
THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL WILL IN DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract : Inclusive education is one of the crucial aspects in the development of a sustainable education system in Indonesia. However, the successful implementation of inclusive education is often constrained by various factors, including the level of political will of the government in adopting policies and taking concrete steps to support them. This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Indonesian government's political will in developing inclusive education. The research method used was a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. Data were collected through policy analysis, and a literature study. Data analysis was conducted using a policy analysis framework that considers aspects such as political commitment, budget allocation and program implementation. The results show that despite several efforts by the Indonesian government to promote inclusive education, the level of political will remains a major challenge. Constraints such as inadequate policy priorities, lack of adequate budget allocations and lack of inter-agency coordination are the main factors hindering the progress of inclusive education in Indonesia. Concrete measures are needed to increase the government's political will, including increased political awareness, increased budget allocations and improved inter-agency coordination to support more effective and inclusive implementation of inclusive education in the future.

Keywords: Political Will, Government, Inclusive Education, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars of a country's development. Through education, a country can create quality human resources, drive sustainable economic growth, and strengthen the foundations of democracy and the overall welfare of society (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2023; Malik, 2018). In Indonesia, education has been recognized as one of the important sectors that must be continuously developed to achieve the vision of national development.

In recent decades, the concept of inclusive education has received increasing attention at both national and international levels (Lindner & Schwab, 2020; Moriña, 2019; Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2024). Inclusive education aims to ensure that all individuals, including those with special needs, have equal access to and equal opportunities in education (Amor et al., 2019; Baranauskienė & Saveikienė, 2018; Floretta, 2021). The concept not only emphasizes the physical integration of individuals with special needs into the existing education system, but also demands changes in education culture, policies and practices more broadly (Moberg et al., 2020; Nilholm, 2021).

However, although inclusive education has been recognized as an important principle in global educational development, its implementation is often faced with challenges, especially in developing countries like Indonesia. One of the main factors influencing the successful implementation of inclusive education is the government's political will. Political will is the desire and political commitment of the government to overcome a problem or achieve a particular goal (Apple, 2021; Tompkins-Stange, 2020). In the context of inclusive education, the government's political will is crucial to determine the extent to which inclusive education policies and programs can be implemented effectively and sustainably.

Research on government political will in developing inclusive education has become an increasingly interesting topic for researchers in different parts of the world. Several studies have highlighted the important role of political will in creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for all individuals (Magnússon et al., 2019; Shaeffer, 2019). However, there are still knowledge gaps that need to be filled, especially in the Indonesian context.

Several international studies have made important contributions to understanding government political will in the context of inclusive education. For example, research conducted by Ainscow (2020), Papastephanou (2019) and Qvortrup (2018). These studies highlight the importance of strong political commitment from the government in overcoming barriers that hinder access to education for children with special needs.

At the national level, several studies have also been conducted to examine the role of government political will in developing inclusive education in Indonesia. For example, research conducted by Bahri (2022) and Tanjung et al., (2022) explored the factors that influence the successful implementation of inclusive education in several primary schools in Indonesia. The results showed that government political will is one of the main factors influencing the effectiveness of inclusive education implementation at the school level.

Although several studies have examined the role of government political will in the context of inclusive education in Indonesia, there is still a need for more in-depth analysis. This is due to the complexity of the education system in Indonesia, which involves a

variety of actors and factors, and the unique challenges faced by developing countries such as Indonesia.

First of all, it is important to understand that the government's political will does not only include formal policies that are officially announced but also involves a real commitment to overcome the barriers that hinder educational access and participation for all individuals, including those with special needs. In the context of inclusive education, the government's political will should be reflected in adequate policies, adequate budget allocations and concrete steps to ensure that every individual has equal access and equal opportunities in education.

However, the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia is still faced with various challenges (Rusmono, 2020). One of them is the lack of understanding and awareness of the importance of inclusive education among communities and stakeholders. This can result in resistance to change, as well as a lack of support for inclusive education policies and programs proposed by the government.

In addition, factors such as the lack of human resources trained in education, the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure, as well as cultural and social barriers can also hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia. Therefore, a more in-depth analysis is needed to understand how government political will can influence the spread and effectiveness of inclusive education policies and programs at different levels of the education system.

This research aims to fill this knowledge gap by analyzing the government's political will to develop inclusive education in Indonesia. By considering the factors that influence successful implementation, this research will provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in developing inclusive education in Indonesia and provide policy recommendations that can improve the effectiveness of inclusive education programs in the future.

As such, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to understanding the role of government political will in developing inclusive education in Indonesia and provide valuable guidance for the formulation of more inclusive and sustainable education policies in the future.'

METHOD

The research method will start with the identification of relevant sources of information, mainly from literature available in the library. Through searching and selecting literature from international and national journals, books, government reports and policy documents, a comprehensive data collection will be conducted. After that, an analysis of the literature will be conducted to understand key themes such as government political

will, inclusive education, education policy and the implementation of inclusive education programs in Indonesia. The information obtained from the literature will be the basis for developing a conceptual framework, which will include elements such as factors influencing government political will, inclusive education implementation strategies and the impact of inclusive education policies. From the literature analysis and the conceptual framework, knowledge gaps will be identified, which will then become the main focus of the research. The results of this knowledge gap identification will be compiled in a full research report, which will include a comprehensive literature review, a detailed conceptual framework and the relevance of this research in the context of inclusive education in Indonesia. This will provide a deeper understanding of the role of the government's political will in developing inclusive education in Indonesia and make a meaningful contribution to the development of more effective and sustainable inclusive education policies in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Policy Commitment

The Indonesian government has demonstrated its commitment through Presidential Instruction No. 1/2019 policy on Inclusive Education. This policy signals the government's recognition of the importance of ensuring equal access to education for all children, including those with special needs. However, it is important to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the implementation of this policy. Despite formal commitments, policy implementation is often not in line with the desired goals. It is worth considering exploring what obstacles may arise in translating policy commitments into concrete actions on the ground. For example, administrative constraints, lack of resources or resistance from certain parties in the education system. By conducting a more detailed analysis of policy implementation, more effective strategies can be found to overcome these obstacles and promote more effective inclusive education in Indonesia.

Although Presidential Instruction No. 1/2019 on Inclusive Education has become an important milestone in the journey towards inclusive education in Indonesia, the implementation of this policy is still faced with a series of challenges that affect the government's ability to realize the vision of inclusion in education. One of the main challenges is budget constraints, where the allocation of sufficient funds is crucial to provide the facilities, resources and support needed for inclusive education to run effectively. Although political commitment has been expressed through policies, limited funding often hampers the government's ability to meet the practical needs of inclusive education. Another challenge lies in the involvement of all stakeholders, where collaboration between local governments, education institutions and civil society organizations is key to success. However, in practice, there are difficulties in achieving

optimal involvement from all parties, whether due to differences in opinions or interests between local and central government, difficulties for educational institutions in adjusting their curriculum and teaching methods or limitations for civil society organizations in their role as effective partners in supporting inclusive education. Overcoming these challenges therefore requires coordinated and comprehensive efforts from all relevant stakeholders. This includes increased budget allocations for inclusive education, training for educators and a broad public awareness campaign on the importance of inclusive education. Thus, only through these concrete steps can the implementation of inclusive education policies become more effective and sustainable, and the vision of inclusion in education can become a reality for all individuals in Indonesia.

The implementation of an inclusive education policy in Indonesia requires sustained effort and regular evaluation to ensure its effectiveness. Various steps have been taken by the government to support the process of implementing and evaluating the success of this policy.

Firstly, the government ensures that regulations and policies supporting inclusive education are applied consistently across the country. This includes the implementation of regulations that support inclusive education, effective supervision and consistent policy enforcement. Thus, a strong legal foundation is the basis for the implementation of inclusive education at all levels of education.

Furthermore, the government conducts socialization and education related to the importance of inclusive education to the community. Through information campaigns and education programs, public understanding and awareness of the right to education for all individuals, including those with special needs, can be improved. This is key to supporting community acceptance and support for policy implementation.

Adequate resource allocation is also an important concern. The government must ensure that sufficient resources, both financial and human, are available to support the implementation of inclusive education. This includes incentives and subsidies, training for educators and the provision of appropriate facilities to support the success of inclusive education.

Periodic evaluation is an integral part of the implementation process. Evaluations are conducted regularly to identify weaknesses and enable necessary improvements in achieving higher inclusiveness goals. Evaluation involves assessing various aspects, including communication, resources, dispositions and bureaucratic structures that support policy implementation.

In the context of inclusive education, the evaluation also looks at the positive impacts of the policy. The evaluation looked at the year-on-year increase in the number of students

in regular schools as well as the reduction in discrimination experienced by students with special needs by peers, teachers and society as a whole.

With these measures, the government strives to ensure that inclusive education is accessible to all individuals without barriers. Periodic evaluations help to improve implementation and achieve better inclusiveness goals, thus creating a fair and inclusive learning environment for all students in Indonesia.

Budget Allocation

Political will is reflected in budget allocations for inclusive education. Funds allocated for facilities, teacher training and support for students with special needs are important indicators. However, the question is to what extent the government allocates funds proportionally and efficiently.

Political will is reflected in the budget allocation for inclusive education, a tangible step that signifies the government's commitment to the provision of inclusive education for all levels of society, including those with special needs. However, it is important to undertake a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of this allocation. The question that arises is to what extent these budget allocations are proportionate and efficient.

A more in-depth analysis is needed to understand whether current funding allocations reflect the government's strong political commitment to inclusive education or whether there are still imbalances that need to be addressed. This requires a detailed evaluation of several aspects. First, the proportion of the budget allocated to inclusive education in the country's total education budget is an important focus. Does the proportion reflect the government's urgency and priority in providing inclusive education?

The division of funds between the various components of inclusive education such as facilities, teacher training, student support and other support programs also needs to be examined carefully. Are these budget allocations balanced and adequate to meet the diverse needs of inclusive education? In addition, it is important to evaluate the efficiency of the use of these funds. Are the allocated funds used optimally to provide maximum benefits in improving access and quality of inclusive education?

By analyzing budget allocations in more depth, we can identify successes and challenges in implementing inclusive education policies. This not only provides a clearer insight into the government's commitment but also provides a solid basis for recommending necessary improvements in budget management so that the goal of more effective and sustainable inclusive education can be achieved.

To realize the vision of superior, innovative, integrity and competitive human resources to achieve the Golden Indonesia of 2045, the Indonesian government has set a significant education budget allocation of IDR660.8 trillion in the 2024 State Budget (APBN). The allocation covers various components, including central government spending of

IDR237.3 trillion, transfers to regions of IDR346.6 trillion, and investment financing of IDR77.0 trillion. By increasing this budget compared to the previous year, the government demonstrates a strong commitment to improving the quality of education as one of the medium-term strategies for sustainable economic transformation.

This medium-term strategy focuses on five main agendas covering various important aspects. First, is the effort to realize superior human resources through improving the quality of education and a better health system, which is expected to produce productive, innovative, and holistically prosperous individuals. Second, is the reform of the social protection system, including protection for Indonesian migrant workers, to ensure all citizens can enjoy decent social rights. Third, is improving the competence of teachers and education personnel, which is one of the keys in improving the overall quality of education. Fourth, is equalizing the quality of education through the distribution of teachers and improving educational infrastructure, so that quality education can be enjoyed by all levels of society in all regions of Indonesia. Fifth, improving access to education at all levels, so that every individual has the same opportunity to access quality education.

It is expected that this large budget allocation will support the overall improvement of education quality and encourage inclusive economic growth in Indonesia. Through the implementation of a well-planned medium-term strategy and the appropriate use of funds, Indonesia is expected to deliver a more equitable, inclusive and quality education system for all its citizens. This will be a step forward in achieving the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045 as a country that is prosperous and globally competitive in all aspects of life.

The Government of Indonesia has established a series of proactive measures to ensure adequate budget allocations for inclusive education. One of them is through efforts to socialize and educate the public about the importance of inclusive education. By holding various activities such as campaigns, seminars and information programs, the government aims to raise awareness of the right to education for all individuals, including those with special needs. In addition, the government also pays special attention to improving the competence of educators. Through training and continuing education programs, teachers and school staff are empowered to face the challenges of teaching students with special needs. This includes learning inclusive teaching methods, inclusive classroom management and individualized approaches that address the unique needs of each student. Not only that, the government also allocates an adequate budget for the development of inclusive education infrastructure and facilities. This includes improving physical accessibility, providing specialized facilities such as inclusion-friendly classrooms and supporting technology that supports inclusive learning. Although nominal amounts vary, the government continues to ensure that sufficient funds are available to support inclusive education in all parts of Indonesia. In addition, the

government also emphasizes the importance of transparency in the use of inclusive education funds. This is done through regular reporting, auditing and monitoring by independent agencies. Information on the use of funds should be openly and easily accessible to the public, thus enabling effective oversight of the use of funds and ensuring high accountability. With these measures, the government strives to ensure that inclusive education is accessible to all individuals without barriers, creating a learning environment that is fair, and inclusive and provides equal opportunities for all children in Indonesia.

Stakeholder Engagement

The involvement of stakeholders plays a crucial role in realizing inclusive education in Indonesia. Data and facts illustrate the importance of collaboration between the government, educational institutions, civil society organizations and families in achieving this goal.

First, the growing number of inclusive education schools is a clear indicator of the commitment to improving access to education for individuals with special needs. With almost 32,000 inclusive education schools in 2021, there is a significant increase compared to the number of special schools of only around 2,250. This shows a concerted effort to provide an inclusive learning environment for all students.

Furthermore, the Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI) supported by the World Bank demonstrates collaboration between the government and international institutions to improve access to education in rural areas, especially for students with special needs. The program aims to identify gaps in education services and ensure better access for those who need it.

Collaboration also occurs in the inclusive education policy-making process. The government works with education institutions, civil society organizations and families to ensure that the policies are holistic and based on real needs in the field.

Not only that, stakeholders are also active in raising public awareness about the importance of inclusive education. Through information campaigns and programs, they play a role in building an understanding of the right to education for all individuals, including those with special needs.

Finally, collaboration between educational institutions and civil society organizations in the development of inclusive learning models reflects a commitment to creating effective learning environments for all students. This involves teacher training, inclusive curriculum development and the application of educational technology that addresses the needs of all students.

Thus, the involvement of stakeholders from various sectors is a key factor in realizing inclusive education in Indonesia, ensuring that every individual has equal access and the opportunity to develop optimally in an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Interactions between government and stakeholders play a crucial role in the development of inclusive education in Indonesia. Various initiatives and mechanisms have been implemented to support active participation from all parties:

First, the Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI), a collaboration between the World Bank and the Indonesian government presents an online platform to diagnose the learning needs of students with disabilities in rural areas. The program involves professionals in various fields such as education, psychology, and health, as well as teachers and parents. This multidisciplinary approach allows for a holistic evaluation of the learning abilities of students with disabilities, while involving all stakeholders.

Furthermore, the government actively socializes and educates the public about the importance of inclusive education. Through campaigns, seminars and information programs, awareness about the right to education for all individuals, including those with special needs, continues to be raised.

Stakeholder engagement also occurs in the inclusive education policy development process. Education experts, communities and local government representatives collaborate in developing policies that are more holistic and based on real needs on the ground.

In addition, forums and meetings between the government, educational institutions, civil society organizations and families provide an important platform to discuss, share experiences and identify challenges and opportunities in developing inclusive education. Here, stakeholders can interact directly, build networks and design joint strategies to improve access and quality of inclusive education in Indonesia.

With strong collaboration between the government and stakeholders, inclusive education can become more effective and have a positive impact on all children in Indonesia. It is hoped that active participation from all parties will continue to strengthen this effort, creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of an inclusive education policy in Indonesia requires strong collaboration between the government and stakeholders. Measures such as supportive regulations, public socialization and education, adequate resource allocation, periodic evaluation and positive impact are key to ensuring the effectiveness and success of this policy implementation.

Consistent regulations and supportive policies provide a strong legal foundation for the implementation of inclusive education across the country. Socialization and education of the importance of inclusive education to the community helps to increase understanding and support for this policy. In addition, the allocation of sufficient resources, both financial and human, is an important concern to support effective implementation.

Periodic evaluation is an important instrument to identify weaknesses and improve the policy implementation process. Evaluations also pay attention to the positive impacts of inclusive education policies, such as increasing the number of students in regular schools and reducing discrimination.

Thus, strong collaboration between the government and stakeholders is key to realizing inclusive education in Indonesia. Such measures support the creation of a learning environment that is fair, inclusive and provides equal opportunities for all students, thus creating a more cultured and equitable society.

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