

Implementation of Individualized Curriculum for Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Elementary Schools: A Systematic Review

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Received: April 2025	The Individualized Curriculum or Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a learning approach designed to accommodate the unique needs of Children with Special Needs (CSN) within inclusive education systems. This study analyzed 24 peer-reviewed articles using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with VOSviewer visualization to identify factors influencing IEP implementation in inclusive elementary schools, particularly within the Palangka Raya context. The review covered literature published between 2015 and 2024 and focused on the planning, execution, and evaluation of IEPs. Findings suggest that IEP success depends significantly on teacher competencies, supportive school policies, parental involvement, and access to adequate resources. While certain schools in Palangka Raya have initiated IEP practices, challenges remain in terms of structural, technical, and cultural barriers. VOSviewer-based visualizations highlight key focus areas in the literature such as "child," "special," and "elementary school," demonstrating an increased scholarly emphasis on inclusive practices. The study recommends enhancing teacher training, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and formulating locally tailored IEP guidelines.
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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a global paradigm that upholds the right of every child, including children with special needs (CSNs), to receive equitable educational services without discrimination. This principle not only emphasizes the physical inclusion of CSNs in regular classrooms but also demands that education systems become more adaptive and responsive to the diverse needs of learners. UNESCO asserts that inclusive education is a fundamental pillar in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNESCO, 2020), particularly Goal 4 on quality and equitable education. Consequently, educational systems are expected to adjust curricula, methods, and learning environments to ensure the success of all learners without exception. (Muniroh Sukardi, & Prasetyo, A., 2023)

In Indonesia, inclusive education has been formally regulated through Ministerial Regulation No. 70 of 2009. This policy represents a significant milestone in designing an education system that embraces student diversity. However, its practical implementation in the field continues to face substantial challenges. Recent studies (Widodo & Nurhasanah, N., 2021) reveal a persistent gap between policy mandates and the schools' capacity to operationalize them effectively. One of the

primary instruments of inclusive education is the Individualized Education Program (IEP), a personalized learning plan developed through comprehensive assessment of student needs. Unfortunately, many educational practitioners still perceive the IEP as merely an administrative requirement for accreditation purposes rather than a dynamic, contextual pedagogical tool.

Recent research, such as those by (Arifin Rohmatillah, R., & Suparno, S., 2022) and (Damayanti, 2023), demonstrates that consistent implementation of IEPs can significantly enhance the cognitive, social, and emotional development of CSNs. However, the effectiveness of IEPs relies heavily on teachers' competencies in designing and adjusting learning plans, active parental involvement in the child's educational process, support from professionals such as psychologists and therapists, and a school culture that embraces differentiated instruction. (Yulianti Nugroho, D., & Pramono, A., 2021) emphasize that successful IEP implementation is closely tied to cross-sector collaboration, which, unfortunately, is not yet systematically integrated into most elementary schools, particularly outside Java.

This issue is particularly evident in the context of Palangka Raya, the capital city of Central Kalimantan Province. While several elementary schools have been designated as inclusive, data from the Education Department (Raya, 2022) indicates that only 11 out of 146 schools are actively implementing inclusive education with functioning IEP documentation. Most teachers have not received specific training in developing individualized curricula, and the presence of Special Education Assistants (GPK) remains extremely limited. (Sulastri & Hidayat, T., 2021) report that many IEPs are only prepared during periods of supervision or accreditation, not as routine working documents to guide day-to-day instruction. This highlights a significant discrepancy between national policy vision and actual school-level implementation. (Hartatik Suyanto, S., & Wahyuningsih, S., 2020)

Moreover, research on IEPs in Indonesia remains predominantly focused on Java, while regions beyond, such as Palangka Raya, have received limited scholarly attention. Additionally, much of the existing literature remains descriptive in nature, lacking thematic analysis or bibliometric mapping to explore research directions and trends. As a result, comprehensive insights into the patterns, challenges, and strengths of IEP implementation models in inclusive elementary schools especially in peripheral areas remain scarce. (Ball & Skerbetz, M. D., 2020)

In response to these problems and knowledge gaps, this study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to analyze 24 national and international academic articles published between 2015 and 2024. The study employs VOSviewer bibliometric tools to visualize key concepts, keyword relationships, and trends in research related to IEP implementation in inclusive elementary schools. Through this approach, the study aims to provide robust empirical contributions and generate contextually relevant and applicable policy recommendations to support the development of a more equitable and inclusive education system particularly in regions such as Palangka Raya.

METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, developed based on the research protocol introduced by Kitchenham and Charters (2007), with contextual adaptations for inclusive education and the study of Children with Special Needs (CSNs) at the elementary school level. The SLR method was selected to obtain a deep, systematic, and structured understanding of the theme of individualized curriculum implementation or the Individualized Education Program (IEP), which is a central instrument in inclusive learning practices. The SLR protocol used in this study includes the stages of formulating research questions, identifying literature, screening articles based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, thematic data analysis, and transparent and replicable reporting. The selection of the SLR approach allows

the researcher to trace academic footprints and emerging empirical trends over a defined period, making the synthesis results a credible reference for policy-making and educational practice. Furthermore, this method supports the synthesis of data from various complementary sources, both thematically and contextually. By adapting the original SLR framework to the issue of individualized curriculum for CSNs in Indonesian inclusive elementary schools, this study aims to produce findings that are more relevant and context-specific.

The SLR in this study was designed to systematically identify, critically evaluate, and synthesize previous studies relevant to the implementation of individualized curricula in inclusive elementary school settings. This approach serves not only as a literature mapping tool but also as a filtering mechanism using objective and consistent criteria. One of the key strengths of the SLR method lies in its ability to reduce selection bias often present in narrative or traditional reviews. As such, the findings of the review reflect not only a descriptive overview but also a structured, in-depth, and reproducible body of knowledge. In the context of inclusive education, SLR is an effective strategy to integrate multiple theoretical and practical perspectives developed across regions and time periods. It also allows for cross-validation of findings from various sources, thereby increasing the reliability and relevance of the results. Therefore, SLR is considered a suitable approach to address research questions regarding the effectiveness and challenges of IEP implementation within localized contexts such as Palangka Raya.

The data sources in this study were drawn from five nationally and internationally recognized academic databases: Google Scholar, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), ScienceDirect, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), and Garuda Ristek from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. The selection of these five databases was based on considerations of reliability, publication coverage, and accessibility to relevant articles. To optimize the literature search, a combination of Indonesian and English keywords was used, such as "kurikulum individual," "individualized education program," "anak berkebutuhan khusus," "sekolah dasar inklusif," and "pendidikan inklusif Indonesia." These keywords were arranged using Boolean operators (AND/OR) to generate more precise search combinations. Additional filters, including publication time range and document type, were also applied to screen articles aligned with the study's focus. The search process was conducted in a gradual and planned manner, with search documentation retained as part of the audit trail to ensure transparency and scientific accountability.

Literature identification was conducted for the period between 2015 and 2024, considering that the past decade reflects the growing policy and practical dynamics of inclusive education in Indonesia. This time boundary is also relevant to the emergence of new policies regarding CSN education and various innovations in individualized curriculum

implementation. Only academic journal articles, policy reports, theses, and dissertations published by academic institutions or government agencies were included in the corpus. Document types such as opinion pieces, news articles, blogs, or other popular writings were explicitly excluded from the review. Researchers ensured that selected documents were accessible in full-text format for comprehensive content analysis. This effort aims to ensure that the quality and depth of information obtained support a robust and accountable thematic analysis. The search results were documented in a spreadsheet listing titles, publication years, authors, source journals, and topic relevance to the study's focus.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to maintain consistency and relevance in literature selection. The inclusion criteria comprised: (1) articles written in either Indonesian or English, (2) a focus on the practice of developing and implementing individualized curricula or IEPs, and (3) direct relevance to elementary education contexts. The exclusion criteria included popular publications (e.g., mass media articles), papers without explicit discussions of IEPs, and literature focusing on secondary or higher education levels. Additionally, articles with unverifiable methodologies (e.g., lacking data sources or research approaches) were excluded. These criteria were applied consistently throughout the screening process to avoid selection bias that could influence the synthesis outcomes. As a result, all selected articles are assured to be directly aligned with the study's objectives and make substantial contributions to understanding IEP implementation in inclusive elementary schools.

Out of a total of 156 articles gathered from the various databases, 43 articles passed the initial screening stage based on titles and abstracts. This screening assessed the alignment with the defined inclusion criteria. Subsequently, a full-text screening was conducted to evaluate methodological quality, topical relevance, and analytical depth. From this evaluation, only 24 articles were found to meet all criteria and were analyzed intensively. The selection process was iterative and involved two independent researchers to prevent subjective bias. Discrepancies in judgment were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. The final number of selected articles reflects a rigorous screening ratio that is critical for ensuring the quality and validity of findings. A visual PRISMA diagram will be included to clearly and systematically illustrate the article selection process for readers.

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative thematic approach, which involved grouping and interpreting literature content based on recurring key themes. In this study, four major themes were identified: (1) the urgency of individualized curricula for CSNs, (2) IEP implementation practices in elementary schools, (3) challenges and obstacles in execution, and (4) strategies to enhance the effectiveness of IEP implementation. Each article was coded according to these themes, and data were synthesized into comprehensive academic narratives. Coding was carried out manually using an

open coding approach to capture local nuances and context from each study. To ensure reliability, two researchers performed independent coding and reconciled their results through discussion. This method ensures that the findings represent not only dominant trends but also the diversity of perspectives on inclusive education practices across different regions.

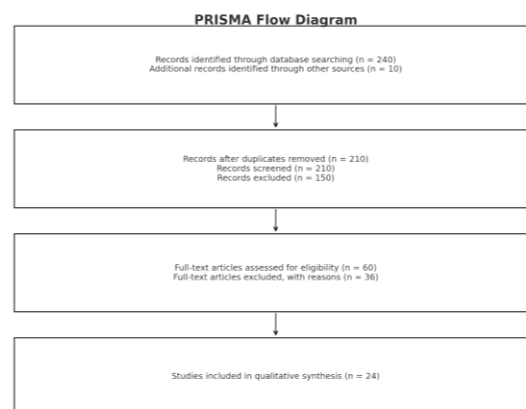


Figure 1. Prisma Flow Diagram

To strengthen the visual dimension and support bibliometric analysis, the VOSviewer software was used. This application is particularly useful in visualizing concept relationships in the literature, especially through its co-occurrence and overlay visualization features. The outputs of this analysis include: (1) a keyword network visualization, (2) a temporal overlay based on term appearance by year, and (3) a density visualization of terms. These visualizations enable researchers to observe trends, the strength of conceptual links, and the intensity of term discussion within the reviewed literature. The visualizations will be included in the results and discussion section, accompanied by narrative interpretation. The use of VOSviewer is advantageous because it simplifies the complexity of bibliometric data and helps readers understand dominant focuses in the literature.

The interpretation of the VOSviewer visualizations was based on three main indicators: keyword frequency, link strength, and term publication time (overlay). The color and size of nodes indicate the intensity of specific keywords in the literature corpus. For example, terms like “child,” “special,” and “elementary school” appeared dominantly and were strongly interconnected, indicating the literature’s focus on personalization in elementary education. The connecting lines between nodes reveal how frequently two keywords co-occurred in the same article. These visualizations provide a conceptual map or knowledge domain overview while also identifying open research gaps. Thus, the analysis results not only reinforce narrative findings but also form a strong foundation for visual argumentation.

The entire research process was guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency, accountability, and replicability of the SLR process. PRISMA served as the

reporting framework for compiling the flowchart of literature selection stages—from initial identification to final article inclusion. This diagram will be presented as Table/Figure 1 at the beginning of the results and discussion section. Through the application of PRISMA, readers can clearly understand the literature screening and selection process, as well as the rationale for decisions at each stage. This approach also guarantees that the findings are not merely based on the researchers’ subjective preferences but have followed a scientifically accountable standard. Ultimately, these procedures aim to produce a valid and relevant literature synthesis to support evidence-based development of inclusive education in Palangka Raya and similar regions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on a review of 24 scholarly articles selected through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, it was found that the implementation of the Individualized Curriculum or Individualized Education Program (IEP) in inclusive elementary schools plays a crucial role, yet its application still faces various fundamental challenges. The majority of the literature reveals that IEPs are not fully utilized as a guide in daily learning processes, but rather tend to serve an administrative function. This is evident in the common practice of preparing IEPs only during supervisory visits or accreditation assessments, rather than as a core pedagogical tool. This reality indicates a

significant gap between the ideals of inclusive education policies, which promote educational equity, and the actual practices in the field, which remain limited to conceptual and technical understanding. The lack of a unified comprehension of the essence of IEPs further widens the disparity in implementation, particularly in areas like Palangka Raya that lack sufficient technical policy support. Therefore, it is essential to further explore the dynamics of implementation—including its challenges, best practices, and strategies to ensure sustainability.

Initial findings from the literature synthesis indicate that teachers’ ability to assess individual students’ needs is the key factor affecting the quality of IEP implementation. Many general classroom teachers have not received systematic training in functional assessment techniques, differentiated instruction, and the formulation of learning objectives tailored to the characteristics of children with special needs. Damayanti (2023) found that only about 35% of teachers in inclusive elementary schools feel capable of independently and comprehensively developing an IEP. This highlights the need for serious intervention to enhance teachers’ professional capacity through ongoing, practice-based training. Without strong assessment competencies, IEP formulation is unlikely to align with students’ actual needs and may be ineffective in supporting their development. Thus, sustainable teacher training based on collaborative approaches must be a priority in regional education policies.

Table 1. Title Research Individualized Education Program (IEP)

No	Year	Title	Authors
1	2023	The Effect of the Individualized Education Program on Early Reading Ability for Students with Special Needs...	Dahlia N. Asri & Bambang E. H. Cahyo
2	2023	Challenges of Implementing the IEP for Special Needs Children with Learning Disabilities: Systematic Review	Syar Meeze M. Rashid & Mei Ti Wong
3	2022	Identification of Processes in Preparing IEPs by Special Education Teachers	Ayşe Yıldız & Emre Koç
4	2024	Integrating Learning Trajectories into IEP to Enhance Number Concepts...	Nurul Hasanah & Rika Pratama
5	2020	Characteristics of IEPs for Students with Learning Disabilities: A Systematic Review	John W. McKenna & Michael Solis
6	2024	Does Special Education Work? A Systematic Literature Review	Sarah J. Thompson & Kevin L. Brooks
7	2023	Implementation of the IEP Program in Elementary Schools: Quality Analysis of Inclusive Education	Sulistyo & Wahyuni
8	2025	Effectiveness of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in Special Needs Learners	Helen G. Perez & Minguela S. Ting
9	2021	Understanding IEP Implementation in Padang Inclusive Elementary Schools	EAI Research Team (Lead: Eka Yuliana & Ardi Saputra)
10	2021	Exploring Augmented Reality Games in Accessible Learning: A Systematic Review	Minghao Cai & Gokce Akcayir
11	2024	A Systematic Review of Inclusive Education Strategies in K–12	Omar Al-Kilani & Faisal Fteiha
12	2022	Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs in Nordic Countries: A Scoping Review	Ingrid Möller & Lars Peterson
13	2020	IEP in Resource and Inclusive Settings	Thomas Espin & George Deno
14	2018	Development of Inclusive Learning Relationships in Mainstream Primary	Angeliki Effthymiou & Helen Kington
15	2023	A Social Model to Guide IEP Development and Change	Mary Blasko & Kristi Morin
16	2023	Does IEP Improve Participation of Adolescents with Disabilities? A Meta-Analysis	Kelli Sanderson & Samantha Goldman
17	2024	Assistive Technologies for Children with Dyslexia	Pramod Paudel & Anita Acharya
18	2020	Personalization of Learning Using Adaptive Technology & AR	Junhua Liu & Lionell Loh
19	2024	Academic Outcomes of Typical Students in Inclusive Settings	Anna Svensson & Johan Karlsson
20	2022	Barriers and Facilitators in Inclusive Education: IWJ Lebanon	Lara Saad & Rami Hassan
21	2023	International Perspectives and Trends in Inclusive Education Research: A Systematic Review	Maria González & Liam O'Connor
22	2024	A Guide to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)	Emily Richardson & Daniel Morrison
23	2022	Developing IEPs that Support Inclusive Education for Students with Cognitive Disabilities	Sarah Sabia & Robert Thurlow
24	2022	Importance of IEP in Communicative Development of Children with Speech Delay: Systematic Review	Laura Henderson & Tomasz Nowak

To enhance the narrative analysis, bibliometric visualizations using VOSviewer were employed, generating three primary outputs: (1) keyword network visualization, (2) overlay visualization of publication time, and (3) density visualization. The network visualization reveals strong connections between keywords such as “child,” “special,” and “elementary school.” The size of the nodes and the thickness of the connecting lines indicate the frequency and strength of the relationships among these terms in the reviewed literature. These keywords are centrally positioned in the network, reflecting the literature's focus on elementary education and the characteristics of children with special needs as the core of IEP discourse.

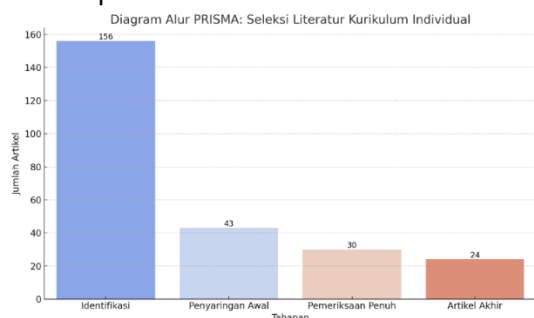


Figure 2. Keyword Network Visualization of IEP Literature Using VOSviewer

The interpretation of this network visualization shows that academic discourse on individualized curriculum consistently places children and elementary schools as the primary domains. This supports the narrative finding that inclusive education requires systematic adjustment at the foundational level of learning. Without establishing these practices in early education, it is difficult to develop a comprehensive approach for higher levels. The spatial proximity of terms such as “individualized curriculum,” “special needs,” and “implementation” within the network indicates these themes are often discussed together in both policy and practice contexts. This correlation serves as an important indicator in developing more contextual and targeted instructional strategies.

The next visualization, the overlay time visualization, illustrates the temporal dimension or the development of key terms in the literature over time. In Figure 2, the word “child” began to appear more frequently in literature around 2020, indicating an increased research focus on learners as specific subjects. Meanwhile, terms like “special” and “elementary school” dominated from 2022 to 2023, suggesting that institutional context and the characteristics of children with special needs are becoming increasingly relevant in academic discussions. The color shift from blue to yellow illustrates the recency of term emergence, with brighter colors representing more recent trends. This overlay indicates that researchers are beginning to shift their focus from merely identifying the characteristics of special needs students toward viewing the inclusive elementary school itself as an ecosystem in need of reform.

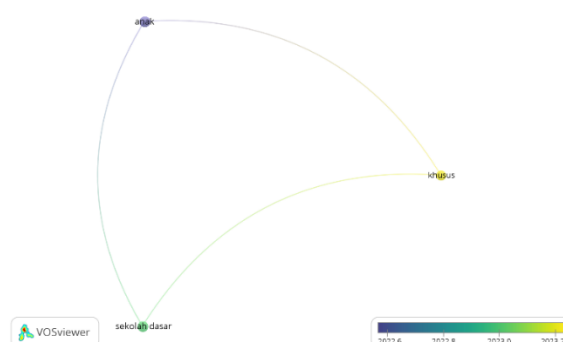


Figure 3. Overlay Visualization of Term Publication Time in IEP Literature

The density visualization in Figure 3 displays keyword frequency in a heatmap format. Bright yellow areas indicate high-frequency terms, while blue areas represent less dominant terms. Keywords such as “child,” “curriculum,” and “inclusive education” appear in the highest-density areas, confirming that these three concepts are central themes in IEP studies at the elementary level. This visualization provides compelling evidence that the issue of IEP implementation cannot be separated from three critical focal points: student characteristics, curriculum development strategies, and inclusive education systems. Meanwhile, less dense yet notable terms such as “collaboration,” “teacher,” and “evaluation” may suggest underexplored research gaps that warrant further attention.

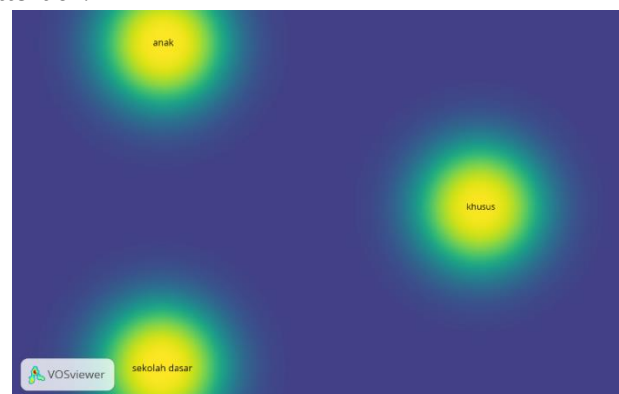


Figure 4. Density Visualization of Keywords in IEP Literature

The literature also reveals that the majority of articles emphasize the importance of cross-stakeholder collaboration in developing and implementing IEPs. Ideal collaboration involves classroom teachers, special education support teachers, school principals, parents, and professionals such as psychologists and occupational therapists. However, in practice, this collaboration rarely materializes comprehensively. Many teachers develop IEPs individually without input from other parties, resulting in documents with limited relevance and effectiveness. Contributing factors include time constraints, administrative burdens, and the lack of a collaborative culture within schools. In Palangka Raya, this issue is exacerbated by the limited number of special education

teachers and the absence of a systematic inter-agency coordination mechanism.

Another noteworthy finding is that schools with inclusive-oriented principals are more consistent in implementing functional IEPs. Visionary leadership encourages teachers to actively engage in developing personalized learning plans. A study by Widodo & Nurhasanah (2021) found that principals who participate in inclusive education training are more likely to allocate time for teachers to collaboratively draft IEPs. In contrast, schools lacking structural support from leadership often treat IEPs as mere formalities without professional input. In Palangka Raya, this variation in leadership quality significantly influences the consistency of IEP implementation across elementary schools, despite them operating under the same educational system.

Discussion

Another critical aspect often overlooked in IEP practice is the evaluative dimension. Many teachers are not yet accustomed to monitoring student progress based on the indicators established in the IEP. Yet evaluation is a core component of the individualized learning planning cycle. Without regular monitoring and reflection, the IEP becomes nothing more than an administrative document. The literature recommends that evaluations be conducted periodically, at least twice per semester, with active involvement from students and parents. This approach also supports the inclusion principle, which positions students as active agents in their learning process, not merely as passive recipients of intervention. In Palangka Raya, there is currently no regulation mandating such periodic evaluations, leaving implementation to the discretion of individual schools.

Another obstacle lies in the lack of adaptive learning media that suit the diverse needs of students. Teachers often struggle to deliver material to students who are deaf, blind, or have attention disorders due to the unavailability of tools such as braille books, audiobooks, interactive visuals, or communication boards. As a result, IEP implementation cannot be maximized, lacking the necessary technological and infrastructural support. The absence of such tools also impedes special needs students from independently accessing learning materials. The local government, particularly the Palangka Raya Education Office, must conduct an inventory of needs and allocate special funding for the provision of inclusive learning media as a key component of IEP implementation strategy.

School culture also plays a significant role in the success of IEP implementation. Schools that lack inclusive values in their daily routines tend to marginalize students with special needs. For example, such students may be left out during lessons, excluded from group activities, or even pitied by their peers. This culture contradicts the spirit of inclusion, which promotes acceptance, diversity, and equality. Therefore, transforming school culture is a vital step in sustaining effective IEP implementation. Training and awareness campaigns about

inclusive values must be carried out consistently for all school members, including teachers, students, educational staff, and parents, to create a learning environment that supports the success of all children.

Besides teachers, parents play an essential role in the development and execution of the IEP. Unfortunately, many studies report that parental involvement remains largely symbolic. Parents often attend IEP meetings without fully understanding the content of the documents. A lack of awareness about inclusive education and insufficient school support leave many parents feeling awkward or reluctant to participate actively. Yet multiple studies confirm that parental involvement improves IEP effectiveness—particularly in terms of home learning support and the child's social skills development. In Palangka Raya, programs for strengthening parental capacity among families of children with special needs remain very limited. Schools must take the initiative to organize regular inclusive parenting programs.

Teacher training is a key element in strengthening the capacity for developing and implementing IEPs. However, various studies show that existing training programs are still sporadic and lack sustainability. One-off training sessions without follow-up are insufficient to bring about long-term change in teachers' instructional practices. The study by Muniroh et al. (2023) emphasizes the importance of tiered training models that include basic training, advanced modules, and in-field mentoring. With such a model, teachers not only understand the theoretical aspects of IEPs but are also equipped to practice them with guidance. In Palangka Raya, teacher training programs still largely depend on school initiatives or partnerships with external institutions, and they have yet to become part of a sustainable teacher competency development agenda organized by the local Education Office. In fact, strengthening teacher capacity should be a top priority intervention within the inclusive education system.

One recommended form of intervention proposed by several researchers is the establishment of Inclusive Teacher Communities of Practice. These communities serve as platforms for teachers to share experiences, discuss challenges, and collaboratively develop solutions based on real cases. In practice, such communities can take the form of online forums, monthly interschool meetings, or cluster-level working groups. Widodo & Nurhasanah (2021) noted that such communities have been effective in increasing teacher motivation, broadening understanding of differentiation strategies, and fostering cross-school collaboration. In Palangka Raya, although these communities have not been formally established, some teachers have expressed interest in networking and exchanging best practices. The local government should facilitate the formation of such communities and provide incentives to sustain them.

Another strategic effort to support IEP implementation is the development of localized technical guidelines. These guidelines should be created by a team comprising academics, inclusive

education practitioners, the Education Office, and disability organizations. With localized guides, schools will have more contextual and applicable references, instead of relying on generic documents that are often overly theoretical or misaligned with on-the-ground realities. The guide may include assessment examples, IEP formats, success indicators, and user-friendly evaluation strategies. In Palangka Raya, the development of local guidelines has not yet been part of the regional education policy. However, if initiated in pilot schools, these documents could gradually be developed into formal local standards.

It is important to note that strengthening IEP implementation is not solely the responsibility of individual schools, but also part of the local government's educational governance. The Education Office plays a crucial role in providing technical regulations, organizing training, monitoring, and evaluating IEP implementation in inclusive elementary schools. Many studies have stated that support from educational bureaucracy structures is a decisive factor in whether a school can build an inclusive learning ecosystem. In areas with mayoral or regency-level regulations on inclusive education, IEP implementation tends to be more directed and structured. Therefore, the Palangka Raya City Government is expected to formulate technical derivative policies from Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009 so that individualized curriculum implementation is grounded in strong legal and operational foundations.

Effective IEP implementation will have broad impacts not only for children with special needs (CSN), but also for the entire school community. When the principle of personalized learning is applied, even regular students benefit from more flexible, varied, and responsive instructional strategies. Teachers are encouraged to be more reflective and innovative in designing the learning process. Moreover, schools that successfully implement IEPs tend to cultivate a more open and collaborative learning culture. Thus, the IEP not only enhances access to and quality of education for CSN, but also acts as a catalyst for transforming the education system toward a more humanistic and holistic approach. This concept aligns with the core values of national education, which regard students as the central subjects of the learning process.

Despite the complexity of IEP implementation challenges, several good practices have been successfully carried out by inclusive elementary schools in various regions, including outside of Java. One example is an Inclusive Public Elementary School that collaborates with a university to develop IEPs collaboratively, involving special education students as teaching assistants during the assessment and instructional intervention process. This practice offers dual benefits: strengthening the school's capacity while also serving as a practicum site for university students. In Palangka Raya, such a partnership model could serve as a promising medium-term solution, especially considering the presence of higher education institutions with special education programs, such as Muhammadiyah University of Palangka Raya. Further facilitation of these collaborations by

the Education Office through interagency agreements is needed.

The various strategies presented in this study have strong potential for adoption and adaptation by inclusive elementary schools in Palangka Raya. However, these efforts must be systematically designed and not rely solely on individual initiatives. A multi-stakeholder and sustainable approach involving schools, families, communities, academics, and local government is required. This approach could begin with identifying pilot schools, drafting an IEP implementation roadmap, allocating special budgets, and developing an integrated reporting and evaluation system. Without cross-actor commitment, IEP implementation will likely remain rhetorical or devolve into a routine administrative exercise that loses its essence as an instrument of learning equity.

To conclude this section, it is important to emphasize that the implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs) in inclusive elementary schools is part of a larger effort to realize equitable, responsive, and socially just education. The review findings show that despite the many challenges faced, there are also significant strategic opportunities to strengthen its implementation—especially when supported by relevant policy, adequate training, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and localized technical guidelines. In Palangka Raya, the momentum to develop IEPs as part of inclusive education reform must continue to be reinforced. With the right strategies and strong commitment, IEPs will not merely remain a mandatory document but will truly serve as a bridge toward education that humanizes all children without exception.

CONCLUSION

This review concludes that the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in inclusive elementary schools particularly in Palangka Raya remains fragmented and underdeveloped despite the presence of national policies. The success of IEPs is shaped by teacher competence, the availability of support staff, inclusive school culture, and adaptive learning tools, all of which are inconsistently present. Bibliometric findings reveal a shift in research focus from child-centered limitations to system-wide transformation, underscoring the need for collaborative, context-based strategies. Strengthening teacher capacity through practice-based training, providing locally relevant technical guidance, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration are essential to ensure IEPs function as instruments of educational equity.

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