental involvement includes emotional, instrumental, and informational support. Emotional support is manifested through motivation and empathy; instrumental support involves time, effort, and financial resources; while informational support is reflected in parents' involvement in decision-making and active communication with teachers (Fitriani et al., 2023). Active parental involvement has a positive impact on children's learning motivation, independence, and social adaptation skills (Pisya & Coyne, 2001; Baroroh & Rukiyati, 2022).

Research by Rizkiana (2023) and Manullang (2025) emphasizes that parents of children with special needs have a better understanding of their children's characteristics and can serve as important sources of information for teachers in designing appropriate learning strategies. Effective collaboration between schools and parents has been proven to enhance the quality of inclusive education services in elementary schools.

Booth & Ainscow (2002) state that the effectiveness of inclusive education is determined by four main principles: accessibility, participation, acceptance, and individualized approaches. In practice, indicators of effectiveness can be observed through the participation of students with special needs in regular classroom activities, improvements in learning outcomes, and the development of children's independence and social skills.

Kinanthi (2024) emphasizes that the effectiveness of inclusive education is strongly influenced by the quality of school management, teacher competence, and community support. Kurniawan (2024) adds that effective educational strategies for students with special needs include initial assessment, curriculum modification, the presence of special assistant teachers, and evaluations tailored to individual needs.

Successful implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools consistently involves synergy among school principals, teachers, parents, and the community. This success depends not only on academic approaches but also on attitudes of acceptance toward diversity and cross-sector collaboration (Harapan, 2023).

Based on this review, a research gap is identified in the lack of integrated analysis of curriculum change and parental support within a comprehensive research framework, as well as the limited empirical studies addressing local contexts, especially in primary schools in Sirah Pulau Padang Subdistrict. Therefore, this study offers novelty by simultaneously examining the influence of curriculum changes and parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education within a local primary school context. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of inclusive education studies and practically to schools, teachers, and parents.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to analyze the effect of curriculum changes on the effectiveness of inclusive education, to analyze the effect of parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education, and to analyze the combined effect of curriculum changes and parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education in primary schools in Sirah Pulau Padang Subdistrict.

B. Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey research design, aiming to examine the influence of curriculum changes and parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education. The quantitative approach was selected because the study focuses on objective measurement of variables and analysis of relationships among variables using numerical data. The survey design enables the researcher to obtain an empirical overview of the current implementation of inclusive education in primary schools.

The population of this study consisted of teachers, school principals, and parents of students in primary schools implementing inclusive education in Sirah Pulau Padang Subdistrict. Given the relatively large population, the sample was determined using proportional sampling techniques. The selection of samples was conducted by considering the representativeness of each respondent group to ensure that the data accurately reflect the population conditions.

Data collection techniques in this study involved the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaires were developed based on indicators of each research variable, namely curriculum change, parental support, and the effectiveness of inclusive education. In addition to questionnaires, documentation was used to obtain supporting data related to the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

The research instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale, consisting of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Prior to data collection, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure its appropriateness for research use. Validity testing was conducted using product-moment correlation, while reliability testing was carried out using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

Data analysis techniques included descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of each research variable, while inferential analysis was applied to test the research hypotheses. Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression and multiple linear regression analyses, preceded by classical assumption tests including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. All data analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

This study involved 85 respondents, consisting of elementary school teachers in Sirah Pulau Padang District. Data were collected using questionnaires that had been confirmed to be valid and reliable through validity and reliability testing using SPSS. The descriptive analysis shows that all research variables are in the high category. Curriculum change obtained a mean score of 113.04 with a standard deviation of 2.788, parental support had a mean score of 112.96 with a standard deviation of 2.645, and the effectiveness of inclusive education recorded a mean score of 113.15 with a standard deviation of 3.034. These results indicate that respondents generally have positive perceptions of curriculum change, parental support, and the effectiveness of inclusive education in elementary schools. Prior to regression analysis, assumption tests were conducted. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test produced a significance value of 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating that the residual data were not perfectly normally distributed. However, given the relatively large sample size ($N = 85$), regression analysis remained appropriate, as it is considered robust to minor violations of normality.

The multicollinearity test results show tolerance values of 0.989 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of 1.011 for both independent variables. Since tolerance values exceeded 0.10 and VIF values were below 10, it can be concluded that no multicollinearity was present and that the regression model was suitable for further analysis. The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that curriculum change had a regression coefficient of 0.102 with a significance value of 0.442 (> 0.05), indicating that curriculum change did not have a significant effect on the effectiveness of inclusive education. In contrast, parental support showed a regression coefficient of 0.211 with a significance value of 0.035 (< 0.05), suggesting a positive and significant

effect on inclusive education effectiveness. The simultaneous test (F-test) resulted in an F value of 2.761 with a significance level of 0.069 (> 0.05). This finding indicates that curriculum change and parental support, when considered together, did not significantly affect the effectiveness of inclusive education. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.060, indicating that curriculum change and parental support jointly explained only 6% of the variance in inclusive education effectiveness, while the remaining 94% was influenced by other factors, such as teacher competence, learning facilities, school leadership, and the learning environment.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that curriculum change does not significantly affect the effectiveness of inclusive education. This finding suggests that curriculum reform, as a structural policy intervention, does not automatically translate into improved inclusive practices at the school level. Within the broader global discourse on inclusive education, similar challenges have been identified in countries undergoing curriculum reform, where policy innovation does not necessarily lead to pedagogical transformation. This phenomenon is often described as an implementation gap, in which formal curriculum changes are not fully supported by teachers' professional readiness, institutional capacity, and resource availability.

In several education systems experiencing reform—such as Malaysia and other developing contexts curriculum revisions have frequently been criticized for emphasizing administrative restructuring rather than classroom-level adaptation. Even in more developed systems, research from countries like Australia and the United Kingdom indicates that curriculum reform becomes effective only when accompanied by sustained teacher training, inclusive pedagogical strategies, and systemic support. Therefore, the non-significant effect of curriculum change in this study may reflect challenges in implementation fidelity rather than a conceptual weakness of curriculum adaptation itself. In line with Mulyasa (2013), curriculum effectiveness depends not merely on design but on the quality of implementation. Similarly, Aprianti & Maulia (2023) note that frequent curriculum changes without adequate professional development often create confusion and resistance among teachers.

In contrast, parental support was found to have a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of inclusive education. This finding may be interpreted within the framework of collectivist cultural values, as conceptualized in Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. Indonesia, characterized as a collectivist society, places strong emphasis on family cohesion, shared responsibility, and community-based support systems. In such contexts, parental involvement in children's education is not merely complementary but central to learning success. The strong influence of parental support found in this study suggests that inclusive education in collectivist settings may rely heavily on family-school collaboration. This finding reinforces Epstein's

(2011) theory of school–family partnerships and aligns with Wulandari et al. (2024), who emphasize that sustained communication and collaboration between teachers and parents are critical in inclusive classrooms, particularly for students with special needs. However, the simultaneous analysis indicates that curriculum change and parental support together do not fully explain the effectiveness of inclusive education. This result underscores the multidimensional nature of inclusive education, which involves pedagogical, institutional, cultural, and structural dimensions. As argued by Novialassafitri et al. (2021), the success of inclusive education is also strongly influenced by teachers’ competencies, differentiated instruction strategies, school leadership, and the availability of adequate learning facilities. Thus, improving inclusive education effectiveness requires a comprehensive and systemic approach rather than reliance on isolated variables.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between variables; the findings indicate statistical associations rather than definitive cause-and-effect mechanisms. Second, the use of self-reported questionnaire data may introduce social desirability bias, potentially influencing respondents’ perceptions. Third, the study was conducted within a specific subdistrict context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Future research employing longitudinal designs or mixed-method approaches would provide deeper insight into the causal dynamics and contextual implementation of inclusive education policies.

D. Conclusions

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion regarding the effects of curriculum change and parental support on the effectiveness of inclusive education in elementary schools in Sirah Pulau Padang District, several main conclusions can be drawn to comprehensively address the research questions. First, the findings indicate that curriculum change does not have a significant effect on the effectiveness of inclusive education. Although teachers’ perceptions of curriculum change were descriptively categorized as high, the regression analysis demonstrates that curriculum change has not been able to produce a tangible impact on improving the effectiveness of inclusive education. This finding suggests that curriculum policy changes, including the implementation of more flexible and adaptive curricula, have not yet been optimally translated into inclusive classroom practices at the elementary school level. This condition may be attributed to limited teacher readiness, insufficient specialized training in inclusive education, and inadequate supporting facilities for students with special needs. Second, parental support was found to have a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of inclusive education. This finding indicates that parental involvement plays a crucial role in supporting the success of inclusive education. Parents who actively assist their children’s learning, maintain intensive communication with teachers, and create a positive learning environment at home are able to enhance students’ participation, motivation, and learning development,

particularly for students with special educational needs. Therefore, parental support emerges as a key factor that directly contributes to the successful implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools. Third, the results of the simultaneous test reveal that curriculum change and parental support together do not have a significant effect on the effectiveness of inclusive education. This finding implies that the effectiveness of inclusive education is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be explained solely by these two variables. The low coefficient of determination indicates that most of the variation in inclusive education effectiveness is influenced by other factors beyond the research model, such as teachers' competence and attitudes toward inclusion, the implementation of differentiated instructional strategies, school leadership, inclusive school climate, and the availability of supporting facilities and services. Overall, the findings of this study emphasize that the success of inclusive education is not determined solely by curriculum policy, but rather requires strong synergy among various educational components, including teachers, parents, schools, and other stakeholders.

The practical implications of this study indicate that schools need to pay greater attention to the implementation of inclusive education, particularly by improving teachers' competencies in addressing learner diversity. Curriculum changes should be accompanied by continuous professional training, technical mentoring, and the provision of practical inclusive learning guidelines. In addition, schools need to strengthen partnerships with parents as part of a strategy to enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education. From a policy perspective, the findings imply that governments and educational policymakers should design inclusive education policies that are holistic and sustainable. Such policies should not only focus on curriculum reform, but also emphasize human resource development, the provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure, and the strengthening of collaboration among schools, families, and communities. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of inclusive education research by demonstrating that social and contextual factors particularly parental support have a stronger influence than formal curriculum.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that schools enhance the quality of inclusive education implementation by strengthening teachers' competencies, developing instructional strategies oriented toward students' individual needs, and increasing communication and collaboration with parents. Furthermore, continuous efforts are required to build an inclusive school culture that is responsive and respectful of diversity. This study has several limitations, including the limited number of variables examined and the restricted geographical scope, which was confined to a single district. In addition, the use of perception-based questionnaires may have introduced subjective response bias. Therefore, future studies are recommended to include additional variables, expand the research area, and employ mixed-method approaches to obtain deeper and more comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of inclusive education.

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