

Supporting The Development of Visually Impaired Children's Talents At SMP N 22 Surakarta

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the provision of supporting facilities and the role of teachers in building the potential of blind children with special needs at SMP Negeri 22 Surakarta. The method used is descriptive qualitative by collecting data through interviews, observation and documentation. The research findings show that the school has provided adequate facilities both in terms of physical (such as good lighting, accessibility of disability-friendly pathways, and space for consultation) and non-physical (support in extracurricular activities and inclusive ways of learning). Teachers function as facilitators, motivators, intermediaries and companions who actively help students understand the material and develop their singing talents. Adequate facilities and sensitive teacher approaches have been shown to increase the enthusiasm, participation and confidence of visually impaired students in inclusive settings. This study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between available facilities and the role of teachers in inclusive education.

Keywords: Special Needs Children, Talent, Facilities, Visually Impaired

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a strategic effort to ensure that all children, including children with special needs, have equal access to regular education. The main goal of inclusive education is not just to include children with disabilities in regular classes but also to create a learning environment that encourages their active participation (Ainscow & Booth, 2002). In Indonesia, the legal basis for inclusive education is set out in Permendikbudristek No. 48 of 2023 Article 7, which requires schools to provide facilities that meet the needs of students with disabilities (Permendikbudristek, 2023).

One type of child with disabilities that requires special attention is visually impaired students, especially those with low vision. They have difficulty accessing visual materials and traditional learning spaces. Therefore, important adjustments are needed, such as using Braille, larger fonts, tactile textures and assistive technology such as audio devices (Fitriani, 2020). In addition, the presence of physical facilities, such as ramps, toilets with handrails, and adequate lighting are essential (Nadine & Yuliana, 2023).

This research explains that the availability of special spaces, such as private study rooms, relaxation rooms and consultation rooms, plays a significant role in supporting the maximum success of children with disabilities (Istiqomah, 2023; Cahyani, 2021). The success of education for children with visual impairments is also determined by the role of teachers in schools, as facilitators, motivators, mediators and assistants (Handoyo, 2022). On the other hand, the ability of teachers is a crucial aspect in the quality of inclusive education. Teachers who do not receive training have difficulty in designing appropriate teaching methods and materials, thus hindering the inclusion process in schools (Sunardi et al., 2011).

At SMP N 22 Surakarta, the development of visually impaired students' talents through extracurricular vocal activities illustrates an example of comprehensive inclusive practices. Art is an effective means of expression for children with disabilities, which reinforces the finding that vocal activities can increase self-confidence and social connectedness (Handayani, 2019). In this case, the teacher's role is not only as a teacher, but also as a motivator and mediator in line with the supportive approach (Manizar, 2015). Ongoing communication between teachers, students and parents is an important foundation in creating a supportive and empowering environment (Ramadhani, 2022).

However, recent research shows that the implementation of inclusive education in many parts of Indonesia is still very limited, mainly due to the lack of facilities and training for teachers, and this situation also occurs in small towns (Permata Sari et al., 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the synergy between the provision of facilities and the capacity building of teachers at SMP N 22 Surakarta, so that the practice of inclusion is not only written in policy, but also becomes a real and sustainable culture in the school.

METHOD

The research method used is descriptive-qualitative. Data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The place for the research was at SMP Negeri 22 Surakarta City. This research was conducted by interviewing children with visual impairments and special assistant teachers. Observation focused on the physical and non-physical facilities at the school and the activities of the children with disabilities in their learning and extracurricular activities. Documentation included photographs, field notes and school documents used to strengthen the validity of the data. The subjects of this study included one visually impaired student with low vision and a special assistant teacher (GPK) who was directly involved in the learning process and talent development of the student.

Data collection was conducted in stages. First, researchers made an initial approach to the school to ask permission and explain the purpose of the research. Then, researchers directly observed the state of the learning environment, the learning process, and extracurricular activities. After that, interviews were conducted to obtain additional information about facility support and the role of teachers in assisting visually impaired students. Data analysis in this study was carried out through a series of stages including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is done by filtering important information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The reduced data was then presented in the form of narratives and tables to facilitate the analysis process. Conclusions were drawn based on patterns of findings that were consistent and relevant to the intended research focus.

To ensure data validity, researchers applied triangulation techniques from both sources and techniques. Triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents collected. Validation was also carried out through member checking, namely reconfirming the results of the interview to the informant to match the statements that had been given previously.

This research is expected to provide a comprehensive and contextualized picture of the school's efforts in providing facility support and assisting visually impaired children with disabilities in developing their potential and talents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results of the research on the provision of supporting facilities for the development of talents of visually impaired children at SMP N 22 Surakarta.

Table. 1 provision of supporting facilities for the development of talents of visually impaired children at SMP N 22 Surakarta

Variable X	Indicator/Sub Variable	Research Result
Provision of supporting facilities (Permendikbudristek No. 48 of 2023)	1. Provision of facilities and infrastructure in general (Chapter 2, Section 1, Article 7 paragraph 1)	- The school provides physical and non-physical facilities that make it easier for blind children at school. - These children with visual impairments have low vision, so they need a room with bright lighting.
	2. Provision of special facilities and infrastructure (Chapter 2, Part 1, Article 7 paragraph 1)	

		• The school provides a consultation room for children with visual impairments. • The school facilitates these children by providing extracurricular vocal activities. These activities are facilitated with microphones and sound speakers to practice and perform at school events such as P5 and Islamic boarding school.
Teacher's role	1. As a facilitator (Senjaya, 2008) 2. As a motivator (Manizar, 2015). 3. As a mediator (Senjaya, 2008) 4. As a companion (Syamsudin, 2005)	• Teachers assisted children with learning comprehension by inviting learning discussions and children also chatted at home if they had difficulty understanding the material. • Teachers support children with visual impairments by always accompanying and encouraging them. • Teachers motivate the children individually by encouraging them and always accompanying them when they are learning or singing. • Teachers provide learning media that are suitable for children with visual impairments and allow them to bring their own facilities for learning. • The teacher communicates with the child about his singing talent. • The teacher invites him to socialize with other children with disabilities and their peers but sometimes the children close themselves off to others.

Variable Y	Indicator/Sub Variable	Research Result
Talent development for visually impaired children	1. Accessibility to supporting facilities (Mulyani, E. 2021)	• The school provides facilities that are suitable for children with visual impairments, both for learning and for singing activities.
	2. Learning experience	• The children with visual

	(Rochmad, 2020)	impairments understand the learning at school and if they have difficulties they always ask the teacher. • Children with visual impairments sometimes lack confidence when singing in public.
	3. Motivation in talent development (Handayani, 2019)	• The school supports the singing talents of children with visual impairments and performs in school activities. • The children with visual impairments have a favorite character to motivate them to develop their singing talent.

CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted at SMP Negeri 22 Surakarta, it can be concluded that the provision of supporting facilities and the role of teachers have a significant impact on the development of the abilities of visually impaired students. The existing facilities have met the needs of children with special needs, both physically and non-physically, including space for consultation, proper lighting, and access to extracurricular activities.

Teachers have a variety of functions, ranging from assisting understanding of the material through discussion and direct interaction, providing emotional motivation, providing adapted learning tools, to accompanying students in socializing and activities. These functions not only enrich students' learning experience, but also encourage students' courage to express their talents, especially in the vocal field. Supportive facilities and well-trained, empathetic teachers are key to success in inclusive education.

Therefore, there is a need for increased consistency in policy and continuous teacher training so that the implementation of inclusive education can truly create a learning environment that is equal, comfortable and empowering for all learners.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare no known financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this manuscript.

DECLARATION OF ETHICS

The authors declare that the research and writing of this manuscript adhere to ethical standards of research and publication, in accordance with scientific principles, and are free from plagiarism.

DECLARATION OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCCESS

The authors declare that Generative Artificial Intelligence and other assistive technologies were not excessively utilized in the research and writing processes of this manuscript.

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