



Comparative Study of Education for Children with Special Needs in Malaysia and Indonesian Primary School

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Abstract: The article aims to compare the implementation of education for children with special needs in primary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data was used using literature studies, observations, and interviews. The subjects used were elementary schools in Surakarta City, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The data is analyzed by means of comparative analysis. The results showed that Indonesia and Malaysia apply the concept of inclusion in the education of children with special needs. In terms of Technology, Malaysia is more advanced by introducing educational Technology such as applications and assistive Technology. This study shows a comparison of education for children with special needs in the two countries, and it is hoped that this study can recommend good practices for the effectiveness and improvement of the quality of education for children with special needs in elementary schools.

Keywords: Comparative; Inclusive education; Indonesia and Malaysia; Primary school; Special needs

Introduction

Education is a fundamental need in the current era. According to the 1945 Constitution Article 31 paragraph 1, every citizen has the right to education. This means every Indonesian citizen has the right to education (Ditpsd, 2021), including children with special needs. Children with special needs (ABK) have abnormalities from the average condition of normal children regarding physical, mental, and social behavioral characteristics (Abdullah & Nandiyah, 2013). Another opinion states that children with special needs have different attributes than children in general, where these characteristics are related to physical, emotional, and mental that are below or above the average child in general (Triyanto & Permatasari, 2016). Children with special needs often receive discriminatory treatment from others (Hirpa, 2021). Even though every child has the right to equality with normal children in general. They should be treated equally and accepted sincerely without discrimination in social life. Education of children with special needs in

SD Indonesia has several fundamental gaps in daily life including lack of support and resources, and limited knowledge and skills of teachers in supporting the learning of children with special needs are still considered to be obstacles in the implementation of education for children with special needs in Indonesia. In addition, negative stigma and discrimination against children with special needs in educational institutions and the community are still common.

Education of children with special needs is necessary to provide proper education. Therefore, in Indonesia there is inclusion education. Inclusion education is a form of particular education service that requires all children with special needs to receive equal education in ordinary classes with their peers (Darma & Rusyidi, 2015). Every child has the right to education and instruction in the context of his personal development and level of intelligence by his interests and talents (Saracho, 2023). The accommodating of children with special needs in educational institutions is expected to expand their horizons of life outlook so that

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they can think creatively, innovatively, and productively.

Malaysia is a country that has a culture that is very similar to Indonesia (Fakhruddiana et al., 2022). The Malaysian government has implemented inclusive education for children with special needs at all levels of education, including primary schools. Inclusive education programs in Malaysia are implemented using a national education curriculum tailored to children with special needs. Inclusive education in Malaysia emphasizes the support provided to children, families, and teachers through training and skills development. Malaysia has a zero-reject policy, introduced by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Malaysia in December 2018, to improve the implementation of the Education Policy (Ensimau et al., 2023). Zero reject policy is a policy that states that every child has the right to receive education without exception. Zero-reject policies are essential in inclusive education, which promotes diversity and equity in education. Under this policy, all children are given access to education and considered for their needs and uniqueness.

In Malaysia, inclusive education for children with special needs in Indonesian elementary schools still needs to be fully implemented, especially in underdeveloped and remote areas. The inclusive education system in Indonesia still needs to be constrained by limited resources, both in terms of the number of teachers, facilities, and technological support. The challenges of inclusive education in Indonesia are socio-cultural, including community and parent belief systems, regulations, technical policies, and support systems (Suhendri, 2020). Government and community commitment is needed to strengthen support in developing policies, programs, and services for the education of children with special needs is very important. This also includes the role of parents in supporting the education of children with special needs in primary schools. Overall, education for children with special needs in primary schools in Indonesia is still in its developmental stage, and more efforts are needed to improve access, inclusion, teacher training, use of Technology, and government and community support in meeting the educational needs of children with special needs. Similar research has been conducted by Gilanyi et al. (2023), who examined a comparative study of Inclusive Education policies in Vietnam and Malaysia with the results of research despite differences in education systems, strategic education and training in Vietnam and Malaysia oriented towards sustainable, inclusive education development, with the aim of not leaving anyone behind and ensuring people with special needs to integrate immediately into the social community (Linh & Azar, 2019).

Another study was conducted by Rose et al. under the title "A Comparison of Provision and Access to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in a Metropolitan City and a Rural District in Telangana State, India" The results of the study showed the lack of opportunities for training and professional development is considered as a significant obstacle to the advancement of inclusive education as required (Rose et al., 2021). Research on the education of children with special needs in elementary schools is very important because it can improve the quality of education, improve the approach and support provided by teachers and educational institutions, improve the welfare and life of children with special needs, encourage greater participation from the community, and strengthen education policies for children with special needs. The purpose of this study is to find out the similarities and differences in the education of children with special needs in Malaysia and Indonesia to find out the best practices that can be used to improve the quality of education for children with special needs, especially in elementary schools.

Method

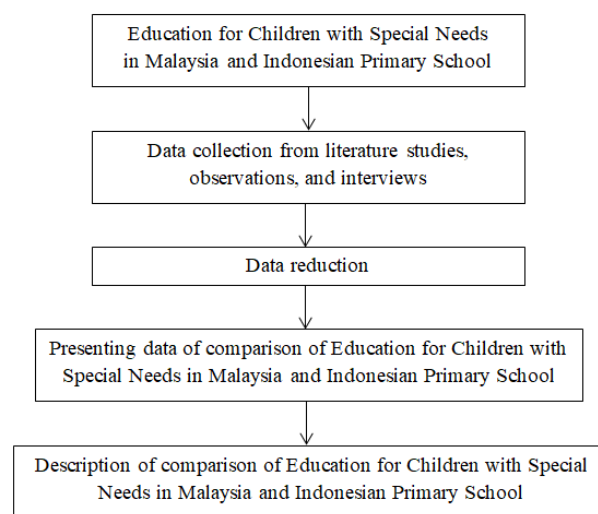


Figure 1. Research design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a comparative study approach. Data were used using literature studies, observations, and interviews. This research was conducted at SD Sekolah Penggerak in Surakarta City, Indonesia and Sekolah Kebangsaan Putrajaya Presint 16(1) Malaysia. Data analysis techniques use Miles and Huberman analysis techniques. The data analysis method of the Miles and Huberman model will be used in this study, which is carried out continuously and interactively. The stages of data analysis of the Miles and Huberman model consist of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and

conclusion-making or verification. Test the validity of the data using triangulation techniques. Triangulation techniques are performed by testing data to the same source with different styles. Three methods, namely questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documents, were used by researchers to evaluate the validity of the data (Busetto et al., 2020). The research procedure begins with the stages of collecting, reducing, presenting data, and drawing conclusions (Lester et al., 2020). The study was conducted in June 2023.

Result and Discussion

Indonesia and Malaysia implement different education systems, but both countries have similar policies and practices supporting children with special needs in primary school. Indonesia and Malaysia apply the concept of inclusion in educating children with special needs. However, implementing inclusion in Malaysia has been more developed than in Indonesia. A comparison between the two countries regarding the number of inclusive schools shows that Malaysia has more inclusive schools than Indonesia. The number of children with special needs in Malaysia based on 2021 particular education data is 97.2. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, as of 2023, as many as 135,946 students with special needs have carried out learning. Data on the number of children with special needs in the city of Surakarta in the 2022/2023 school year there are elementary schools providing inclusive education spread across 22 elementary schools with a total of 379 children with special needs.

Education policy assesses the value system and situational needs factors operated in an institution as general planning for guidance in making decisions so that the desired educational goals can be achieved (M Madawana, 2021). In 2016, Indonesia passed the Law on Persons with Disabilities. This law provides a legal basis for implementing inclusion programs for children with special needs. The Indonesian government encourages all primary schools to accept children with special needs and provide their curriculum and friendly environment. The program aims to ensure that children with special needs receive the same education as other children. Indonesia has several essential policies related to the education of children with special needs that must be considered, one of which is the inclusion policy that must be part of the education policy in elementary schools, which means that children with special needs must be included in regular classes and given the necessary support.

Inclusive education is an educational service system for children with special needs in regular schools provided to students with disorders who have potential

intelligence and special talents (Saputra, 2018). Inclusive education is an approach that pays attention to how to transform the education system so that it is able to respond to student diversity (Bahri, 2022). In addition to policies related to inclusive education, in Indonesia there are policies related to special education where elementary schools must have special education programs for children with special needs who need extra support. The program should include a curriculum specifically designed to meet the needs of children with special needs and staff trained to work with such children.

Indonesia and Malaysia implement similar inclusion policies to include children with special needs in regular classes with appropriate support. However, Malaysia has been more proactive in implementing this policy nationally by introducing an inclusion placement model in 2003. In that year, the Malaysian government implemented compulsory Inclusive Education, which adopted an inclusive placement model emphasizing inclusivity as other developed countries practiced. In addition, Indonesia and Malaysia also have special education programs for children with special needs. However, Malaysia has more types of special education approaches, such as curriculum-based special education programs and special education programs focused on developing social and emotional skills.

The education of children with special needs in Malaysia is quite broad, with various policies and programs that have been developed to ensure they receive an equal education to other children. Malaysia has several organizations that assist in promoting the education of children with special needs, such as Pusat Pendidikan Khas Integrasi (PPKI) and Pusat Pendidikan Khas (PDK). PPKI provides educational services to children with special needs in public schools, while PDK provides special education for children who need special care and more attention. Malaysia has introduced special training for teachers to meet the needs of children with special needs in primary schools (Ali & Nasri, 2021). Such special training programs are targeted at teachers in public schools and special education institutions (Alsolami, 2022).

Malaysia has adequate policies and funds to build an effective and efficient inclusive education system. The Malaysian government has also launched various programs and assistance services to help children with special needs get a proper education. This support includes psychological counseling, social support, and support items for inclusive education (Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001). The government also pays attention to accessibility, such as physical facilities and an environment that supports children with special needs (Tufvesson & Tufvesson, 2009). The government

continues to improve school facilities and physical environments to make them more friendly to children with special needs. There is no priority between one human being and another. In the Islamic view, anything that occurs to humans is fate, so that difference, sickness, and disease are events that have always accompanied human life since the time of the Prophet Adam until now, even told in the Qur'an about an event that happened to the Prophet Job in Sura Al-Anbiya verses 83-84.

Regarding educational Technology, children with special needs in Indonesia and Malaysia promote using Technology to help children with special needs (Lynch et al., 2022). However, Malaysia is more advanced in introducing assistive technologies such as special education applications and software. Malaysia has introduced educational technologies such as apps and other assistive technologies to help children with special needs learn. Assistive Technology is Technology or all kinds of tools that are modified or directly used to improve the ability of Children with Special Needs (Arifin & Widyastono, 2020). This Technology can help children with special needs access information and help them feel more inclusive in their educational environment.

Based on data collected from several elementary schools in Surakarta, Special Guidance Teachers (GPK) in the 2022/2023 school year, there are 91 GPK staff spread across 22 public and private elementary schools in Surakarta City. Several conditions of elementary school children require GPK guidance, such as speech delay, cerebral palsy, hyperactivity, Down syndrome, low vision, global development delay, autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, slow learning, deafness, and behavioral and emotional disorders. One of the elementary schools in Surakarta even has GPK personnel, each of whom guides one crew.

Education resources for children with special needs in primary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia are essential to ensure quality education for children with special needs (Wibowo & Muin, 2018). Teachers are the main concern in inclusive learning because teachers are school devices that directly interact with students and simultaneously provide teaching to students in the classroom (Dukuzumuremyi & Siklander, 2018). Trained teachers are essential in supporting the education of children with special needs. Strategies, methods, supporting materials, and a teacher's knowledge and skills are important in teaching students with special needs (Brownell et al., 2020). Both countries have similar policies in providing teachers training to understand children's special needs (Tekin-Iftar et al., 2021). The Malaysian government stresses the importance of teacher training in inclusive education

(Cretu & Morandau, 2020). This training aims to assist teachers in understanding the needs of children with special needs and identifying appropriate teaching strategies to help these children.

The Government of Indonesia continues to improve training for teachers to understand the needs of children with special needs and identify appropriate teaching strategies to help them (Sutarto et al., 2020). Training includes special education systems, learning models and materials development, and learning techniques and methods (Haleem et al., 2023). The Government of Indonesia also provides support to children with special needs in the form of rehabilitation programs and health assistance. The program includes psychological counseling, physical and mental support, and support items for inclusive education. Indonesia also pays attention to accessibility, such as friendly physical facilities and technological support to help children with special needs. The government must continue improving school facilities and the physical environment to make it more friendly to children with special needs.

Conclusion

Indonesia and Malaysia implement different education systems, but both countries have similar policies and practices in supporting children with special needs in primary school. Indonesia and Malaysia apply the concept of inclusion in the education of children with special needs. In terms of technology, Malaysia is more advanced by introducing educational technology such as applications and assistive technology. The differences and similarities in the implementation of education for children with special needs in elementary schools are expected to be a reference as a decision making in determining best practices that can be used to improve the quality of education for children with special needs, especially in elementary schools. This research has limitations in cultural differences, ways of learning, and language used, so that it can affect the results of research and conclusions drawn.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S. M., & A. P. L.; methodology, S. M.; validation, A. P. L. and S. M.; formal analysis, A. P. L.; investigation, S. M and A. P. L.; resources, S. M and A. P. L.; data curation, S. M.: writing – original draft preparation, S. M and A. P. L.; writing – review and editing, S. M.: visualization, and A. P. L and S. M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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