Management of Inclusive Education: Insights from SD Plus Darul Ulum, Indonesia

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Abstract: Management of Inclusive Education: Insights from SD Plus Darul Ulum Elementary School in Indonesia. **Objectives**: This study investigates SD Plus Darul Ulum, an Indonesian elementary school, examining its management of inclusive education, interactions, and socialization for special needs children. **Methods:** Using qualitative methods, data was collected through observations and interviews with key stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, parents, and students, then thematically analyzed. **Findings:** Findings reveal SD Plus Darul Ulum's strengths in engagement, student-centered learning, collaboration, diversity appreciation, and supportive physical environment. Teachers adapt methods, utilize diverse resources, and employ flexible assessments, while collaboration involves professionals, parents, and support staff to tailor strategies. The school prioritizes a physically accessible environment, employing Universal Design for Learning principles and assistive technologies. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, SD Plus Darul Ulum's commitment to inclusive education is deeply rooted in theories such as Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Social Constructivism, and Inclusive Education Principles.

Keywords: inclusive education, special needs, elementary school, management strategies.

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◼ INTRODUCTION

In today's educational landscape, inclusive education stands as a cornerstone principle dedicated to providing equitable access to quality education for all learners, irrespective of their abilities, including those with special needs. This concept has evolved beyond mere ideology to become a moral imperative and a legal mandate, as reflected in numerous national and regional regulations. In Indonesia, legislative frameworks such as Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (Sisdiknas), Minister of Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009 on Inclusive Education, and East Java Governor Regulation No. 6 of 2011 on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in East Java Province serve as tangible evidence of the government's unwavering commitment to fostering inclusive practices within educational institutions (Fadhil & Sabic-El-Rayess, 2021). These regulations not only underscore the importance of inclusive education but also provide guidelines and directives for its effective implementation across various educational settings. Thus, inclusive education has transitioned from a mere concept to a legally mandated framework aimed at ensuring that every learner, regardless of their background or abilities, receives the support and resources necessary to thrive in their educational journey.

One such institution that has embraced the principles of inclusive education is SD Plus Darul Ulum, an elementary school located in Jombang,

East Java, Indonesia. At SD Plus Darul Ulum, the provision of educational services for children with special needs is guided by a commitment to inclusivity and equity. The concept of inclusive education emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments that accommodate the diverse needs of all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities (Wilson, 2017). It is rooted in the belief that every child has the right to access quality education in an environment that fosters their holistic development. Inclusive education not only benefits students with special needs by providing them with equal learning opportunities but also enriches the educational experience of all students by promoting diversity, empathy, and understanding (Pradhan & Naik, 2024).

SD Plus Darul Ulum exemplifies the principles of inclusive education through its commitment to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students. The school ensures that children with special needs are not only included but actively engaged in the learning process alongside their peers. This approach aligns with national and regional regulations that emphasize the importance of accommodating the diverse needs of learners and promoting inclusivity in educational settings.

The primary objective of this research is to explore how SD Plus Darul Ulum manages inclusive education for children with special needs, in facilitating interaction and socialization among students. By delving into the practical aspects of inclusive education at the school, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the strategies employed and challenges encountered in managing inclusive classrooms. Additionally, the study seeks to identify potential areas for improvement and best practices that can inform the development of inclusive education programs in similar contexts.

While there exists a substantial body of literature on inclusive education, much of the research has primarily concentrated on mainstream schools, leaving a noticeable gap in understanding the implementation of inclusive practices within specialized settings like SD Plus Darul Ulum. Previous studies (e.g., Kim, Florian, & Pantiæ, 2022; Knight & Crick, 2022; Alexiadou & Essex, 2016) have predominantly delved into policy analysis or explored general inclusive practices, thereby offering only limited insights into the specific strategies inherent in managing inclusive classrooms within specialized institutions. For instance, research by Kim, Florian, & Pantiæ (2022) conducted in mainstream schools emphasized the importance of teacher training and professional development in fostering inclusive practices but did not delve into the unique dynamics of specialized settings. Similarly, a study by Knight & Crick (2022) highlighted the significance of parental involvement in promoting inclusivity but did not explore its implications within specialized educational contexts. Therefore, this research seeks to bridge this gap by conducting a comprehensive investigation into the practical aspects of inclusive education at SD Plus Darul Ulum, shedding light on the unique strategies and outcomes associated with managing inclusive classrooms in specialized settings.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the implementation of inclusive practices within a specialized educational setting like SD Plus Darul Ulum. While previous studies have touched upon aspects of inclusive education, they have predominantly centered on mainstream schools, overlooking the distinctive dynamics of specialized institutions. By narrowing the scope to SD Plus Darul Ulum, this research endeavors to offer a nuanced understanding of the practical strategies involved in fostering inclusivity within such settings. Additionally, by delving into the unique context of SD Plus Darul Ulum, this study aims to provide insights that can inform policy and practice not only within the institution itself but also in similar specialized educational settings.

Thus, the research contributes to filling the existing gap in literature by offering valuable insights into the practical aspects of inclusive education in specialized contexts, thereby advancing our understanding of how inclusive practices can be effectively implemented to support the diverse needs of students in such settings.

The findings of this research are expected to have several implications for theory, practice, and policy in the field of inclusive education. Firstly, the study can contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the strategies and challenges associated with managing inclusive classrooms in specialized settings. Secondly, the identification of best practices and potential areas for improvement can inform the development of guidelines and recommendations for enhancing inclusive education provision in similar contexts. Ultimately, the research aims to support efforts towards creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students, irrespective of their diverse learning needs.

■ **METHODS**

This study involved a select group of participants from SD Plus Darul Ulum, comprising 3 teachers, 2 administrators, 2 parents, and 10 students. These participants were strategically chosen to provide diverse insights into the various aspects of inclusive education. Engaging multiple stakeholder groups allowed for a comprehensive examination of the lived experiences and management practices pertaining to inclusive education within the school.

Employing a qualitative case study approach, this research aimed to delve into how inclusive education was managed at SD Plus Darul Ulum. Data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with the selected participants and performing direct observations in the inclusive classrooms. The combination of these methods enabled an in-depth exploration of the practical implementation of inclusive education strategies and the day-to-day challenges faced within these environments.

The research instruments included semi-structured interview guides and classroom observation checklists, whose contents had been validated by two experts. The interview guides were crafted to facilitate detailed discussions about the experiences, strategies, and challenges related to inclusive education. Similarly, observation checklists were designed to systematically capture the dynamics and interactions within the classrooms, ensuring reliable and nuanced data collection.

Thematic analysis was applied to the data collected from both interviews and observations. This method involved systematic coding and categorization to identify and analyze patterns and themes concerning the management of inclusive classrooms. The analysis provided a detailed understanding of the recurring strategies and persistent challenges, which were instrumental in framing the conclusions and recommendations of the study. These insights are expected to contribute to the enhancement of best practices and program development for inclusive education in similar settings.

■ **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of analysis (as presented in table 1) emphasize the commitment of SD Plus Darul Ulum to inclusive education. This commitment is evident through various initiatives aimed at ensuring the engagement and active participation of all students in the classroom. The school emphasizes creating learning experiences that are accessible and relevant to each student, fostering an inclusive atmosphere where every student feels valued and encouraged to participate. Moreover, the school's dedication to student-centered learning is highlighted through the implementation of individualized learning plans tailored to meet the specific needs of each student, promoting

academic success and supporting social and emotional development. Additionally, SD Plus Darul Ulum emphasizes collaboration and teamwork among teachers, parents, and other professionals to support diverse learning needs and create a supportive physical environment that is accessible to all students, further enhancing the inclusivity of the educational experience.

Table 1. Aspect of inclusive learning management at sd plus darul ulum

No	Aspect of Inclusive Learning Management	Description
1	Engagement and Active Participation of All Students	Ensuring teachers create learning experiences that are accessible and relevant to all students, fostering active participation within the classroom.
2	Student-Centered Learning	A testament to the commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that no child is left behind, and every student has the opportunity to thrive in their educational journey.
3	Collaboration and Team Support	Ensuring teamwork to develop learning strategies, design individualized learning plans, and provide appropriate support for students with special needs.
4	Appreciation for Diversity and Inclusivity	Ensuring differentiation in learning, using varied teaching materials, and adjusting evaluation methods to accommodate diverse needs.
5	Supportive Physical Environment	Creating a physical environment that supports accessibility for all students, including facilities accessible to those with mobility or sensory needs.

Theme 1. Enhancing Engagement and Active Participation of All Students at SD Plus Darul Ulum.

The theme underscores the critical role of teachers in creating accessible and relevant learning experiences, particularly for children with special needs. This commitment to fostering an inclusive educational environment is foundational, aligning with the principles of inclusive education (Croft & Brown, 2020). Each teacher at SD Plus Darul Ulum is dedicated to understanding the unique needs of every student and adapting their teaching methods accordingly, thus supporting diversity and providing equal opportunities for development. By leveraging technology, up-to-date teaching materials, and innovative instructional methods, teachers actively engage children in their learning experiences (Zhang et al., 2021; McKnight et al., 2016).

Moreover, fostering collaboration among students is another crucial aspect of SD Plus Darul Ulum's inclusive education strategy. Within this supportive environment, students with special needs experience a sense of value and acceptance, essential for their confidence and overall development (Addy et al., 2023). This approach transforms the school into a nurturing environment conducive to personal growth and social skills development. Learning transcends mere curriculum adherence; it aims to lay a robust

foundation for every student, including those with special needs (Acedo & Hughes, 2014).

The steadfast commitment of SD Plus Darul Ulum to inclusive education is further evident in its alignment with various theories of special education and inclusive learning (Addy et al., 2023). Emphasizing the creation of accessible and relevant learning experiences tailored to diverse needs, the school's approach aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Zhang et al., 2021). By employing a range of inclusive teaching methods and integrating various instructional strategies, teachers address the unique learning profiles of students with special needs, fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment (Farmer et al., 2019). This approach not only facilitates academic success but also promotes active engagement and contribution, nurturing a supportive learning community (Addy et al., 2023).

Theme 2. Student-Centered Learning at SD Plus Darul Ulum.

The inclusive learning practices at SD Plus Darul Ulum are meticulously designed to cater to the individual needs of each student, illustrating a firm commitment to inclusivity (DeMatthews, Serafini, & Watson, 2021). Recognizing the diverse learning styles, abilities, and specific needs of students, the school prioritizes tailored education for every individual. This approach underscores the school's dedication to inclusivity, ensuring equitable opportunities for every student to thrive in their educational journey, leaving no child behind (Alam & Mohanty, 2023).

Teachers at SD Plus Darul Ulum are integral to fostering an inclusive learning environment by comprehensively understanding the diversity present in students' learning styles, abilities, and unique needs. Acknowledging the uniqueness of each student, teachers actively embrace differentiation in their instructional methods

(Bondie, Dahnke & Zusho, 2019). This involves adapting teaching materials, methods, and assessment techniques to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of individual students, creating an inclusive atmosphere where each student feels valued for their unique qualities (Harris, 2018).

Moreover, the school demonstrates its commitment to inclusive education through the provision of a diverse range of teaching materials (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2016). SD Plus Darul Ulum ensures the availability of a variety of learning resources tailored to different learning preferences and abilities. These resources, such as audio-visual aids, supplementary materials, and interactive tools, are strategically designed to support the diverse needs of students, aiming to enhance the inclusivity and enrich the educational experience for all (Harris, 2018).

Additionally, SD Plus Darul Ulum emphasizes the adjustment of evaluation methods to suit diverse needs, ensuring a fair and inclusive assessment environment (Fu, Hadjioannou, & Zhou, 2019). The school adopts flexible assessment strategies that encompass traditional tests, project-based assessments, and alternative methods. This flexibility enables students to demonstrate their understanding in alignment with their individual abilities, further reinforcing the school's commitment to inclusivity in education (Bondie, Dahnke, & Zusho, 2019).

Theme 3. Collaboration and Team Support in Inclusive Learning at SD Plus Darul Ulum.

At SD Plus Darul Ulum, there is a concerted effort to cultivate teamwork for the purpose of devising effective learning strategies, crafting individualized learning plans, and providing tailored support for students with special needs. The school recognizes that collaboration among teachers, specialists, and support staff is crucial in establishing an inclusive learning environment that addresses the diverse needs of every student.

This collaborative approach allows for the pooling of expertise from various professionals, ensuring that comprehensive and personalized learning strategies are developed to meet the unique requirements of each student (Caena & Redecker, 2019). By fostering a culture of teamwork, SD Plus Darul Ulum promotes a supportive and inclusive educational environment where all students can thrive and succeed.

Teamwork is fundamental to the school's approach, especially in the development of learning strategies (Caena & Redecker, 2019). Various professionals, including special education specialists, regular classroom teachers, and support staff, collaborate to pool their expertise. This collaborative effort enables the creation of comprehensive and customized learning strategies tailored to the unique needs of each student. Leveraging the collective knowledge and experience of the team ensures that students with special needs receive holistic and personalized education, optimizing their potential for success.

The commitment to teamwork extends beyond individualized planning to the ongoing development of broader learning strategies. Teams at SD Plus Darul Ulum collaboratively explore innovative and inclusive teaching methods catering to diverse learning styles and abilities within the classroom. This collaborative endeavor facilitates a fruitful exchange of ideas and experiences, contributing to the continuous enhancement of teaching practices and the overall learning environment (Barkley, Major, & Cross, 2014).

Furthermore, the school underscores the importance of collaboration not only among teachers and specialists but also involving parents and guardians. Regular communication channels are established to ensure that the support provided at school is reinforced consistently at home. This collaborative approach fosters a unified and supportive network around each student, promoting a more comprehensive and

effective learning experience (Almusharraf & Khahro, 2020).

SD Plus Darul Ulum has positioned itself as a beacon of inclusive education, placing collaboration and team support at the core of its learning environment for children with special needs. This approach is deeply rooted in various theories related to the education of children with special needs. One prominent theory aligning with SD Plus Darul Ulum's collaborative ethos is the "Social Model of Disability," emphasizing society's role in creating barriers for individuals with disabilities and highlighting the importance of collaboration in dismantling these barriers (Hoare, Bott, & Robinson, 2017).

Additionally, the school's collaborative efforts resonate with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By bringing together special education specialists, regular classroom teachers, and support staff, SD Plus Darul Ulum establishes a zone where collective expertise contributes to the development of tailored learning plans. This collaborative approach enables the school to guide students just beyond their current abilities, facilitating optimal learning and growth (McKnight et al., 2016).

Theme 4. Appreciation for Diversity and Inclusivity at SD Plus Darul Ulum.

In the context of education at SD Plus Darul Ulum for children with special needs, a pivotal focus is placed on ensuring differentiation in learning, utilizing varied teaching materials, and adjusting evaluation methods to accommodate diverse needs. The school is dedicated to recognizing and responding to the individual learning styles, abilities, and unique requirements of each student, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

At SD Plus Darul Ulum, differentiation in learning is considered a fundamental principle. Teachers are committed to tailoring their

instructional methods to meet the diverse needs of students. This involves adapting the complexity and format of instructional content to ensure that each student has the opportunity to engage with the material in a manner that aligns with their individual needs. By recognizing and accommodating the unique learning styles within the classroom, the school cultivates an environment where every student can learn and thrive at their own pace.

To further enrich the learning experience, SD Plus Darul Ulum places a strong emphasis on utilizing varied teaching materials. The school actively seeks to offer a diverse range of resources, including audio-visual aids, supplementary materials, and interactive tools. These resources are strategically designed to cater to different learning preferences and abilities. For example, auditory learners may benefit from podcasts or recorded lectures, while visual learners may find graphic organizers or visual aids helpful. This provision of a variety of resources ensures that each student has access to materials that resonate with their unique learning styles, fostering a more inclusive and enriching educational experience.

Moreover, the school acknowledges the importance of adjusting evaluation methods to suit diverse needs. Assessment strategies are flexible and may include a combination of traditional tests, project-based assessments, and alternative methods. This adaptability allows students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that align with their individual abilities, ensuring that the assessment process is fair and inclusive.

SD Plus Darul Ulum's unwavering commitment to fostering appreciation for diversity and inclusivity within its inclusive learning environment is deeply rooted in theories related to special education. The school's approach aligns with several key theories that emphasize the importance of tailored strategies for children with special needs.

One notable theory that resonates with SD Plus Darul Ulum's commitment is the "Universal Design for Learning" (UDL) framework. UDL promotes the use of varied instructional methods, materials, and assessments to accommodate diverse learners (Evmenova, 2018). The school's provision of a diverse range of teaching materials, including audio-visual aids, supplementary materials, and interactive tools, directly aligns with the UDL principles of providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. This ensures that each student, regardless of their unique abilities, has access to resources that cater to their specific learning styles.

Furthermore, SD Plus Darul Ulum's implementation of differentiated learning strategies reflects the principles of the "Differentiated Instruction" theory. This theory advocates for tailoring teaching methods to individual students' strengths, preferences, and challenges. By recognizing and addressing the diverse learning styles within the classroom, teachers at the school adhere to the core tenets of differentiated instruction, creating an inclusive learning environment that values each student's uniqueness (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016).

The emphasis on flexible evaluation methods at SD Plus Darul Ulum aligns with the principles of "Authentic Assessment". Authentic assessment encourages the use of varied evaluation techniques, such as project-based assessments, to allow students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that align with their individual abilities (McDermott, et al., 2017). This approach ensures that assessment methods are not a barrier to diverse learners, fostering a more inclusive educational experience.

Theme 5. Supportive Physical Environment at SD Plus Darul Ulum.

In the realm of education at SD Plus Darul Ulum, the commitment to inclusivity extends beyond the curriculum to creating a physical

environment that ensures accessibility for all students, particularly addressing the unique needs of children with special requirements. The school places great emphasis on establishing a welcoming and accommodating atmosphere, ensuring that every student, regardless of their abilities, can fully participate in the learning experience. This dedication to inclusivity reflects the school's ethos of providing equal opportunities for all learners, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among students with diverse needs.

One of the key initiatives at SD Plus Darul Ulum involves the meticulous design of facilities to cater to the diverse needs of students. This includes the creation of spaces that are easily accessible to those with mobility challenges, ensuring ramps, elevators, and other accommodations are in place. The school also takes into account the sensory needs of students by incorporating features that enhance accessibility for those with visual or auditory sensitivities (Zhang & Zhou, 2020).

Moreover, SD Plus Darul Ulum invests in adaptive technologies and resources to supplement the physical environment, making sure that learning materials are available in various formats to accommodate different learning styles. This approach aims to create an inclusive setting where every student can engage with the educational environment comfortably and effectively (Cook, 2019). Cook's research (2019) provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of adaptive technologies in enhancing the learning experience for students with diverse needs. Their findings underscore the significance of such investments in promoting inclusivity and ensuring equitable access to educational resources, aligning closely with SD Plus Darul Ulum's commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment.

By prioritizing the creation of an accessible physical environment, SD Plus Darul Ulum not only meets the immediate needs of students with special requirements but also sends a powerful message of inclusivity and respect for diversity. This commitment fosters a sense of belonging among all students, contributing to a positive and supportive learning community where every child can thrive (Masika & Jones, 2016). Additionally, research by Ackah-Jnr & Danso (2019) highlights the significant impact of inclusive physical environments on students' overall well-being and academic performance. Their findings suggest that schools that prioritize accessibility and inclusivity tend to have higher levels of student engagement and satisfaction, further emphasizing the importance of SD Plus Darul Ulum's commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment.

SD Plus Darul Ulum's commitment to inclusive education is manifested in its emphasis on creating a supportive and accessible physical environment for all students, particularly those with special needs. This dedication aligns seamlessly with key theories in special education that underscore the importance of a conducive and accommodating learning space. For instance, the school's proactive approach to designing facilities and integrating assistive technologies reflects its adherence to the principles of universal design and assistive technology. These efforts not only enhance accessibility but also promote equity and inclusion, fostering an environment where every student can thrive regardless of their abilities.

One foundational theory that resonates with SD Plus Darul Ulum's approach is the "Universal Design for Learning" (UDL) framework. The installation of ramps throughout the school premises exemplifies the UDL principle of providing multiple means of representation and engagement (Evmenova, 2018). This physical modification ensures that students with mobility challenges have equitable access to different areas of the school, promoting a sense of inclusivity and equal participation.

The utilization of assistive technologies at SD Plus Darul Ulum aligns with the "Assistive Technology" theory, emphasizing the use of tools to support the learning needs of individuals with disabilities. By incorporating audio devices, screen readers, and adaptive computer interfaces, the school addresses diverse learning needs, ensuring that students with sensory challenges can access educational resources effectively (Ahmed, 2018). This strategic integration of assistive technologies underscores the school's commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment where all students can actively engage in the educational process, regardless of their individual abilities or challenges. Additionally, it reflects a proactive approach to meeting the diverse needs of learners, promoting equitable access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Furthermore, the intentional design of classroom layouts at SD Plus Darul Ulum aligns with the principles of "Universal Design for Learning Environments". Flexible seating arrangements, easily adjustable furniture, and spatial considerations cater to students with physical disabilities, promoting an inclusive and accessible classroom setting (Nasir et al., 2024). This approach reflects a commitment to creating an environment where every student can comfortably engage with the learning process, fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring that physical barriers do not impede their educational journey.

■ CONCLUSIONS

SD Plus Darul Ulum's commitment to inclusive education is deeply rooted in theories like Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Social Constructivism, and Inclusive Education Principles. Their approach prioritizes engagement and active participation, creating a dynamic and inclusive learning environment tailored to each student's diverse needs. Influenced by Differentiated Instruction Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory, their student-centered learning ensures no child is left behind, addressing unique learning profiles. Collaboration among teachers, specialists, support staff, and parents ensures a tailored approach to education, integrating diversity and inclusivity through differentiation in learning, varied teaching materials, and flexible evaluation methods. In essence, SD Plus Darul Ulum's multifaceted approach, inspired by various theories, fosters personal growth, social skills, and self-confidence, contributing to the development and success of every child.

Educators can learn from SD Plus Darul Ulum's holistic approach to inclusive education. This emphasizes prioritizing engagement, active participation, and personalized learning experiences tailored to students' diverse needs. Collaborative efforts among stakeholders are crucial for customizing education and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Embracing student-centered practices, inspired by Constructivist Learning Theory, empowers students to construct knowledge and engage meaningfully in learning.

The study at SD Plus Darul Ulum may have limitations regarding the generalizability of their inclusive education approach to diverse contexts. While effective within their school, its success may not translate universally across various cultural, social, and institutional settings. Additionally, the study might lack quantitative data to assess the impact of their practices on student outcomes, making it difficult to evaluate their overall effectiveness. Further research with quantitative measures across varied contexts is needed for a comprehensive understanding of SD Plus Darul Ulum's inclusive education practices.

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