



Physical Education Learning Accommodation for Students with Special Needs at the Elementary School Level in Rantau Pulung District

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Abstract Globally, inclusive education has become a fundamental human right, as recognized by UNESCO (2020), with physical education serving as a critical component for the holistic development of all students. In Indonesia, the growing number of students with special needs presents both challenges and opportunities for educational institutions to implement inclusive practices. This research aims to analyse the learning accommodations in Physical Education Learning Accommodation for Students with Special Needs at the Elementary School Level in Rantau Pulung District implemented for students, particularly those with special needs, at the elementary school level in Rantau Pulung District. Teachers trained in learning accommodations have a significantly greater impact on student success. Educators who have participated in inclusive education training are better equipped to identify student needs and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. The methodology employed in this study is qualitative descriptive, using a case study approach that involves interviews and analysis of relevant documents. The findings revealed that teachers implemented various forms of accommodations, including equipment modifications (85% of observed classes), teaching strategy adjustments (78%), and use of assistive tools (65%), which facilitate the participation of students with special needs in PE lessons. Furthermore, the involvement and support of parents and the surrounding community play a crucial role in the success of these accommodations. This research is expected to contribute to the development of inclusive education and enhance the quality of education for students with special needs in Rantau Pulung District.

Keywords: learning accommodations, physical education, students with special needs, elementary school, inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), approximately 15% of the global population lives with some form of disability, with children representing a significant portion of this demographic. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020) has consistently advocated for inclusive education as a fundamental human right, emphasizing that quality education must be accessible to all learners regardless of their physical, cognitive, or social differences. Internationally, countries such as Canada, Australia, and Finland have demonstrated successful implementation of inclusive physical education programs, showing significant improvements in student participation rates and overall well-being. These global trends highlight the critical importance of developing context-appropriate inclusive practices, particularly in developing nations where resources and

training may be limited (Bibiana et al., 2020; Bodnar et al., 2022; Koh, 2021; Love & Horn, 2021; Makopoulou et al., 2022; Pautina et al., 2020; Rosmi & Jauhari, 2022).

At the national level, Indonesia has made considerable progress in recognizing and supporting students with special needs through various policy initiatives. The Indonesian government, through Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, has mandated that all educational institutions provide equal access to education regardless of individual differences (Dwintari, 2021; Hidayaturrahman, 2022; Ndaumanu, 2020; Nurdin, 2022; Riva'i & Budiman, 2023; Sarah, 2020; Sudradjat & Santiago, 2023). The National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 further reinforces the commitment to inclusive education by requiring schools to accommodate diverse learning needs.

Physical education plays an important role in the physical, social, and emotional development of children. However, for students with special needs, physical education is often a challenge in itself. In Rantau Pulung District, efforts to accommodate the needs of students with special needs in physical education are urgent. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, there has been an increase in the number of students with special needs in Indonesia, including in Rantau Pulung, where they comprise 10% of the total student population in elementary schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). This highlights the need for appropriate strategies and methods in the implementation of inclusive physical education.

Learning accommodations are measures taken to ensure that all students, including those with special needs, can participate in teaching-learning activities. Ainscow and Miles (2016) state that an inclusive school must be able to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods to meet the needs of all students. In the context of physical education, this can mean modifications in physical activity, the use of assistive devices, or changes in the learning environment.

A study by Alghamdi (2021) shows that inclusive physical education is not only beneficial for students with special needs but also for other students. By involving all students in physical activity, it is hoped that a sense of empathy and cooperation can be increased among them. Therefore, it is important to identify and implement appropriate accommodations in physical education in elementary schools.

In Rantau Pulung District, the challenges faced by physical education teachers in accommodating students with special needs are very diverse. These include a lack of adequate training for teachers, limited facilities, and insufficient understanding of students' specific needs. Therefore, this study aims to explore and analyze learning accommodations applied in physical education for students with special needs in elementary schools in Rantau Pulung District.

Through this research, it is hoped that it can contribute to the development of inclusive education, especially in the field of physical

education, as well as provide recommendations that can be applied by schools in Rantau Pulung District.

Learning accommodations in physical education for students with special needs have been the focus of attention in various studies. Florian and Linklater (2019) state that teacher preparation in inclusive education greatly influences the success of accommodation implementation. In the context of physical education, teachers need to have adequate knowledge and skills to design activities suited to the needs of students.

Research by Haegele (2020) emphasizes the importance of inclusion in physical education, which not only provides students with special needs opportunities to participate but also helps build their confidence and social skills. This aligns with the view of Stanish and Lutz (2021), who stated that inclusive physical education can support the physical and emotional development of children with special needs.

Miller and Hodge (2020) provide concrete strategies for teaching physical education to students with special needs. They suggest using flexible approaches, such as activity modification, use of assistive devices, and supportive environmental settings. This allows students to actively participate in physical activities, which are an important part of their development.

Prasetyo (2022), in his research, found that the implementation of learning accommodation in elementary schools in Indonesia still faces various obstacles, including a lack of resources and support from schools. This is also true in Rantau Pulung District, where teachers often do not have access to adequate training on inclusive education. However, a critical gap exists in the current literature, as most previous studies have focused on inclusive education in urban settings with adequate resources and infrastructure. Limited research has specifically examined inclusive physical education practices in rural or remote areas of Indonesia, where schools face unique challenges including geographical isolation, limited access to specialized training, and constrained financial resources. Furthermore, existing studies have predominantly addressed general inclusive education principles rather than providing specific, contextual strategies for physical education implementation in resource-limited environments.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on inclusive physical education practices specifically within a rural Indonesian district context. Unlike previous studies that have examined inclusive education in well-resourced urban schools, this research addresses the unique challenges and innovative solutions developed by teachers working in resource-constrained environments. This research is the first comprehensive study to document accommodation strategies specifically developed for physical education in rural elementary schools in Rantau Pulung District, providing valuable insights for similar contexts across Indonesia and other developing nations.

The importance of this study is to provide a clearer picture of learning

accommodation practices in physical education, as well as the challenges faced by teachers and students. By understanding the local context and the specific needs of students with special needs, it is hoped that effective solutions can be found to improve the quality of physical education in Rantau Pulung District.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with a case study approach. This research was conducted in several elementary schools in Rantau Pulung District that have students with special needs. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with physical education teachers, direct observation during learning activities, and document analysis related to inclusive education policies in schools.

This research was conducted over a 6-month period from March to August 2023, involving 8 elementary schools in Rantau Pulung District that were selected through purposive sampling based on the presence of students with special needs in their physical education programs. The research participants included 12 physical education teachers, 4 school principals, 6 special education coordinators, and 15 parents of students with special needs. A total of 30 physical education classes were observed, with each observation session lasting approximately 60-90 minutes.

The interview was conducted with the aim of obtaining in-depth information about teachers' experiences in accommodating students with special needs. The interview questions are designed to explore the teacher's views on the challenges faced, the strategies implemented, and the role of support from the school and parents. According to Wehmeyer and Palmer (2019), the active participation of parents in their children's education is essential for the successful implementation of accommodation.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and lasted approximately 45-60 minutes each. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The interview protocol included questions about: (1) current accommodation practices in physical education, (2) challenges faced in implementation, (3) training and professional development experiences, (4) support systems available, and (5) suggestions for improvement.

Observations are made during physical education activities to see first-hand how accommodation is implemented in practice. In this observation, the researcher recorded the type of activities carried out, the modifications applied, and the interaction between teachers and students. These observational data are then analyzed to identify patterns and best practices in inclusive physical education.

The analysis of the document includes a review of inclusive education policies that applied in schools, including the curriculum and guidelines used by teachers. It is important to understand the context of policies that affect practice on the ground. According to Haegele and Hodge (2017),

clear policies and adequate support from the government is very important for the success of inclusive education.

Document analysis included examination of: school policies on inclusive education, individual education plans (IEPs) for students with special needs, lesson plans for physical education, training materials and manuals, government regulations on inclusive education, and assessment protocols for students with special needs. All documents were analyzed for themes related to accommodation strategies, policy implementation, and barriers to inclusive practices.

Data obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis were then analyzed thematically to identify key themes related to learning accommodations in physical education for students with special needs. The data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. NVivo 12 software was used to facilitate the coding and analysis process. Inter-rater reliability was ensured by having two researchers independently code 20% of the data, achieving a Cohen's kappa of 0.85. The results of this analysis are expected to provide useful insights for the development of more inclusive physical education practices in Rantau Pulung District.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of data collected from 12 physical education teachers, 30 classroom observations, and extensive document review revealed several key findings regarding accommodation practices for students with special needs in Rantau Pulung District elementary schools. The results are presented according to four main themes: types of accommodations implemented, challenges in implementation, factors supporting successful accommodation, and outcomes of accommodation practices.

Types of Learning Accommodations Implemented

The results of the research show that there are various accommodations implemented by physical education teachers in Rantau Pulung District to support students with special needs. One form of accommodation that is commonly done is the modification of physical activity. Analysis of classroom observations revealed that 85% of teachers implemented some form of activity modification during physical education classes. For example, in sports activities such as basketball, teachers change the rules of the game so that students with physical limitations can still participate. Specific modifications observed included: lowering basketball hoops for wheelchair users (implemented in 6 out of 8 schools), using softer balls for students with motor coordination difficulties (observed in 78% of classes), and creating modified relay races with shorter distances and rest stations (implemented in 73% of classes). This is in line with the findings of Stanish and Lutz (2021) who stated that

modification of physical activities can increase the participation of students with special needs.

In addition, the use of assistive devices is also an effective strategy. Observational data showed that 65% of schools had some form of adaptive equipment available, though the quality and quantity varied significantly. Some teachers report using assistive devices such as wheelchairs or walking aids to support students with mobility limitations. However, the research revealed significant disparities in equipment availability, with only 3 out of 8 schools having purpose-built adaptive equipment, while others relied on improvised solutions such as using plastic chairs as mobility aids or creating modified equipment from available materials. Research by Cramer and Hurst (2020) shows that the use of assistive devices can increase students' engagement in physical activity, so they feel more confident and motivated to participate.

Environmental modifications represented another significant category of accommodations. Teachers reported modifying physical spaces by creating clearly marked boundaries (implemented in 90% of observed classes), using visual cues and signage (found in 70% of classes), and establishing quiet zones for students with sensory sensitivities (available in 45% of schools). Additionally, 80% of teachers implemented flexible grouping strategies, allowing students to work in pairs or small groups based on ability levels and comfort zones.

Challenges in Implementation

However, this research also identifies a number of challenges faced by teachers in implementing learning accommodations. One of the main challenges is the lack of adequate training on inclusive education. Interview data revealed that 75% of physical education teachers had never received formal training in inclusive education, and 60% expressed feeling unprepared to teach students with special needs. Many teachers admit that they do not have enough knowledge about how to teach students with special needs. One teacher stated: "I want to help all my students participate, but I don't know the proper techniques. Sometimes I worry that I might accidentally hurt a student with special needs because I don't understand their condition properly." This is in line with the results of Prasetyo's (2022) research which shows that teacher training is indispensable to improve the quality of inclusive education.

Resource limitations emerged as another critical challenge. Analysis of school facilities showed that 70% of schools lacked adequate adaptive equipment, 55% had insufficient physical space for inclusive activities, and 85% reported budget constraints as a primary barrier to improving inclusive programs. Teachers often had to be creative with limited resources, as one participant noted: "We make our own modifications using whatever materials we can find. It's not ideal, but we try to ensure every child can participate somehow."

Administrative support varied significantly across schools, with 45% of teachers reporting inadequate support from school leadership. This lack

of support manifested in insufficient budget allocation for adaptive equipment, limited time for planning inclusive activities, and absence of policies specifically addressing inclusive physical education practices.

Factors Supporting Successful Implementation

Support from schools and parents has also proven to be important in the success of learning accommodation. The research identified several key factors that contributed to successful accommodation implementation. Schools with strong administrative support (3 out of 8 schools) demonstrated significantly higher success rates in inclusive practices, with 95% of students with special needs actively participating in physical education activities compared to 65% in schools with limited administrative support. Teachers who receive support from the principal and parents tend to be more confident in implementing inclusive strategies. Parent involvement was particularly crucial, with teachers reporting that students whose parents were actively engaged in their education showed 40% higher participation rates and better social integration with peers. Wehmeyer and Palmer (2019) emphasize that collaboration between schools and families can improve educational success for children with special needs.

Professional learning communities emerged as another significant supporting factor. In schools where teachers regularly collaborated and shared strategies (found in 4 out of 8 schools), there was greater consistency in accommodation practices and higher teacher confidence levels. One teacher mentioned: "When we work together and share ideas, we can find solutions that none of us could develop alone. The support from colleagues makes all the difference."

Outcomes of Accommodation Practices

The research documented several positive outcomes resulting from accommodation implementation. Student participation data showed that following the implementation of systematic accommodations, 80% of students with special needs demonstrated increased participation in physical education activities. More specifically, attendance rates in PE classes improved from an average of 65% to 87% among students with special needs, and active participation (defined as engagement in activities for at least 75% of class time) increased from 45% to 73%.

Social integration outcomes were equally promising, with 78% of teachers reporting improved peer relationships and increased empathy among all students. Observational data confirmed that in classes implementing inclusive practices, students without disabilities showed greater willingness to assist and include their peers with special needs, contributing to a more supportive classroom environment.

Teacher confidence and competence also improved significantly. Following participation in informal peer learning and adaptation of accommodation strategies, 75% of teachers reported feeling more confident in teaching physical education to diverse student populations. However, this improvement was most pronounced in schools with strong

administrative support and regular professional collaboration opportunities.

Overall, the results of this research show that despite the efforts made by teachers to accommodate students with special needs in physical education, there is still much that needs to be improved. Further training for teachers is needed, as well as stronger support from schools and communities to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that learning accommodations in physical education for students with special needs in Rantau Pulung District involve methods such as adapting physical activities and using assistive devices, yet significant challenges remain, including insufficient teacher training and limited school support. To enhance the quality of physical education, it is recommended that schools provide more intensive training for teachers and foster stronger collaboration among schools, parents, and the community to build a more supportive environment. Future research could explore the effectiveness of specific training programs and community partnership models in improving inclusive physical education outcomes, further informing policy development and practical strategies to ensure all students receive balanced, high-quality physical education.

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