Important Rules for the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Indonesia

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The aim of this study is to find the important rules for the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia. The study was conducted at Mutiara Bunda Primary School (MBPS) of Bandung, Indonesia, which has implemented the inclusion education successfully. The method applied in the research is an interpretative qualitative approach in which data were analysed descriptively. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the representatives of all stakeholders, combined with observation and documentation. The findings of the research are (1) the implementing school should have a commitment at the beginning to exercise the inclusive education, (2) no special label for the SNCs, (3) number of special needs children (SNC) and normal children (NC) in a class should be balanced, (4) a modification of educational infrastructure that is compatible with the needs of the SNCs, (5) the implementing school should develop a contextual or local curriculum that meets the needs of the SNC, (6) a good collaboration between class teacher and the special needs teacher, and (7) a special unit serving the SNCs in accordance with their specific needs. These findings are very important to implement the inclusive education.

Key words: Rules, Implementation, Inclusive Education.

Introduction

The early paradigm of education for special need children (SNC) – formerly called disabled children – applied a segregation system in which SNC were educated at a special school. As a matter of fact, the segregation system had developed exclusivism among the SNC inhibiting them from interacting with normal children (NC). Consequently, the system had made the SNC become alienated in the society. The society became unfamiliar and unfriendly towards SNC on one hand, and the SNC felt isolated from the surrounding people.
In line with the increasing demand to recognise the existence and the rights of SNC the concept of inclusive education was introduced to replace the old system. The new system was applied as a strategic and innovative educational approach in widening the access of SNC to the world of education. In a broad spectrum inclusion education was perceived as an educational reform emphasising anti-discriminative attitudes, equal rights and opportunity, justice, and widening of access to education for all in implementing the nine years compulsory education as well as changing the attitude of society towards SNC. According to Skjorten (2004) a social environment will be inclusive if the system is changed to one in which milieu and facilities are available to meet the demands of all people. In other words, the physical surrounding of the setting should be familiar for the SNC.

Commitment is the basic social capital of MBPS to run the inclusion education from early child education (kindergarten) up to senior high school. In her research, Irawati found that MBPS was successful in implementing the inclusion education that has labelled it as an inclusion school. In the Special Action Competition organized by Cimahi Islamic Primary School, Gareth Ina Ragil Wicaksono representing MBPS won the first price in Al-Qur’an reading. Ragil was a grade 6 student of MBPS who is suffering from eye problems (blindness) but he could pronounce several Al-Qur’ani verses smoothly. At the national event, the junior school of MBPS organised National Inclusion Olympic Games in 2010, attended by inclusion schools all over Indonesia. The olympiad was a venue at which the existence of inclusion schools in sciences and arts was actualised.

The success of the special need students actualising their ability at MBPS indicates that they are treated and given equal opportunity with normal fellows making them interact with each other easily. Teachers, normal students, special needs students and educational staff can obtain knowledge and understanding on inclusive education through their interaction with themselves and outside realities. To quote Berger and Luckmann (1990) saying knowledge is obtained from day-to-day realities of life. The daily life, according to them, is an expression of what people think about, manifested in behaviour, and maintained as the reality of and compatible with what in mind. The daily reality of life is found only through an intersubjective process by which common understanding among people living together is set up. For special needs students, this means sharing the same class with normal students, making them understand that there are different people living together with them. To what extent MBPS implements the inclusive education successfully is interesting to explore, and what the research was focused upon.

Problems Statement

Participation of SNC in the teaching-learning process and in every educational activity indicates the success of MBPS in implementing the inclusion education. The successful
achievement is indicated by mixing the SNC and NC in every school activity without segregating them from each other. The good practices of MBPS in implementing the inclusion education influenced me to do the research by focusing on the following topics: (1) the history of the inclusion education, (2) demographic characteristic of the students, (3) supporting facilities needed in implementing the inclusion education, (4) adaptation and development of curriculum of inclusion education, and (5) the human resources of MBPS as inclusion education institution.

The Concept of Inclusion Education

Inclusion education could be understood as a philosophy and practice in educating SNC within the conventional or regular education management (Bastiana, 2012; Ajuwon, 2009; Bryant, Smith & Bryant, 2008; Salend, 2001). Its basic consideration is every child should be an equal member of the school culture. In other words, SNC can benefit from the class and, on the other hand, NC learns the heterogeneous characters and traits of people.

Inclusion education can be defined as educational services for children with special needs conducted in a conventional or regular school. The SNC learn and interact with teachers and NC in the class. Interaction between NC and their normal fellows is of course different from that between them and the SNC due to the specific conditions of the latter. The SNC interact with other students in their own ways and manner due to their specific conditions. However, though the SNC have different physical and mental conditions from the normal ones, the former don’t feel isolated or that they are a minority in the class. According to Skjorten (Johnsen and Skjorten, 2004), in inclusion education, we don’t talk about the minority of SNC only but all school children, including those who have special needs. Geovanni (2008) points out that teachers teaching in the inclusion school don’t have specific behaviour towards inclusion education. Another researcher, Sutisna (2009), indicates that a majority of extra ordinary school teachers, from the original and specific form of school for disabled children, have positive attitudes towards inclusion education.

Prior to the application of the inclusion education in regular schools, education for SNC was done in the form of integrative education, the second system after the segregation model. According to Skjorten (2003), the integration of SNC into regular school had been done for years but in different ways. The SNC were transferred from special school to regular school when they were assumingly able to follow the learning process in the new school. They were placed in a class which was compatible with their knowledge, not by age.

Different from integration form, the system, environment, and activities in the inclusion education must be adjusted to the needs of all students. In other words, the adjustment process in the regular school is not done by the SNC but by the school. Accordingly,
flexibility, creativity, and sensitivity are very important in planning and implementing the inclusion education.

An inclusion school or class has the following characteristics: (1) all mature children are members of the same group, (2) all children interact with each other, (3) all children help each other in the learning and functioning process, (4) recognition towards the needs and interests of SNC which are different from the majority of NC in the class (Skjorten 2003). This is a linear process where tolerance, solidarity and cohesion between SNC and NC are developed and by which discrimination between them is eliminated.

There are various functioning components in the inclusion education that determine the achievement of the system goals. As mentioned by Syarifuddin & Anzizhan (2004), school components consist of school master, teachers, administrative staff, school supervisors, and students. Infrastructures, facilities, finance, and curriculum are supporting components in the educational process. Among those, according to Syarifuddin & Anzizhan, the most important components in inclusion education are teachers, students, curriculum, and infrastructures.

Method

The research was aimed to deeply find out how MBPS has successfully implemented the inclusion education. In order to gain comprehensive information, the research applied a qualitative method applying interview, observation, and documentary studies. Collecting data instruments were an interview guide, observation sheets, and both written and visual documents. The primary sources of data were foundation management, teachers, and students. Data obtained were analysed in descriptive-interpretative model.

Results

The research results are grouped into five variables, namely (1) the history of MBPS, (2) demographic characteristics of students, (3) infrastructures, (4) adaptation and development of curriculum, and (5) human resources. Each of the variables is analysed and interpreted as follows.

The History of MBPS, Bandung, As An Inclusion School

The history of MBPS, which was established in 1999, cannot be separated from the history of inclusion education since the school from its early year has applied the philosophy of inclusion education in providing educational services. However, as informed by AR (2011), according to an informant, MBPS never declares and labels itself as an inclusion school.
**Demographical Structure of the Students**

When the research was conducted, there were two to three SNC in each class. The number of SNC in the class was based on the ability of the school to provide services. Principally, the school preferred to limit the number, so that optimal services for the students could be provided. Having a big number of students in the class in which some of them are SNC may inhibit the teachers to use proper and varied methods in delivering a subject to them. Accordingly, it is necessary to pay attention to the manageable number of both SNC and NC. It is interesting to note that MBPS does not apply any entry examination in recruiting students, but rather limits the number and balance between SNC and NC according to the capacity of the classroom. The policy is based on the principle of the school that input is not the determining factor in the achievement of students but the process.

**Infrastructures**

All classrooms are equipped with tables and chairs for students but in various forms. Some are in a square shape and others are in a trapezium model. The classroom is set for multi-function. In a learning process that needs to group the students, tables and chairs are set up in 5 or 6 clusters. Student tables and chairs are located around the classroom. A carpet is put in the middle of the classroom which they call ‘circle time’. If the lesson is designed for the group, the students sit in their relevant cluster of the tables and chairs but in the classical method they sit on the carpet. Apart from using the carpet for studying, it is also used by Muslim students to pray.

The classrooms are also equipped with two sets of tables and chairs for teachers, a cupboard for students’ writing tools, baskets for teacher’s work schedule and students’ works, a set of computer and books on the shelves in the room. Special shelves for students’ as well as teachers’ bags and baskets for students’ drinks are provided. A shelf for students’ and teachers’ shoes is provided outside the room. Students’ works, pictures of heroes, Indonesian map, reminder board, cleaning list, and lesson time table are displayed on the wall inside the room.

Sports facilities are also provided in the school such as a mini soccer field, which is mainly used for athletics, a basketball field, and playground. The playground is filled in with sand and completed with slides, and a net for balance training and hanging to strengthen the muscles. The venue is designed specifically to help the students to develop the motor skills, physical agility, and concentration of the students.

The library is an important facility for each school. Hundreds of books, both in Indonesian and English, are found in the library of MBPS. The library collection is used by students as
references in doing their assignments and by the teachers to improve their knowledge. Other than books, national and international magazines as well as a variety of local and national newspapers are also available. Electronic equipment such as a computer, sound system, and DVD player are also available.

Being an inclusion school means that all related facilities to support the learning process for SNC should be provided. A Child Stimulus Unit (USA) is provided to facilitate the need of the SNC. Some of them are requested to take the USA lesson. However, there are also some but not many SNC who cannot get involved in the academic activities during their time in the classroom, rather just develop the relationship through interaction between them and other students. Some SNC take USA as well as other specific lesson. It means that, at particular times they take the USA lesson and at other times they join the NC in the classroom to take other lessons. Apart from facilities that directly support the learning process, there are also some indirect supporting facilities to the process such as the computer room, an arts gallery that is used for art lessons and extracurricular subjects, audio visual room where students train their vocals skills, and the hall. In the computer room 25 computers are installed that are used by the students in a shifting schedule.

The hall at MBPS is a multi-function facility. It is used for Muslim teachers and students to pray, and as an assembly theatre. Every Friday, three classes are scheduled to exhibit an art performance such as drama, reading poetry, and to sing in a choir. Each performance takes 30 minutes. The performances are attended by the students and their parents. At special times, the hall is used as a meeting venue between parents and the school in a program called Parenting Day.

**Adaptation and Development of Curriculum**

The curriculum applied at the MBPS is a combination between national and local curriculum. The local one is developed by the school which is related to its vision and mission. There are subjects in the national curriculum which are not found in the local one and so on the other way round. The subject of ‘Iqra’ for example is designed specifically at MBPS as a typical subject compatible with the vision of the school as an Islamic educational institution. The vision of MBPS is to manage an Islamic school but with global orientation to produce educated children who are able to meet the challenges in the global era, maintain the environment, and be beneficial for the society.

Apart from the subjects mentioned recently, all students at MBPS must take the subject called personality development which is taught twice a week. The substance of the subject is dealing with the development of good students’ personality.
**Human Resources**

The first step to be done before implementing an inclusion education is to establish a good understanding of the teachers concerning the program. For MBPS, the step is kept as a strategy to make the school as the best in the process though the inputs are not the best. Accordingly, all teachers should have a competency in teaching so that they can do their jobs professionally.

It is difficult for professional teachers to adopt the educational concept applied by MBPS because it is different from that taught at the teaching college. On the other hand, for teachers with non-teaching background, it is easy to adjust to and learn the concept because he or she is ‘fresh’. However, recruitment of teachers with a non-teaching background is also based on the competency of the teacher on the subject being taught in the school. For example, a teacher in sciences or mathematics must have qualified know-how in the field concerned so that he or she can teach the subject properly. There are specific requirements applied to the teacher being responsible in the education of SNC.

To improve the quality of teachers, MBPS established a learning and training centre that is managed by a coordinator. The function of the centre is to train the teachers to become professional inclusion instructors and provide them with the ability to collaborate with their colleagues in making time table plans. The program of the centre is designed with routine activities such as weekly evaluations on the performance of the teachers done by the school master, in house training where junior teachers are trained by the most competent fellow in a particular subject, and other incidental activities. Apart from that, MBPS also send the teachers and administrative staff to do comparative studies or to share experience and knowledge with fellow teachers at other schools. This program is called community service that sometimes takes form in a mini workshop.

The experts at MBPS such as the medical doctor, psychologist, and ortopaedagogist are also functioning as consultants to improve the qualification of teachers through unscheduled activities depending on the subject matter being discussed and personal consultation if needed by the teacher. For example, the orthopedagogist holds a meeting with a particular teacher to discuss the case of a particular SNC. An outside expert is sometimes invited by the school as the facilitator in a special event, a seminar, for example.

**Discussion**

Formally using the terminology as ‘Inclusion School’, the term would make the SNC exclusively labelled differently from the NC. As said by Alimin (2004), such terminology may destroy the existence of the student as an individual. Moreover, as stated by Florida
Inclusion Network (2005), inclusion education is based on the need of the student, not on the label of his/her disability. Labelling will make the SNC less confident. For Praptiningrum (2010) inclusion education should be able to raise confidence for the SNC. Since the establishment MBPS keeps the commitment to educate the SNC. Though inclusion education in Indonesia just as a phenomena, MBPS has from the beginning adopted such a concept (Praptiningrum, 2010).

The size of classroom is also important to be considered in order to enable an intense interaction between the teacher and the students. Apart from that, a big size of classroom can be of some obstacles for the adoption of subject materials, the use of different learning method, and learning by the tutors (Mukhopadhyay et all, 2012). The variety model of the equipment enables teachers to adjust the class formation to make it compatible with the learning need. As said by Mumpuniarti (2003), modification of the classroom environment is one of the efforts to accommodate the heterogeneity of SNC.

From the above mentioned description, it is clear cut that provision of facilities for SNC in the regular school is very important. Those facilities should be familiar for them. Accordingly, before implementing the inclusion education the school management should considered the availability of such facilities. Marti (2012) says that school which is unable to provide the facilities that are familiar for the SNC will result in the children having less ability to adjust and no inspiration to study. Wahyono & Toruan (2009) state that the school which does not pay much attention to the development of the facilities and school maintenance for the learning process is a poor school. Accordingly, as suggested by Praviasari & Wardoyo (2012), an innovation to renew the infrastructures in the school is needed. Through optimisation of all educational components, the school will be able to support the development of motoric and psycho-motoric of the SNC.

They learn to develop responsible attitude, discipline, care, cooperation, problem solving ability, concept of self, and motivation. The subject is handled by the school psychologist and supported by class teacher and assistant. The material of the subject is adjusted to the class level. In general, they enjoy the subject because they learn by doing in the form of simulation and games. According to Ashman (2010), the essential and basic factors in the inclusion education are the Universal Design for Learning (UDfL) and differentiation of curriculum.

Through the active learning approach, each student is stimulated to have the willingness to know. Each subject is delivered in an enjoyable and interesting way, for instance through games and simulation. Mastepiori et.al argue that teaching SNC in both specific and inclusion class should implement the curriculum in games from (Baret & Fish, 2011). The teacher should develop his/her teaching method for individual teaching, group formation, evaluation
and technique as well as other assignments that he or she uses in dealing with individual students having equal opportunity to study and access to the same curriculum (Chapman & Gregory, 2002).

In other words, the teachers should have a teaching knowledge and skills background. As emphasized by Surakhmad (2009), qualified learning is produced by qualified teachers. Inclusion education needs qualified teachers who are skillful in teaching and interpersonal relationships with various perspectives (McCann, 2008). Interestingly, it is not the case at MBPS. Recruitment of specific teachers at this school is not in line with the concept of teacher professionalism. The school recruits class teachers with non-teaching backgrounds instead. The reason is because a teacher with a non-teaching background is still fresh, has not been contaminated by the teaching mindset as happens to a professional teacher. As a matter of fact, the educational paradigm adopted by MBPS is freedom in the form of active learning and inclusion.

The teacher must have an orthopedagogic background. Competency in orthopedagogics is necessary because teachers with positive knowledge and attitudes will significantly affect the achievement of the SNC. To meet the requirements, every teacher has to participate in a specific training before implementing the inclusion education to the SNC (Mathis, 2007). McCrudy and Manella strongly argue that a teacher graduated from general education is not sufficiently trained to deal with SNC. Moreover, Kozleskian & Waitoller (2010) suggest the teachers should prepare themselves and pay attention to the surrounding cultural milieu in order to understand, evaluate, and predict the ability of students.

All components collaborate each other in providing services in the implementation of inclusion education to both SNC and NC in order to develop the students’ potency. As indicated by Mukhopadhyay, et.al (2012), there are many factors operating at the macro (school system), meso (classroom), and micro (individual student) level of the educational system that affected the SNC. Accordingly, active involvement of all stake holders and active interaction among the components with each other is what makes the inclusion education a success.

The success of Mutiara Primary School in Bandung, Indonesia, is supported by the provision of Unit Stimulasi Anak (USA) – Children Stimulation Unit – a unit specially provided to help students who need special care. Every student is handled by a special teacher depending on the need of the student. A teacher employed in the unit as a special tutor must have a Special Educational background. He or she has to have a professional competence obtained from formal education and training. In India, most of the assisting tutors are recruited from trained regular teachers. Training for them is focused on the understanding of special needs children (SNC). The teachers were trained in two steps:
the first step is called pre-service training and the second is called in-service training. In the second step training is directed towards understanding the concept of inclusive education, types of Special needs children, teaching approach, and regulations concerning special needs children (Kumar & Kumar, 2007).

Research findings indicate that inclusive education has been implemented in Indonesia for years. The findings also point out that schools applying the new method in educating disabled children have tried to provide infrastructures needed by the program, special tutors, and a modified curriculum. Inclusive education in Indonesia has been well organised as practised in Malaysia. Classes are compiled with multimedia facilities, video and audio used as teaching aids, ruler and pens, hearing aids, and software as learning aids for students. Every student sits individually on a chair in the classroom. Those facilities are not found in some other countries like Bangladesh where blackboards are still used and some students sit on the same bench (Hoque, et al, 2013).

Conclusion

Based on analysis, it can be concluded that in the implementation of inclusive education there should be; (1) the implementing school should have a commitment at the beginning to exercise inclusive education, (2) no special label for the SNCs, (3) number of special needs children (SNC) and normal children (NC) in a class should be balanced, (4) a modification of educational infrastructure that is compatible with the needs of the SNCs, (5) apart from applying national curricula, the implementing school should develop a contextual or local curriculum that meet the needs of the SNC, (6) a good collaboration between class teacher and the specific guiding teacher, and (7) a special unit serving the SNCs in accordance with their specific needs. These findings are very important to implement the inclusive education.
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