

Readiness of Elementary School Teachers in Implementing the Inclusive School Program in Jepara Regency

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Abstract

The inclusion education program is a way to achieve the educational goal of learning to live together for all parties, including children with special needs. This study aims to determine the level of teacher readiness in the implementation of the inclusion school program in Jepara Regency in 11 regular elementary school candidates who have been appointed. The research method used is a survey with a quantitative descriptive approach. The primary data source was the result of an online questionnaire distributed to 16 respondents. The results showed that 97.9% of the respondents were ready for the implementation of the inclusive school program in Jepara Regency with a readiness range between 61-100% and 2.1% of the respondents answered that they were not ready. This readiness is influenced by their acceptance of students with special needs (SWSNs), their work experience, and their understanding of inclusion programs.

Keywords: *teacher readiness, primary school, inclusion.*

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of an inclusive education system is because the world of education is faced with students with special needs (SSNs) to study in the same environment as other "normal" friends (Mumpuniarti & Lestari, 2018). Since they have the right to get proper and quality education regardless of their background, education must be inclusive and open to all parties (Yuwono & Utomo, 2021). The concept of inclusive education applies an integrative educational model to realize educational goals namely " *learning to live together*" learning to be able to live side by side with each other so as to create independence in life (Andini et al., 2020).

Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009 which requires each district or city government to designate at least 1 elementary school and one junior high school in each district. to become an inclusive school (Arriani et al., 2021) . However, in Jepara Regency this policy has not been fully realized. The reason is that only 5 out of 16 sub-districts have elementary schools with the Inclusion program (Unisnu Admin, 2022) so that equal distribution of education for children with special needs (CWSNs) has not been implemented completely. Due to this reason, in 2022 the Jepara Regency government through the Education and Sports Office designated 11 elementary schools in each of the other sub-districts as candidate schools with the inclusion program (Priyanto, 2022) . Therefore, as prospective schools implementing the inclusion program, they must prepare themselves in terms of infrastructure, curriculum, graduation system, "normal" students and their guardians, community environment, teachers, and so on (Andini et al., 2020) .

This appointment raises a big question mark regarding their readiness in implementing the inclusion program, especially for teachers. Puspitasari (2019) mentions that elementary school teachers commonly are from regular educations, nongraduate not from special needs education, lack of work experience, and never attended an upgrade or training on inclusion programs for teachers. (Puspitasari, 2019) . In addition, Nurfadhillah (2021) said that there were problems that arose along with holding inclusive education, namely the lack of special tutors, teachers having difficulties in the learning process, teachers' lack of understanding of about CWSNs, increasingly heavy administrative burden, difficulty coordinating with parents , lack of teacher competence in dealing with CWSNs etc. (Nurfadhillah, 2021) .

In fact, teachers should be at the forefront of implementing inclusion programs, must have competence readiness from the personal, pedagogical, social, and professional aspects so that they are able to optimally develop the potential of students with special needs. The readiness to implement inclusive education is also reflected in the teacher's ability to identify, provide assessments , and develop LPI for students with special needs (Arriani et al., 2022) .

Therefore, this study will examine the level of readiness of elementary school teachers in implementing inclusive schools in Jepara Regency.

This research is a quantitative descriptive study using a survey method (Sugiyono, 2016) . Primary data was obtained by distributing questionnaires online *via* Google Form to respondents (Morissan, 2017) . This research was carried out in October 2022 for inclusive school *workshop participants*, namely 22 elementary school teachers from 11 regular elementary schools who had been appointed by the Jepara District Education and Sports Office as candidates for primary schools to administer the inclusive program. However, only 16 respondents were willing to answer the questionnaire. The components of the questions raised are related to the readiness of implementing the inclusion program in regular schools for both the school and the teacher as learning assistants.

DISCUSSION

The results of the research questionnaire stated that 97.9% of respondents were ready to implement the inclusive school program in Jepara Regency with a readiness range between 61-100% and 2.1% of respondents answered that they were not ready. The readiness level of elementary school teachers can be seen in terms of their understanding of students with special needs, the curriculum used, ILP, and their acceptance of SWSNs in schools.



Figure 1. Understanding of SWSNs

The teacher's understanding of students with special needs is the initial capital for identifying *the disabilities* of students (Firli et al., 2020) . Figure 1. shows that 43.8% of respondents have an understanding of 71-80% about students with special needs. This understanding is reflected in the respondents' knowledge of the types of CWSNs.

Nevertheless, 37.5% of respondents were not able to classify the types of crew members based on the characteristics that had been shown.

How much do you understand about inclusive
school program?



Figure 2. Understanding of the Inclusive School Program

Based on the data that has been obtained, it is revealed that 50% of respondents have an understanding level of the inclusion program ranging from 71-80% and 37.5% of other respondents whose level of understanding is 61-70%. The inclusive school program demands competent teachers so they are able to serve students with a variety of their learning needs (Olivia, 2017) . One of these competent indicators is the understanding of the concept of inclusive schools. Through this understanding, teachers can provide learning services and assistance that have been adapted to their needs to develop the potential of students with special needs (Tiarni & Rakhmawati, 2013) .

How much do you agree if your elementary school is
appointed as an inclusive school?



Figure 3. Appointment as an Inclusive School

There are 11 regular elementary schools designated by the Jepara Regency Disdikpora as potential candidates for SD Inclusion. Based on the results of the questionnaire, 31.3% of respondents from the 11 elementary schools stated that 81-90% agreed if their school was designated as an inclusive school. However, there were 6.3% of other respondents who said

they did not agree with being appointed as an inclusive school. This disagreement is due to unpreparedness in terms of infrastructure, school management, teaching staff, student guardians, and so on to support the implementation of inclusive school programs (Tarnoto, 2016) .

How much is your readiness in implementing inclusive school?



Figure 4. Readiness in Implementing the Implementation of Inclusive Schools

Teachers as educators have an important role in implementing the inclusive school program. Thus, teachers must have adequate competence in pedagogical, social, personality and professional aspects to help overcome learning difficulties with CWSNs when studying in regular schools with other "normal" friends (Olivia, 2017) . The results of the data stated that 50% of respondents stated that 71-80% were ready to implement inclusive schools and 6.3% of other respondents said they were not ready. This readiness is based on the 4 competencies that have been possessed and the experience of teaching students with special needs in their schools, even though they have not been labeled as inclusion. However, teaching experience that is not supported by qualified knowledge about inclusive learning models has an impact on the less than optimal services provided (Ni'matuzahroh, 2015) .

How much do you understand about Inclusive
School Curriculum?

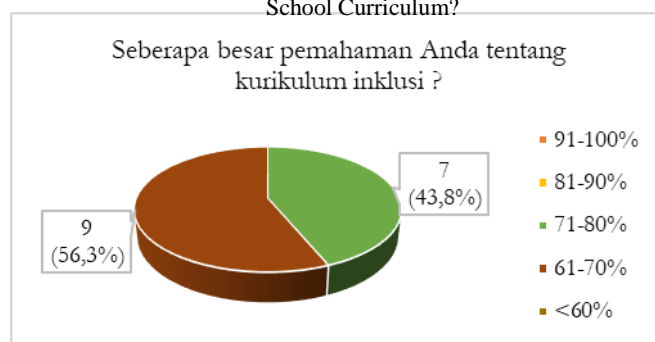


Figure 5. Understanding of the Inclusive School Curriculum

Based on the results of the questionnaire that was distributed, 56.3% of respondents had an understanding level between 61-70% about the inclusion curriculum and 43.8% of other respondents, their level of understanding ranged from 71-80%. This understanding is related to a differentiated and flexible curriculum for students with special needs (Dapa & Tuerah, 2021) due to the diversity of their needs so that the learning curriculum used cannot be standardized (Andini et al., 2020) . In other words, the curriculum adapts to SWSNs, not the other way around. Adaptation of the curriculum can use models of acceleration, duplication, modification, substitution, or omissions adapted to the needs of students with special needs (Arriani et al., 2022) . Through this, the respondents felt anxiety, namely their level of understanding was high but they had little experience in the practice of making the SWSNs curriculum. This is due to their habit of applying the same curriculum to all students in the classroom, thus making respondents unaccustomed to adapting the curriculum that has been adjusted to the potential of SWSNs.

How much do you accept SWSNs in your school?



Figure 6. Acceptance of SWSNs

Regarding the acceptance of the presence of students with special needs at school, 37.5% of respondents stated that 80-90% accepted. However, acceptance from the teacher alone is not enough. The reason is, in the school environment there are still other parties such as "normal" students and their guardians, the local community who must also support this inclusion program (Olivia, 2017) . The existence of such support can minimize the potential for problems to arise, for example *bullying*, dislike, and so on.

How much do you understand in making PPI?



Figure 7. Understanding of Making PPI

One of the services provided by teachers for students with special needs is an ILP for each student that has been adapted to their situation, conditions, characteristics, and learning needs (Arriani et al., 2021). The results of the questionnaire stated that 43.8% of respondents had an understanding of about 71-80% about ILP making. However, this high level of understanding is not supported by teacher confidence in making individual services due to the lack of experience and training in making ILP.

CONCLUSION

The readiness of regular elementary school teachers in implementing the inclusion program in Jepara Regency can be measured through the teachers' understanding of students with special needs, their readiness to implement the inclusion program, their acceptance of SWSNs, and the readiness of the school to implement the inclusion program. In addition, teacher readiness can also be seen from their work experience and the inclusion training they have received.

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