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ADDRESSING IMPLEMENTATION GAPS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A MANAGEMENT EVALUATION OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM USING THE CIPP MODEL

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Abstract : *Inclusive education in Indonesia still faces a gap between policy commitments and school practices, particularly related to teacher preparedness, limited resources, and stakeholder engagement. This study aims to evaluate the management of an inclusive education program in an elementary school by integrating the CIPP model. The study employed a qualitative evaluative design with a case study approach. Data analysis was conducted thematically using the CIPP framework and interpreted through a POAC lens. The results indicate that the program context is relatively supportive, with aligned policies and an inclusive school culture. Program inputs are adequate in terms of teacher commitment and curriculum flexibility, but remain limited in technical capacity, accessibility, and learning support. The implementation process has been quite effective through differentiated learning and peer support despite constraints on time and parental participation. The program's output is evident in students' socio-emotional development, while academic achievement has not been consistently documented. This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening individual planning, monitoring learning progress, teacher professional development, and partnerships.*

Keywords : *Inclusive Education; Evaluation Management; CIPP Model.*

Abstrak : *Pendidikan inklusif di Indonesia masih menghadapi kesenjangan antara komitmen kebijakan dan praktik di sekolah, terutama terkait kesiapan guru, keterbatasan sarana, dan keterlibatan pemangku kepentingan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi manajemen program pendidikan inklusif di sebuah sekolah dasar dengan mengintegrasikan model* CIPP. *Penelitian menggunakan desain kualitatif evaluatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik berbasis kerangka CIPP dan diinterpretasikan menggunakan lensa POAC. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konteks program relatif mendukung melalui keselarasan kebijakan dan budaya sekolah yang inklusif. Input program cukup memadai dari sisi komitmen guru dan fleksibilitas kurikulum, namun masih terbatas pada kapasitas teknis, aksesibilitas, dan dukungan pembelajaran. Proses implementasi berjalan cukup efektif melalui pembelajaran diferensiatif dan dukungan sebaya meskipun terkendala waktu dan partisipasi orang tua. Produk program terlihat pada perkembangan sosial-emosional siswa, sementara capaian akademik belum terdokumentasi secara konsisten. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya penguatan perencanaan individual, monitoring kemajuan belajar, pengembangan profesional guru, dan kemitraan.*

Kata Kunci : *Pendidikan Inklusif; Manajemen Evaluasi; Model CIPP.*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education remains a crucial yet challenging agenda in Indonesia because the realization of equal educational access depends not only on policy commitment, but also on schools' capacity to manage inclusion in everyday practice. National efforts to expand inclusive schooling are intended to ensure that all learners, particularly those with special educational needs, can participate meaningfully in regular education settings. In practice, however, implementation often falls short of these rights-based and equity-oriented commitments due to uneven teacher preparedness, limited accessibility and learning facilities, and inconsistent stakeholder engagement (Rasmitadila et al., 2022 ; Yuliawati et al., 2023). As a result, inclusive education is not simply a matter of policy adoption, but also a matter of how schools organize planning, resourcing, implementation, and oversight in a sustainable and responsive way (Mavropoulou et al., 2021 ; Hove & Phasha, 2022).

At the school level, inclusive practice is enacted within local social and institutional contexts and negotiated through daily interactions among teachers, school leaders, students, families, and communities (Mavropoulou et al., 2021 ; Hove & Phasha, 2022). For this reason, stakeholder participation is central to program success. Previous studies show that meaningful parental and community involvement can strengthen relationships among students, parents, and teachers and can support more inclusive educational practices (Spratt & Florian, 2015 ; Rasmitadila et al., 2023). At the same time, socio-cultural dynamics influence how learner diversity is understood and accepted, making school–family communication an essential element of inclusive schooling (Rasmitadila et al., 2021 ; Filipino et al., 2023 ; Hoppey et al., 2023).

Despite increasing recognition of inclusive education, many schools continue to face recurring constraints in three interrelated areas: teacher preparedness, infrastructure, and stakeholder engagement. Teacher preparedness remains uneven because many educators still have limited formal preparation in inclusive pedagogy, which affects their ability to implement differentiated instruction and to respond effectively to diverse learner needs (Azizah et al., 2024 ; Rante et al., 2020). Without adequate preparation, teachers may struggle to support students appropriately and may unintentionally reproduce exclusion within regular classrooms (Ediyanto et al., 2021 ; Rofiah, 2023). Infrastructure also remains a significant barrier, as many schools do not yet meet basic accessibility standards or provide sufficient assistive tools and adaptive learning facilities (Alvi et al., 2023 ; Widyawati & Sugiyono, 2020). This challenge reflects broader systemic patterns in which conventional learning environments are often prioritized over inclusive solutions, even though disability-friendly facilities are repeatedly identified as a prerequisite for meaningful inclusion (Murhayati et al., 2023 ; Andriana & Evans, 2021). Stakeholder engagement, meanwhile, is often inconsistent, even though collaboration among families, schools, communities, and education authorities is widely acknowledged as essential for sustaining inclusive practice

(Yasin et al., 2023 ; Tarnoto, 2016). Weak home–school coordination can reduce the responsiveness and long-term sustainability of inclusive support (Rante et al., 2020 ; Ediyanto et al., 2021 ; Tarnoto, 2016).

These constraints also indicate a persistent gap between policy alignment and implementation capacity. In many settings, students with special educational needs are placed in regular classrooms despite limited accessibility, learning aids, and specialized support, which undermines equitable access to quality learning experiences (Stephan et al., 2015 ; Weist et al., 2017). At the same time, teachers often demonstrate commitment to inclusion but lack technical capacity in adaptive assessment and individualized planning, making targeted professional development particularly important (Fazel et al., 2014 ; Utari et al., 2025 ; Cruickshank & Mainsbridge, 2021). Similarly, monitoring structures may exist, yet follow-up and accountability are often inconsistent, thereby limiting improvement cycles and program learning (Pérez, 2025). Although parental participation appears to be increasing, it remains uneven across communities, reinforcing disparities in support for students with special educational needs (Shodipe & Ogbuanya, 2024). For this reason, schools need structured communication channels that promote consistent stakeholder involvement and shared responsibility (Cruickshank & Mainsbridge, 2021).

From a management perspective, these recurring implementation problems can be understood as weaknesses in core school functions—planning, organizing/resourcing, implementing, and controlling or quality assurance (POAC). Schools may struggle to translate inclusive commitments into operational standards, such as service targets, role allocation, and minimum support provisions, and to align resources, supervision, and follow-up routines with diverse learner needs (Ar et al., 2019 ; Poncowati, 2024 ; López et al., 2023). Resource constraints involving funding, infrastructure, and specialized personnel further limit the development of learning supports and accessible environments (Sunardi et al., 2011 ; Poncowati, 2024). At the same time, leadership and supervision remain decisive, because inclusion is more likely to be sustained when schools build a culture of reflective practice and strengthen professional learning through supportive monitoring and follow-up (Irvine et al., 2010 ; Opoku-Nkoom & Ackah-Jnr, 2023).

The state of the art in inclusive education research has therefore made important contributions by clarifying the main conditions that shape implementation. Existing studies have examined teacher attitudes and preparedness, accessibility and infrastructure, parental acceptance, collaborative partnerships, inclusive pedagogy, and the policy–practice divide in different educational contexts (Rante et al., 2020 ; Ediyanto et al., 2021; Rasmitadila et al., 2023 ; Rasmitadila et al., 2021 ; Yuliawati et al., 2023). Other studies have highlighted the role of reflective leadership, school culture, monitoring, and professional development in supporting inclusive practice (Irvine et al., 2010 ; Hoppey et al., 2023 ; Utari et al., 2025).

Together, this body of literature helps explain what pedagogical, structural, and relational factors influence inclusion, but it still tends to discuss these factors in separate strands.

However, an important gap remains. Much of the existing literature discusses inclusive education in terms of policy, pedagogy, teacher perceptions, or implementation barriers, but fewer studies evaluate it explicitly as a school-level management system that connects contextual conditions, resources, implementation routines, and outcomes within a single evaluative framework. This limitation is particularly visible in elementary school settings, where operational routines and school-based decision making play a central role in shaping everyday inclusion. As a result, there is still limited empirical understanding of how management functions such as planning, resourcing, implementation, supervision, and follow-up interact to support or constrain the consistency and sustainability of inclusive education programs (Rokhim et al., 2021 ; Khamidah, 2025).

This study responds to that gap by positioning inclusive education not only as a pedagogical or policy issue, but also as a management issue that requires systematic evaluation. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of the CIPP model with the POAC management lens to evaluate an inclusive education program in an elementary school context. While the CIPP framework is used to assess contextual conditions, inputs, implementation processes, and outcomes, POAC is used to interpret how management functions shape program performance and where operational improvements are needed. In this way, the study moves beyond merely identifying barriers and instead provides a structured explanation of how inclusive education is managed at the school level and which decision points are most critical for strengthening consistency and sustainability (Rokhim et al., 2021 ; Poncowati, 2024; Khamidah, 2025).

Accordingly, this study aims to evaluate the management of an inclusive education program in an anonymized elementary school in Metro City, Lampung Province, using the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) model as the primary evaluation framework. More specifically, the study seeks to examine how contextual conditions, program inputs, implementation processes, and outcomes interact in practice, and to identify areas where planning, resourcing, implementation, and quality assurance need strengthening. To achieve this aim, the study addresses four research questions: (RQ1) How do contextual conditions (needs, goals, policy alignment, and environmental support) enable or constrain the management of an inclusive education program? (RQ2) How adequate are the inputs-human resources, curriculum adaptation readiness, facilities/accessibility and learning supports, financing, and stakeholder support—for program management? (RQ3) How effectively is the program implemented in practice, particularly in inclusive instruction, stakeholder participation, supervision/monitoring, and follow-up actions? Moreover, (RQ4) What products/outcomes are evident in academic and socio-emotional development, stakeholder satisfaction, and sustainability implications?

METHOD

This study used a qualitative evaluative case study design to examine how an inclusive education program is planned, resourced, implemented, and monitored at the school level. The case study approach was chosen because it allows close attention to everyday practices and stakeholder perspectives in a natural school setting, while the evaluative orientation supports identifying strengths, gaps, and improvement priorities (Rokhim et al., 2021).

The study was conducted in one anonymized elementary school in Metro City, Lampung Province, Indonesia. The site was selected because it implements an inclusive education program that places students with special educational needs (SEN) in regular classrooms. The school serves approximately 350 students and is staffed by around 20 teachers and staff. The program uses the flexibility of the Merdeka Curriculum to adjust instruction to learners' varied academic and socio-emotional needs (Silviani, 2025). This setting provides a relevant case for examining how policy expectations are translated into operational routines and how local conditions shape program delivery.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to include stakeholders directly involved in the inclusive program. Snowball sampling was used when additional perspectives were needed based on recommendations from initial participants. The sample included the principal, classroom teachers across grade levels, an inclusion support teacher/special education support staff member (where available), and parents. Parents of SEN students were interviewed to capture experiences, satisfaction, and barriers to participation; where feasible, parents of non-SEN students were also included to provide complementary views on school climate and inclusion impacts. In total, approximately 12 participants were interviewed: the principal (n=1), classroom teachers (n=5), an inclusion support teacher/support staff member (n=1, where available), parents of SEN students (n=3), and parents of non-SEN students (n=2, where feasible). Recruitment continued until information adequacy was reached, indicated by recurring patterns across stakeholder groups and convergence across data sources.

Data collection followed the CIPP framework (Context, Input, Process, and Product) and combined observations, interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on classroom practices, including differentiation strategies, peer-support routines, the participation of students with special educational needs (SEN), and classroom management, as well as school-level conditions such as accessibility, learning climate, and learning spaces (Makofane et al., 2023). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal to explore planning, resource allocation, monitoring, and partnerships (Owen et al., 2020); with teachers to examine instructional adaptations, assessment practices, and implementation challenges (Febriyani et al., 2024); with inclusion support staff to understand support mechanisms and collaboration; and with parents to capture experiences, perceived barriers

to involvement, satisfaction, and perceived outcomes (Agaton & Cueto, 2021). In addition, document analysis was used to examine evidence of program intent, resourcing, implementation, and outcomes. The reviewed documents included vision and mission statements, the school work plan (RKS), the budget plan (RKAS), curriculum documents (KOSP), supervision and activity reports (Day et al., 2016), as well as student learning records and stakeholder meeting notes (Widana et al., 2023).

Fieldwork was conducted over approximately four weeks. Classroom observations covered around three classes/grade levels across approximately six sessions (40–60 minutes per session), using structured field notes. Interviews lasted 30–60 minutes, were audio-recorded with consent, and supplemented with written notes. Interview guides were organized by the CIPP domains. Document analysis used a CIPP-aligned review matrix to extract evidence related to program planning, resourcing decisions, implementation routines, supervision, and outcomes. Table 1 summarizes the evidence sources and data volume.

Table 1: Overview of Data Sources and Study Evidence (CIPP-Aligned)

Data source	Units/participants	Volume	Primary focus (CIPP)
Classroom observations	Classes/grade levels observed	~3 classes, ~6 sessions, 40–60 minutes/session	Process (instruction, participation), Input (learning supports), Context (class climate)
School environment observation/walkthrough	Key school areas	~2 visits covering ~8–10 areas	Input (accessibility, facilities), Context (learning climate)
Interviews – principal	Principal	1 interview, ~60 minutes	Context, Input, Process (planning, resourcing, monitoring)
Interviews – classroom teachers	Teachers	~5 interviews, ~40–60 minutes	Input, Process (adaptation, assessment, constraints)
Interviews – inclusion support teacher/support staff	Support staff	~1 interview, ~45–60 minutes	Input, Process (support services, collaboration)
Interviews – parents (SEN)	Parents	~3 interviews, ~30–50 minutes	Context, Process, Product (experience, satisfaction, outcomes)
Interviews – parents (non-SEN, if applicable)	Parents	~2 interviews, ~30–45 minutes	Context, Process (school climate, perceived impact)
Documents	RKS, RKAS, KOSP, supervision reports, student learning records, meeting notes	~10 documents	Context, Input, Process, Product

Data analysis was conducted in six sequential steps. *First*, all raw data were prepared and organized according to source type, including classroom observation notes, school environment observation notes, interview transcripts, and school documents. Each data item was assigned a source code to support traceability during analysis, for example OBS for classroom observations, ENV for school environment observations, INT-P for the principal interview, INT-T for teacher interviews, INT-S for inclusion support staff, INT-PS for parents of students with special educational needs, INT-PN for parents of non-SEN students, and DOC for school documents. *Second*, the researchers performed initial reading and familiarization by reviewing all transcripts, field notes, and documents several times to identify recurrent issues related to the management of inclusive education. At this stage, brief analytic memos were written to capture preliminary impressions, such as; teacher commitment but uneven technical practice, peer-support routines as process strength, limited accessibility, and weak documentation of academic progress.

Third, open coding was carried out line by line across the full dataset. Segments of data were coded using short descriptive labels that reflected the substance of the evidence, such as community demand, policy alignment, teacher commitment, adaptive assessment difficulty, limited accessibility, peer support, uneven parent participation, socio-emotional gains, and weak progress documentation. This stage combined deductive coding based on the CIPP domains with inductive coding for issues that emerged directly from the data. *Fourth*, the initial codes were grouped into analytic categories under each CIPP component. Codes related to community expectations, policy support, and school climate were grouped under context. Codes related to teacher readiness, curriculum flexibility, learning supports, facilities, and financing were grouped under Input. Codes related to differentiated instruction, peer-support practices, participation, supervision, and follow-up actions were grouped under Process. Codes related to socio-emotional development, academic progress, stakeholder satisfaction, and sustainability were grouped under Product. During this stage, the researchers compared categories across interviews, observations, and documents to identify convergence, variation, and discrepant evidence.

Fifth, themes were refined through constant comparison both within and across the CIPP domains. For example, findings on teacher commitment from interviews were compared with classroom observation evidence and with planning documents to assess whether reported practices were visible in implementation. Likewise, claims about student progress were compared against student learning records and teacher accounts to determine the strength of documentary support. This step allowed the researchers to identify not only dominant themes but also mismatches between formal planning, classroom practice, and recorded outcomes. *Sixth*, the findings from the CIPP analysis were interpreted through the POAC lens—planning, organizing/resourcing, implementing, and controlling/quality assurance—to generate management-oriented conclusions. Context and input findings were

examined mainly in relation to planning and organizing/resourcing, while process findings were interpreted in relation to implementation and supervision. Product findings were used to assess whether management routines were producing observable results and where quality assurance and follow-up needed strengthening. In this way, the analysis moved from descriptive coding to evaluative interpretation and practical recommendations.

To strengthen the evidentiary basis of the findings, triangulation was conducted in two ways. Source triangulation compared data from the principal, teachers, parents, support staff, and school documents, while method triangulation compared observations, interviews, and document analysis. A finding was treated as strong when it was supported by at least two different types of evidence or by multiple stakeholder groups. Discrepant cases were retained and examined to avoid overgeneralization.

Trustworthiness was established through several procedures. Credibility was supported through source triangulation across the principal, teachers, parents, support staff, and school documents, and through method triangulation across observations, interviews, and document analysis (Brubacher et al., 2022 ; Lang et al., 2022). Member checking was conducted, where feasible, by sharing interview summaries or preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm whether the researchers' interpretations reflected their intended meaning. Dependability was strengthened by maintaining an audit trail consisting of field notes, coding sheets, analytic memos, and records of category development and theme refinement (Swaramarinda et al., 2021). Confirmability was supported through reflexive memos, which were used to record assumptions, coding decisions, and analytic judgments during the study. In addition, discrepant evidence was actively examined and, where feasible, peer debriefing with colleagues or supervisors was used to review emerging interpretations and reduce the risk of bias.

Ethical safeguards were applied throughout the study because of the sensitivity of information related to students with special educational needs. Participants provided informed consent after receiving clear information about the study's aims, procedures, and potential risks. Confidentiality was protected through anonymization and secure data storage. Information related to students with special educational needs was handled with particular care to protect privacy and ensure respectful treatment (Childs & Demers, 2018). Formal permission was obtained from the school leadership and relevant authorities where required. All digital data, including audio files, transcripts, and field notes, were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the research team.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

This section presents the evaluation findings based on the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) framework. To strengthen the evidentiary basis of the findings, the results are drawn explicitly from three main data sources: classroom and school

observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The observation data covered classroom practices and school accessibility conditions; the interview data were obtained from the principal, classroom teachers, inclusion support staff, and parents; and the document data included the school work plan (RKS), budget plan (RKAS), curriculum documents (KOSP), supervision reports, student learning records, and stakeholder meeting notes. For analytic clarity, each finding is presented with reference to its main data sources and coding categories across the four CIPP domains.

Table 1: Data Sources, Codes, and Key Findings Across CIPP Domains

CIPP Aspect	Data Source	Code/Category	Key Finding
Context	Principal interview; parent interviews; school vision/mission; annual plan; classroom observations	Community need; policy alignment; inclusive school climate	The program responds to community expectations for non-discriminatory access and is supported by school values and policy alignment, although operational service standards are not consistently specified.
Context	Parent interviews; school meetings; external monitoring records	Stakeholder support; environmental support	Parent involvement and external guidance are present, but participation and support remain uneven across families and partners.
Input	Teacher interviews; support staff interview	Teacher readiness; technical competence	Teachers show strong commitment, but technical capacity in adaptive assessment, individualized planning, and progress monitoring varies.
Input	School observation; facility walkthrough; RKAS	Accessibility; learning supports; financing	Basic accessibility exists, but facilities, assistive tools, and specialized supports remain limited, partly due to funding constraints.
Input	Teacher interviews; curriculum documents (KOSP)	Curriculum flexibility; differentiation readiness	The Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for differentiation, but individualized planning is still mostly informal.
Process	Classroom observations; teacher interviews	Differentiated instruction; peer support; classroom participation	Inclusive instruction is generally implemented through child-friendly activities, peer-support routines, and differentiated tasks.

Process	Principal interview; supervision reports; staff meetings	Supervision; monitoring; follow-up	Internal supervision and reflective meetings support implementation, but follow-up depends on available time and resources.
Process	Parent interviews; meeting notes	Stakeholder participation	Parent participation is visible but inconsistent, affecting continuity of support at home and school.
Product	Teacher interviews; parent interviews; classroom observations	Socio-emotional development; participation	The most visible outcomes are increased confidence, participation, and peer relationships among students with special educational needs.
Product	Student learning records; teacher interviews	Academic progress; documentation	Academic progress is reported, but documentation is uneven because individualized planning and progress records are not consistently maintained.
Product	Principal interview; budgeting documents; partner records	Sustainability; institutional support	Program sustainability depends on stronger technical teacher support, more stable resourcing, and broader partnerships.

Based on the data above, the findings of this study show that evaluation management using the CIPP model in the process of implementing inclusive education is as follows;

First, case setting and program profile. The case school is an anonymized elementary school in Metro City, Lampung Province, Indonesia, serving approximately 350 students with around 20 teachers and staff. The school runs an inclusive education program that places students with special educational needs in regular classrooms and supports participation in academic and co-curricular activities. Inclusion is treated as a school-wide responsibility, reflected in coordination roles and regular staff discussions of inclusion-related issues. The school implements the Merdeka Curriculum and uses its flexibility to adapt instruction to varied learner needs. At the same time, observations, interviews, and document review consistently indicate constraints related to limited specialized training, partially adapted facilities, and restricted resources for individualized learning support.

Second, context evaluation: needs, goals, policy alignment, and environmental support. The findings indicate that the program is relevant to both learner and community needs. Interview data from educators and parents show that the school is

expected to provide non-discriminatory access and to accommodate diverse learner needs. These accounts are supported by classroom observations in which peer assistance and inclusive interaction were regularly visible, suggesting a school climate that encourages participation and belonging.

Document analysis further shows that school vision and planning documents refer explicitly to inclusive and child-friendly education. Interviews with school leaders also confirm that the school receives periodic guidance and monitoring from local education authorities. However, although inclusive commitments are formally recognized, the documents do not consistently specify operational targets or minimum service standards for support across classrooms. This helps explain why inclusion is implemented with some variation from one class to another.

Environmental support was evident but uneven. Parents were involved through school meetings and parenting sessions, and the school reported collaboration with external partners for psychological and community-based services. However, interview data indicate that attendance and participation vary across families, while support from external actors is not always stable. Thus, the context is supportive in principle, but not yet fully institutionalized in operational terms.

Third, input evaluation: human resources, facilities, curriculum readiness, and financing. The input findings show that teacher commitment is one of the strongest assets of the program. Teacher interviews consistently revealed willingness to support inclusive practices, while inclusion support staff, where available, assisted with coordination and technical guidance. However, the data also show recurring gaps in adaptive assessment, individualized progress monitoring, and the use of shared planning tools for different student profiles. School observations and document review indicate that facilities are partly supportive but still limited. Basic accessibility improvements, such as ramp access, were observed, and a resource area was used for small-group or individualized assistance. Teachers also used both school-provided and self-created learning materials. Nevertheless, accessibility features were incomplete across school areas, and stakeholders noted limited assistive technologies and specialized learning tools.

Curriculum input was relatively flexible because teachers used the Merdeka Curriculum to adjust pacing, tasks, and activities to student needs. However, interviews and document review suggest that individualized planning remained largely informal, and consistent individualized education plans were not evident across classes. From a management perspective, budget and planning documents show that inclusion has been integrated into routine school planning, but funding limitations continue to constrain the procurement of specialized tools and facility improvement.

Fourth, process *evaluation*: implementation quality, participation, and quality assurance. Observation data show that inclusive instruction was generally implemented through differentiated, child-friendly approaches such as discussion, games, project-based activities, and concrete learning materials. Peer-support practices were also common and helped students participate in group work and class presentations. However, teacher interviews indicate that time constraints often reduced the consistency of individualized support during lessons. Stakeholder participation was visible but uneven. Students were generally active in classroom activities, particularly when lessons were interactive and supported by peers. Parents participated through meetings and parenting sessions, but interview and meeting-note data indicate that family involvement remained inconsistent, which affected continuity of support outside school.

Quality assurance processes were present through internal supervision, classroom visits, reflective feedback, and periodic external monitoring. The principal's leadership style was described as supportive and oriented toward teacher learning. Follow-up actions included reflection meetings, internal mini-training, and efforts to seek additional resources through proposals and partnerships. Even so, the consistency of follow-up depended on time, available funding, and the institutionalization of support routines.

Fifth, product evaluation: outcomes, stakeholder satisfaction, and sustainability. The most visible outcomes were socio-emotional. Teachers and parents reported that students with special educational needs showed increased confidence, stronger peer relationships, and better classroom participation. These outcomes were also supported by observation data showing more active engagement when lessons were interactive and socially supportive. Academic progress was reported as gradual, especially when students received scaffolding and individualized assistance. However, document analysis showed that progress records were uneven across classes because individualized planning and monitoring were not systematically documented. As a result, the evidence base for long-term academic progress remains weaker than the evidence for socio-emotional gains.

In terms of sustainability, stakeholders appreciated the school's inclusive ethos and perceived social benefits, but also raised concerns about workload pressures, limited specialized resources, and uneven family engagement. The data suggest that the program is promising but remains vulnerable unless individualized planning, monitoring routines, technical teacher support, and external partnerships are strengthened.

2. Discussion

This study shows that the inclusive education program examined in this case is not weak because inclusion is rejected in principle, but because inclusion is not yet fully institutionalized as a school management system. Across the CIPP domains, the findings reveal a recurring pattern: contextual legitimacy is relatively strong, teacher commitment is evident, and inclusive classroom routines are already present; however, these strengths are not yet supported by sufficiently standardized service mechanisms, technical tools, and stable resource structures. In other words, the main problem is not whether the school values inclusion, but whether those values have been translated into durable managerial routines that can ensure consistency, accountability, and sustainability.

From this standpoint, the findings should not be read simply as another confirmation that inclusive education faces familiar barriers in teacher competence, infrastructure, and stakeholder participation. The more important interpretation is that these barriers are interconnected through management processes. This study therefore takes the position that inclusive education should be understood not only as a pedagogical or policy project, but as an organizational system whose effectiveness depends on the alignment between moral commitment and managerial capacity. We argue that many implementation gaps persist because schools often adopt inclusion normatively before they are able to operationalize it administratively. This is the point at which this study seeks to intervene in the scholarly debate: rather than treating management as a secondary background condition, we position it as a central analytical category for understanding why inclusion remains uneven even in schools that are ethically committed to it.

The context findings support this position. Community support, school values, and policy alignment clearly function as enabling conditions, and these are rightly emphasized in the literature as important foundations for inclusion (Rad et al., 2022 ; Widiastuti, 2025). However, this study also shows that legitimacy alone is insufficient. In the school examined, inclusion was morally accepted and institutionally endorsed, yet variation in classroom-level implementation remained evident because internal service standards were not clearly operationalized. We therefore depart from more normative readings of inclusion that assume policy alignment naturally leads to equitable practice. Instead, this study supports a more critical view: policy legitimacy creates permission for inclusion, but not necessarily managerial coherence. In this respect, our findings reinforce prior observations about the policy–practice divide (Abdillah et al., 2024 ; Khamidah, 2025), while extending them by showing that the gap is not merely a matter of weak compliance, but also a matter of incomplete managerial translation from vision into routines, targets, and support structures.

A similar argument applies to the input dimension. Existing scholarship often emphasizes that teacher attitudes and school culture are decisive for inclusive education (Rasmitadila et al., 2023 ; Hoppey et al., 2023), and the present findings confirm that

teacher commitment is indeed a major strength. Yet this study also shows the limits of over-relying on commitment. Teachers in this case demonstrated willingness, flexibility, and peer-sharing, but these strengths did not automatically produce consistent adaptive assessment, individualized monitoring, or comparable planning practices across classrooms. Our position here is explicit: commitment is necessary, but insufficient. Inclusive education cannot depend primarily on personal goodwill or informal collegial learning. It must be supported by technical instruments, shared planning formats, and structured coaching. In this sense, the study critiques a tendency in some inclusion discourse to romanticize teacher dedication while paying insufficient attention to the managerial and technical infrastructure that makes dedication sustainable in practice. The novelty of this study, therefore, lies partly in showing that the critical bottleneck is not simply teacher disposition, but the absence of institutionalized support tools that convert commitment into repeatable practice.

The facilities and learning-support findings further strengthen this argument. Prior research has repeatedly shown that infrastructure and accessibility matter for inclusive schooling (Alvi et al., 2023 ; Widyawati & Sugiyono, 2020 ; Rosyidah & Rindanigsih, 2024 ; Karya et al., 2021), and this study is consistent with that literature. However, our analysis goes beyond restating that facilities are limited. We argue that incomplete accessibility and weak assistive support are not only material shortages; they are structural indicators of how far inclusion has—or has not—been integrated into school planning priorities. In other words, accessibility should not be treated merely as a technical add-on or facilities issue, but as a visible marker of institutional seriousness. Where accessibility remains partial and specialized supports remain dependent on improvisation, inclusion remains vulnerable to inconsistency and low scalability. Here the study extends existing theory by reframing facilities not as peripheral supports, but as part of the managerial architecture of inclusion. This is a conceptual move that places resource allocation and accessibility planning at the centre of school improvement, rather than at the margins.

The process findings also invite a more critical reading. The presence of differentiated, child-friendly instruction and peer-support routines confirms what previous research has suggested: participation improves when classroom teaching is adaptive and socially supportive (Strogilos, 2018 ; Ramberg & Watkins, 2020). Yet the present study shows that good classroom routines can coexist with uneven individualized support. This matters theoretically because it suggests that visible inclusion practices should not be equated with fully effective inclusion. We position ourselves here against celebratory interpretations that treat classroom friendliness or peer acceptance as sufficient indicators of successful inclusion. The findings indicate that process quality in this school is real, but fragile. It is held together by teacher improvisation, reflective supervision, and collegial effort, but remains vulnerable to workload pressures and uneven family engagement. This is where POAC becomes

analytically useful: what appears as a pedagogical inconsistency is also an implementation and quality-assurance problem. Thus, the contribution of this study is not simply to confirm that time constraints matter, but to show that without standardized service routines, workload pressure becomes a mechanism through which inclusion quality becomes uneven across classrooms.

At the product level, the study found that socio-emotional outcomes were more visible and consistently supported than academic outcomes. This is partly in line with literature linking inclusive environments to belonging, confidence, and positive school climate (Mintz et al., 2021 ; Coates et al., 2020). However, the significance of this finding lies not only in the outcome itself, but in what it reveals about how schools recognize success. The school appears more able to observe and value socio-emotional participation than to document academic progress systematically. Our interpretation is that inclusion in practice is currently more socially institutionalized than academically institutionalized. That is, the school has developed routines for acceptance and participation more successfully than routines for evidence-based individualized learning progression. This distinction is important because it allows us to critique a common tendency in inclusion discourse to celebrate social participation without equally strengthening accountability for academic growth. The present study therefore proposes that sustainable inclusion requires a dual institutionalization: inclusion must be socially visible and academically traceable. Without routine documentation, individualized planning, and progress monitoring, academic support remains dependent on memory, goodwill, and isolated teacher effort.

On this basis, the novelty of this study can now be stated more clearly. The contribution of this article is not simply that it applies the CIPP model to an inclusive education case, nor merely that it documents familiar barriers. Rather, its novelty lies in showing that implementation gaps in inclusive education are best understood as problems of partial institutionalization. Through the integration of CIPP and POAC, this study proposes that inclusion succeeds when contextual legitimacy, resourcing, implementation, and monitoring are not only present, but also systematically connected through managerial routines. This conceptual contribution shifts the discussion from "what barriers exist" to "how school management mediates whether inclusion becomes stable, uneven, or fragile." In this sense, the study offers an alternative analytical stance within the scholarship: instead of treating inclusive education primarily as a moral imperative or pedagogical challenge, it frames inclusion as a management-dependent educational reform whose success depends on the institutionalization of standards, supports, documentation, and follow-up.

The implications of this argument are practical as well as theoretical. Practically, schools should not rely only on teacher motivation or broad policy alignment, but should build minimum internal service standards for students with special educational needs,

including clearer role allocation, simple individualized planning formats, routine progress logs, and structured follow-up from supervision. Professional development should move beyond general awareness and focus on concrete competencies such as adaptive assessment, progress monitoring, and classroom-level documentation. Likewise, accessibility planning should be integrated into budgeting and partnership strategies rather than treated as a secondary facilities concern. Theoretically, this study suggests that future research on inclusive education should give greater analytical attention to school management processes as mediating structures between policy intention and learner outcomes. This would help move the field away from fragmented explanations and toward more integrated accounts of why inclusion remains inconsistent even where commitment is strong.

The broader impact of this study extends beyond one elementary school in Metro City. Many education systems, particularly in resource-constrained settings, have already adopted the language of inclusion at the policy level but continue to struggle with implementation consistency. The findings of this study suggest that this is not merely a local administrative problem, but a broader issue in how inclusive reform is institutionalized in schools. By highlighting the need to connect legitimacy, technical capacity, resourcing, and documentation within a coherent management system, this study offers a perspective that may be relevant to similar school contexts in Indonesia and other comparable settings. Its wider significance lies in reminding policymakers, school leaders, and scholars that inclusion becomes sustainable not when it is only affirmed, but when it is organized.

At the same time, this study has limitations that should be acknowledged as part of its intellectual scope. Because it is based on a qualitative evaluative case study in one anonymized elementary school, the findings are analytically transferable rather than statistically generalizable. In addition, although the study triangulates observations, interviews, and documents, the strength of some product findings—particularly academic progress—was constrained by uneven documentation within the school itself. This limitation is not merely methodological; it also reflects one of the substantive findings of the study, namely that individualized monitoring remains underdeveloped. Therefore, the article should be read as offering a conceptually grounded and empirically supported interpretation of school-level management in inclusive education, not as a universal model. Future studies can build on this contribution by testing whether the idea of partial institutionalization also explains implementation gaps in other inclusive school settings and by examining which management arrangements most effectively stabilize inclusive practice over time.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the inclusive education program in the examined elementary school is supported by strong contextual legitimacy, teacher commitment, curriculum

flexibility, and generally positive classroom practices, especially in differentiated instruction, peer-support routines, and socio-emotional participation. However, these strengths have not yet been fully institutionalized into a consistent management system. The main weaknesses remain in adaptive assessment, individualized planning, progress documentation, accessibility, and the stability of specialized supports and partnerships. In this sense, the findings suggest that the central challenge of inclusive education at the school level is not merely whether inclusion is accepted in principle, but whether it is translated into clear service standards, structured support mechanisms, and sustainable managerial routines.

The main contribution of this study lies in its effort to reposition inclusive education as not only a pedagogical or policy issue, but also a school management issue. By combining the CIPP framework with POAC as an operational lens, this study offers a more integrated way of understanding implementation gaps in inclusive education. Rather than treating problems such as weak documentation, uneven support, and limited accessibility as separate barriers, this study shows that they are interconnected through the school's planning, resourcing, implementation, and quality-assurance processes. In this way, the study contributes to the literature by highlighting partial institutionalization as a key explanation for why inclusive programs may appear promising in principle but remain uneven in practice.

Future research should expand this line of inquiry by examining how schools operationalize inclusive commitments into internal service standards, measurable targets, and clearer role allocation across classrooms. Further studies are also needed to develop and test more feasible models of individualized planning, adaptive assessment, and progress monitoring in inclusive elementary settings. Because time constraints and resource limitations remain significant, future work should compare alternative support arrangements, such as scheduled support blocks, shared intervention resources, co-teaching models, and structured school–family communication mechanisms, in order to identify which approaches most effectively strengthen consistency, accountability, and sustainability.

The central message of this study is that inclusive education becomes sustainable not simply when it is endorsed as a value or mandated as a policy, but when it is organized as a coherent management system. Without clear standards, structured monitoring, adequate learning supports, and stable institutional follow-up, inclusion remains dependent on individual commitment and therefore vulnerable to inconsistency. For this reason, strengthening school-level management should be understood as a necessary pathway for addressing implementation gaps in inclusive education.

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