

IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT UPT SPF SMPN 3 MAKASSAR

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Abstract

Inclusive education aims to ensure equal access to education for all students, including those with special needs. This study aims to analyze the implementation of an inclusive education model at UPT SPF SMP Negeri 3 Makassar as a pilot school since 2013. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that the school implements an admission policy allocating approximately 2% of seats for students with special needs and integrates them into regular classrooms through adaptive learning practices. The implementation is supported by collaboration among teachers, parents, and partner institutions such as PUSPAGA. However, several challenges persist, including the limited number of special education teachers, inadequate disability-friendly facilities, and low awareness among some parents regarding inclusive education. The study concludes that SMP Negeri 3 Makassar represents a good practice of inclusive education at the junior secondary level. Therefore, improving infrastructure and providing continuous teacher training are recommended to sustain and enhance the quality of inclusive education services.

Keywords: *inclusive education, special needs, implementation*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen as mandated in Article 31 Paragraph (1) of the Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia 1945, which states that every citizen has the right to education. This principle implies that education must be accessible to all segments of society without discrimination, including children with special needs. In this context, the concept of inclusive education becomes increasingly relevant, referring to an education system that provides learning opportunities for all children—regardless of physical, intellectual, social, or emotional differences—to grow and learn together in regular school environments.

Inclusive education is an approach that seeks to ensure that every child receives educational services within the same learning environment, without distinction based on ability, background, or physical condition. This paradigm is grounded in the values of justice, equality, and respect for diversity among learners. In international discourse, inclusive education is recognized as an integral part of the global agenda of “Education for All” and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as schools serve not only as centers for knowledge transfer but also as social spaces that foster tolerance, respect for differences, and active participation of all children.

In Indonesia, the development of an inclusive education system has gained increasing attention as a means of fulfilling the rights of children with special needs to learn alongside their peers

in regular schools. National policies have mandated schools to provide services that accommodate children with special needs, either within regular classrooms or through inclusive pathways. However, in practice, the implementation of inclusive education still faces several challenges, such as limited teacher competence, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and varying levels of public understanding regarding the concept of inclusion (Sari, Sarofah, and Fadli, 2022).

The implementation of inclusive education requires transformation across multiple aspects of school management. First, student admission procedures should establish specific inclusive pathways to ensure that children with special needs can be accepted alongside regular students. Second, the learning process must be adapted to be more flexible and responsive to the characteristics of each student by addressing individual needs and providing necessary support. Third, the presence of special assistant teachers (GPK) or educators who understand the needs of students with special needs is crucial to support them in regular classroom settings. Fourth, school facilities and learning environments must be designed to be inclusive-friendly, including physical accessibility, adapted learning materials, and the use of assistive technologies when necessary.

Furthermore, the success of inclusive education implementation is highly dependent on collaboration among various stakeholders, including school principals, teachers, parents, and external partners such as family service institutions or communities for children with special needs. Institutional support, continuous teacher training, and inclusive school leadership are key factors in successful inclusion practices (Schuelka, 2018).

In Indonesia, the implementation of inclusive education is regulated under the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and/or Special Talents. This regulation encourages educational institutions not only to accept students with special needs but also to adapt curricula, teaching methods, and evaluation systems according to students' needs. Although it has been implemented nationally, field realities indicate that inclusive education is not yet fully optimized. Various studies reveal limitations in human resources, infrastructure, and insufficient understanding of inclusive concepts among both teachers and the community (Utami, 2022).

UPT SPF SMP Negeri 3 Makassar is one of the public junior high schools in Makassar City that, since 2013, has been designated by the local Education Office as a pilot project for inclusive education implementation. The school admits approximately 2% of its total new student intake through the inclusive pathway each year. The types of inclusive students vary, including those with mild learning difficulties, autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and low vision. This diversity makes SMPN 3 Makassar an interesting social laboratory for study, as it illustrates how inclusive education policies are translated into real practices at the junior high school level.

The success of inclusive education implementation is strongly influenced by policy readiness, the quality of school-level execution, and collaboration among stakeholders (Kumar, 2017). Furthermore, a systematic review by Isyatirradhiyah et al. (2024) reveals that several obstacles remain in the application of inclusive education in regular schools, including limited teacher competence, inadequate facilities, and suboptimal collaboration among schools, parents, and communities. In line with this, a study by Yunita, Diana, and Kurniawati (2024) emphasizes the importance of collaboration among schools, parents, and communities as a key factor in the success of inclusive learning.

Although many studies have discussed inclusive education concepts and principles theoretically, most have focused on primary school contexts or special institutions. Research on the implementation of inclusive education at the junior high school level remains relatively limited, particularly in terms of managerial and policy aspects in public schools. Therefore, examining the model of inclusive education implementation at SMPN 3 Makassar contributes new insights to the understanding of inclusive education dynamics at the secondary level.

Several previous studies have highlighted the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia and the challenges encountered. For instance, Sari, Sarofah, and Fadli (2022), in their study titled “The Implementation of Inclusive Education in Indonesia: Challenges and Achievements,” found that the success of inclusive education in several major cities is supported by the presence of special educators (GPK), adaptive classroom management, and supportive curricula. However, many smaller regions still lag behind due to inadequate facilities and uneven dissemination of information about inclusive systems.

Another study by Zain, Yoenanto, and Fardana (2022), titled “Inclusive Education in Public Schools: What is the Reality?”, found that the main issues revolve around the lack of competent assistant teachers and insufficiently inclusive infrastructure for children with special needs. Furthermore, Suhendry (2020; 2023), in “The Challenges of Inclusive Education in Indonesia,” explains that barriers to inclusion are not only technical but also socio-cultural, such as societal perceptions of children with special needs and regulations that have not been fully translated into school practices.

From these studies, it can be concluded that although many schools have initiated inclusive practices, there remains a gap between formal policy and actual implementation, particularly in terms of human resources, infrastructure, and stakeholder support. This condition forms the basis for this research, which seeks to examine how inclusive education is implemented in a junior high school that has served as a model since 2013, namely SMPN 3 Makassar. By building upon previous research,

this study aims to fill the gap regarding implementation at the junior high school level, particularly in pilot inclusive education units, while also highlighting collaboration with partner institutions.

Although the school has long been designated as an inclusive institution, its implementation still faces challenges such as limited human resources, lack of specialized facilities for students with special needs, and insufficient understanding among some parents regarding inclusive education. On the other hand, the school has successfully developed several best practices, such as the use of the pull-out model, inclusive teacher training, and partnerships with external institutions such as PUSPAGA. These conditions indicate a research gap between theory and practice that needs to be explored further to obtain a comprehensive understanding of effective and sustainable inclusive education models.

This study is aimed at empirically exploring how the inclusive education model is implemented at SMPN 3 Makassar as a pioneering institution. The focus includes several key dimensions: policies for admitting inclusive students, the integration process of students with special needs into regular classrooms, the readiness and competence of educators (including GPK), the availability of inclusive-friendly facilities, and the role of partner institutions and parents in supporting implementation. Thus, this study not only describes “what” has been implemented but also examines “how” and “why,” by identifying supporting and inhibiting factors within the context of a junior high school in Makassar. As previous studies have largely focused on primary education or national-level generalizations, this research contributes to the literature by focusing on a junior high school that serves as a pilot project.

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of inclusive education in Indonesia. Theoretically, the findings can enrich academic discussions on inclusive education models, particularly in relation to policy implementation and the strengthening of adaptive school systems. Practically, the results are expected to serve as a reflection for schools implementing inclusive programs in improving service quality, strengthening teacher capacity, and expanding partnerships with supporting institutions and communities. Therefore, this study not only aims to describe existing conditions but also to contribute strategically to the realization of an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable education system in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, as it aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the inclusive education unit model at UPT SPF SMP Negeri 3 Makassar. This approach was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate for describing social and educational phenomena in their natural context without manipulating field

conditions (Sugiyono, 2018). It allows the researcher to understand the meanings, policies, and practices carried out by the school in implementing inclusive education.

The research subjects included the Vice Principal for Student Affairs as the main informant, as well as Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) and subject teachers as supporting informants. These participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their direct involvement and in-depth understanding of the implementation of inclusive education in the school.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. As explained by Sugiyono (2018), qualitative research data are obtained through direct interaction between the researcher and the research subjects. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

The validity of the data was tested based on four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Thus, this method was systematically designed to comprehensively describe the implementation of inclusive education at SMP Negeri 3 Makassar.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of inclusive education in this school has been running *puqulquu* well, although it still faces several challenges. The school has implemented inclusive education policies in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 by admitting students with special needs (ABK) at a quota of two percent of the total new student intake. The national curriculum is applied with adaptive modifications tailored to students' abilities, although the limited availability of Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) remains a major challenge. In addition, the active involvement of parents, the community, and collaboration with partner institutions such as PUSPAGA has strengthened program implementation. However, limitations in disability-friendly physical facilities and varying levels of parental awareness remain obstacles to achieving optimal implementation. Overall, SMPN 3 Makassar has demonstrated a strong commitment as a model inclusive school at the secondary level, grounded in the principles of equality and social justice.

Policy and Student Admission Process for Students with Special Needs

Based on observations at UPT SPF SMPN 3 Makassar, the school has implemented inclusive education policies based on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 concerning inclusive education for students with disabilities and/or special talents. This policy serves as the main guideline for providing equal learning opportunities for all students without discrimination. As a pilot school appointed directly by the Education Office since 2013, SMPN 3

Makassar has made inclusion part of its institutional identity. This policy is realized through an inclusive student admission pathway (PPDB), allocating two percent of the total new student quota each year. This effort reflects the school's commitment to ensuring fair and inclusive access to education for all children, in line with Munawir (2021), who states that inclusive education is a system that enables students with special needs to learn alongside their peers in regular schools to achieve equity and equality in education.

Furthermore, the implementation of inclusive policies is integrated into the school's vision and mission, emphasizing the development of students who are faithful, well-characterized, intelligent, and nationally oriented, regardless of background. Policy socialization is conducted regularly through annual work meetings and parent-teacher meetings at the beginning of the academic year. This demonstrates a collective awareness that inclusive education is not merely an additional program but an integral part of the school system. This aligns with Bahri (2022), who emphasizes that inclusive education requires the readiness of all school components to adapt to student diversity.

In practice, the school applies an initial identification and assessment system for prospective students with special needs through interviews with parents, direct observation, and review of supporting documents such as medical or school records. This assessment is conducted collaboratively by the Vice Principal for Student Affairs and Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers. The purpose is to ensure appropriate educational services and create a conducive learning environment. This is consistent with Juntak et al. (2023), who highlight the importance of needs assessment and evidence-based approaches in inclusive education.

However, due to limitations in facilities and human resources, the school restricts the types of disabilities it can accommodate, including mild learning difficulties, mild autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia, low vision, and mild hearing impairment. This reflects a realistic approach to inclusion based on the school's capacity, as noted by Zakiah, Karsidi, and Yusuf (2021), who argue that successful implementation depends on institutional readiness in providing adequate resources and competent personnel.

Curriculum and Human Resources

Based on observations, SMPN 3 Makassar implements the National Curriculum (K13) with modifications tailored to the needs of students with special needs. Teachers are given flexibility to adapt lesson plans according to students' abilities and characteristics. Assessment is also conducted flexibly, emphasizing participation and individual progress rather than purely academic achievement. This approach aligns with Salim's view that curriculum modification is essential in inclusive education to create meaningful learning experiences.

In terms of human resources, the school has more than ten teachers who have received inclusive education training from the Makassar Education Office. These trainings cover strategies for teaching students with autism, ADHD, and mild learning difficulties. However, the school does not yet have permanent Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) due to budget constraints. As a result, regular teachers must take on dual roles as both instructors and facilitators for students with special needs. This reflects a high level of teacher commitment despite limited resources, consistent with findings by Juntak et al. (2023).

Collaboration among teachers is another key factor supporting inclusive education. At SMPN 3 Makassar, cooperation between BK teachers, subject teachers, and the Vice Principal for Student Affairs is evident in designing adaptive learning programs and monitoring student progress. This collaborative culture aligns with Ariani, Wahyudi, and Rugaiyah (2019), who emphasize the importance of teamwork among educators and parents in supporting inclusive education.

Nevertheless, the absence of permanent GPK remains a major challenge. Regular teachers often face difficulties in addressing the diverse needs of students due to limited specialized training. This finding is consistent with Mularsih (2019), who identifies teacher preparedness as a common issue in inclusive education. Therefore, continuous professional development and policy support for GPK placement are essential.

Parental and Community Involvement

Observations indicate that parental involvement plays a crucial role in the success of inclusive education at SMPN 3 Makassar. Character education begins in the family, as parents are the primary agents in shaping children's intellectual, emotional, and moral development (Astuti and Putri, 2024). Parents act not only as supervisors of academic progress but also as facilitators of therapy and home-based support, particularly for children with autism (Minropa, Khalida, and Wijaya, 2024).

The school actively encourages parental participation through regular meetings, evaluation sessions, and orientation programs. This collaboration reflects a strong partnership between school and family, consistent with Mustika (2024), who highlights the impact of parental involvement on students' confidence, independence, and social skills.

Communication between teachers and parents is maintained through regular progress reports and discussions on appropriate learning strategies. This participatory approach reflects a partnership-based education model, supported by Maghfiroh et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of collaboration in creating supportive learning environments.

Additionally, the school collaborates with external institutions such as PUSPAGA and the Social Affairs Office to provide psychological support and financial assistance. This reflects a community-based inclusive education model, as noted by Juntak et al. (2023). The school also fosters

an inclusive culture by promoting awareness and acceptance among parents of regular students, reducing stigma and discrimination, as supported by Sidiq, Latif, and Nurfaidah (2022).

Mobility and Disability-Friendly Facilities

Observations reveal that SMPN 3 Makassar still faces limitations in providing disability-friendly infrastructure. The school buildings consist of multiple floors without accessibility features such as ramps, lifts, or accessible toilets. As a result, the school cannot accommodate students with severe physical disabilities. This finding aligns with Mularsih (2019), who notes that infrastructure limitations remain a major barrier in inclusive education.

Despite these limitations, the school has made efforts to create a supportive learning environment through classroom arrangements, flexible scheduling, and emotional support. Teachers and staff work collaboratively to ensure that students feel comfortable and included. This supports findings by Amahoru et al. (2024), who emphasize that inclusive environments depend not only on physical facilities but also on psychological and social support.

The school also expects support from local government in the form of funding for inclusive facilities. This expectation aligns with Hangin et al. (2025), who stress the importance of policy and financial support in inclusive education.

Evaluation and Challenges

Evaluation of inclusive education at SMPN 3 Makassar is conducted through administrative and qualitative approaches. Administrative evaluation uses the national education database (Dapodik), while qualitative evaluation involves reflective meetings among teachers. Teachers also prepare Individual Progress Reports for students with special needs, which are shared with parents regularly. This reflects a comprehensive monitoring system covering both academic and social development, consistent with Juntak et al. (2023).

The school also implements authentic assessments through student exhibitions and talent showcases, focusing on students' interests and abilities rather than standardized tests. This aligns with Kasman (2020), who emphasizes the importance of personalized assessment in inclusive education.

However, several challenges remain, including the lack of GPK, limited infrastructure, insufficient funding, and varying levels of parental awareness. These findings are consistent with Halidjah and Asrori (2025), who identify similar barriers in inclusive education implementation.

Despite these challenges, the school demonstrates strong commitment through teacher collaboration, leadership support, and partnerships with external institutions. Strengthening strategies such as GPK training, increased funding, and continuous public awareness are necessary to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of inclusive education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of inclusive education at UPT SPF SMP Negeri 3 Makassar reflects a strong commitment to the principles of equality. This is demonstrated through the provision of a special admission pathway (PPDB) for students with special needs, their integration into regular classrooms, and the application of curriculum modifications and differentiated instruction. These efforts are supported by trained teachers, collaboration with institutions such as PUSPAGA and the Education Office, as well as active parental involvement, which together have contributed to the development of an emerging inclusive ecosystem. However, several limitations remain, including the absence of permanent Special Assistant Teachers (GPK), insufficient disability-friendly facilities, and the lack of fully optimized holistic learning evaluation. These challenges indicate the need for more comprehensive service improvement.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that local governments enhance the provision of GPK personnel and supporting facilities. Meanwhile, schools should strengthen inclusive culture through cross-professional collaboration and the development of evaluation models that balance cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of student development. The involvement of parents, communities, and partner institutions should also be continuously expanded to ensure the sustainability of inclusive education practices that are adaptive, participatory, and responsive to students' needs. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for other schools in developing effective and equitable inclusive education systems.

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