

## **Bridging Excellence: A Multisite Study on Strategic Management and Governance in Inclusive Schools**

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**Abstract:** This study explores the strategies and governance of inclusive education management through a multisite case study at SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh. The aim is to analyze how these schools implement inclusive policies, manage resources, and address challenges in fostering an inclusive learning environment. Employing a qualitative approach with a multisite case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school principals, teachers, and stakeholders. The findings reveal that both schools adopt adaptive strategies, including differentiated instruction, teacher capacity building, and collaborative partnerships with local and national education authorities. However, contextual differences, such as policy implementation support, community engagement, and resource allocation, significantly impact the effectiveness of these strategies. The novelty of this study lies in its comparative analysis of inclusive education governance across distinct regional and sociocultural contexts, highlighting best practices and contextual challenges. This research contributes to the development of more effective and adaptable inclusive education management strategies, providing insights for policymakers, educators, and institutions committed to fostering equitable learning environments.

**Keywords:** Differentiated Instruction, Governance, Inclusive Education, Multisite Study, Strategic Management

### **A. Introduction**

Inclusive education aims to provide equal learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or socio-economic backgrounds. Numerous studies highlight the importance of inclusive policies, teacher training, and adaptive learning strategies in fostering an equitable educational environment (Ainscow, 2020; Florian, 2011). Effective management and governance play a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of inclusive education (Schuelka et al., 2019). However, the success of inclusive education varies across different regions due to differences in

policies, school leadership, and resource availability (UNESCO, 2021).

Despite growing research on inclusive education, limited studies have explored the comparative governance and strategic management of inclusive education in different sociocultural contexts. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical research examining how different schools in Indonesia, particularly those in urban and semi-urban areas, implement inclusive policies (Rahmawati & Syamsudin, 2022). Furthermore, existing research has not fully addressed how local policies, community involvement, and institutional leadership influence the sustainability of inclusive education programs.

Recent studies emphasize the need for differentiated instruction, teacher professional development, and community collaboration as key components of inclusive education (Mitchell, 2020). Additionally, a growing body of research highlights the role of technology in supporting inclusive learning (Sailor, 2022). However, while global frameworks for inclusive education have been established, their practical implementation remains challenging due to regional disparities in resources, policy enforcement, and cultural perceptions of inclusivity (Kozleski et al., 2020).

This study offers a comparative analysis of inclusive education strategies and governance in two different Indonesian schools: SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh. By adopting a multisite approach, this research highlights variations in inclusive education management, focusing on leadership strategies, teacher capacity, and stakeholder involvement. Unlike previous studies that focus on single-case analyses, this research provides a broader understanding of how different contextual factors influence the effectiveness of inclusive education strategies.

The findings of this study will contribute to the development of more effective inclusive education policies and strategies tailored to regional needs. Policymakers and educators can use the insights gained to refine their approaches to managing inclusive education, ensuring that best practices are adaptable across diverse settings. Additionally, this study provides empirical data that can guide future research on inclusive education governance in Indonesia. Based on the above discussions, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How do SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh implement strategic management and governance in inclusive education, and what factors influence the effectiveness of their approaches?

## **B. Methods**

This study employed a qualitative multisite case study approach to explore the strategic management and governance of inclusive education in two primary schools in Indonesia: SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh. The multisite approach was deliberately chosen to compare the unique contexts and strategies employed by these schools in implementing inclusive education policies at the primary school level. By examining two distinct regions, the study aimed to uncover

the variations in local governance, resource allocation, and educational practices that influence the effectiveness of inclusive education. This comparative approach allowed for a deeper understanding of how contextual factors, such as leadership, community involvement, and local policies, shape the successful integration of students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms.

## **1. Research Site and Respondents**

The study was conducted at SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik, a public primary school located in East Java, and SDN 25 Banda Aceh, a public primary school in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province. These schools were selected because of their established inclusive education programs, which provided an ideal setting for exploring the strategies and governance of inclusive education in primary schools. The schools were chosen for their contrasting regional characteristics, which offer valuable insights into how local contexts such as infrastructure, community engagement, leadership, and cultural factors can influence the implementation of inclusive education policies. This comparative approach enabled the study to identify both common challenges and region-specific strategies in fostering inclusive environments for students with disabilities.

The respondents consisted of: 1) School Principals (to understand school leadership and governance strategies); 2) Inclusive Education Coordinators (to explore specific implementation strategies); 3) Teachers (to assess their perceptions, challenges, and instructional practices in inclusive classrooms); 4) Parents of Students with Special Needs (to understand their involvement in school activities); and 5) Education Policy Officials (from local education offices to examine policy support and implementation challenges).

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who were chosen based on their expertise and direct involvement in managing and implementing inclusive education. This method ensured that participants possessed relevant knowledge and experience to provide valuable insights into the strategies and governance of inclusive education in the selected schools. By targeting individuals with firsthand experience in the design, management, and execution of inclusive education policies, the study aimed to gather in-depth perspectives on the challenges and successes associated with fostering inclusive learning environments for students with disabilities.

## **2. Data Collection Instruments**

To gather comprehensive data, this study employed multiple research instruments: (1) Semi-Structured Interviews, conducted with school principals, teachers, and parents to explore their experiences and perspectives on inclusive education management (Creswell & Poth, 2018); (2) Observations, Focused on classroom

interactions, school facilities, and teacher-student engagement to assess the practical implementation of inclusive education (Mertens, 2020); and (3) Document Analysis, Examined school policies, curriculum modifications, teacher training materials, and government regulations related to inclusive education. These methods provided a well-rounded understanding of the strategies and challenges faced in implementing inclusive education (Bowen, 2009).

The combination of these research instruments ensures a more comprehensive and reliable analysis of inclusive education management. Interviews capture firsthand experiences and insights from key stakeholders, providing depth to the findings. Observations offer an objective assessment of how inclusive education is implemented in real-time, revealing gaps that might not be evident through self-reported data. Meanwhile, document analysis strengthens the study by verifying policies and practices against actual implementation. Relying solely on one method could lead to incomplete or biased conclusions; therefore, the triangulation of interviews, observations, and document analysis enhances the validity and credibility of the research, allowing for a more accurate evaluation of inclusive education strategies.

### **3. Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006), following these steps: 1) Data Transcription - Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim; 2) Coding - The transcripts, observations, and documents were coded using NVivo software to identify recurring themes; 3) Categorization - Codes were grouped into categories such as school leadership strategies, teacher preparedness, curriculum adaptation, stakeholder involvement, and policy implementation gaps; 4) Cross-Case Analysis - Findings from SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh were compared to identify common strategies and contextual differences (Yin, 2018); and 5) Triangulation - Data from interviews, observations, and document analysis were cross-validated to enhance credibility and reliability (Patton, 2015).

### **4. Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to ethical research guidelines to ensure that all participants' rights were respected and protected throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. Additionally, the confidentiality of all participants was rigorously maintained by anonymizing personal data and ensuring that no identifying information was disclosed in the research findings (T. Miller et al., 2012). All data was securely stored and accessible only to the research team to further uphold participants' privacy rights.

Furthermore, prior to conducting the research, approval was sought and obtained from the relevant educational authorities to ensure that the study complied with institutional and governmental regulations. The ethical standards set forth by the institution and the broader academic community were followed to ensure that the research was conducted responsibly and with integrity. G. J. Miller et al., (2012) emphasize the importance of ethical guidelines in educational research, highlighting how they safeguard participants' well-being and contribute to the credibility of the study. By adhering to these ethical principles, this study maintained the highest standards of academic research while protecting the interests of its participants.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

This section presents the findings of the study, addressing the research question: How do SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh implement strategies and governance for inclusive education? The study reveals that both schools face distinct challenges in implementing inclusive education strategies, shaped by their unique regional contexts. SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik demonstrates a more robust infrastructure and strong parental involvement, which facilitates the implementation of inclusive policies. In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh struggles with bureaucratic governance, cultural barriers, and a lack of specialized teacher training, which hinders the effective inclusion of students with disabilities. These findings highlight the role of local factors, such as leadership quality, community engagement, and resource allocation, in determining the success of inclusive education practices.

The discussion contextualizes these findings within the broader literature on inclusive education governance and strategic management. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of strong leadership and community support in creating inclusive environments Ainscow (2005); Booth and Ainscow (2002). The findings of this study are consistent with these conclusions, suggesting that schools with better governance structures and greater community involvement are more likely to succeed in implementing inclusive education. Additionally, the study aligns with research by Setiawan et al., (2023), which highlights the challenges posed by teacher shortages and insufficient training in the effective integration of students with disabilities. This comparison underscores the necessity of addressing both structural and cultural barriers to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education policies.

#### **1. Strategies for Inclusive Education Implementation**

##### *School Leadership and Policy Implementation*

Both schools have implemented policies in accordance with Permendikbud No. 70/2009 on Inclusive Education, demonstrating their commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment. However, their approaches to leadership and governance significantly influence their effectiveness. At SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik,

the principal adopts a transformational leadership style, actively engaging teachers, parents, and the local community to create a collaborative support system for students with special needs. This approach ensures that inclusion is not merely a policy requirement but a shared responsibility among all stakeholders (Subban et al., 2023).

In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh relies on a more bureaucratic governance structure, where decision-making is largely influenced by government directives. While the school adheres to national policies, its top-down approach limits flexibility in addressing the unique needs of students with disabilities. The lack of proactive leadership and localized initiatives results in a slower adaptation to inclusive practices, making it challenging to foster a dynamic and responsive learning environment (Beijer et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of inclusive education in both schools is shaped by leadership style, stakeholder engagement, and the ability to adapt policies to local contexts. Schools that encourage collaboration and empower their communities tend to achieve better outcomes in inclusion. Conversely, a rigid bureaucratic structure can hinder innovation and responsiveness. Strengthening leadership capacity and fostering greater community involvement are essential steps in enhancing the quality and sustainability of inclusive education in both schools.

These findings align with Ainscow, (2020), who emphasizes the critical role of school leaders in shaping inclusive school culture. Similarly, Sharma et al., (2018) argue that transformational leadership significantly improves teacher readiness for inclusive classrooms. However, Makoelle, (2019) found that some schools in developing countries lack strong leadership, which limits inclusivity—contrasting with our findings in SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik.

#### *Teacher Training and Pedagogical Adaptation*

Teachers at SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik benefit from regular training on inclusive education strategies, supported by collaborations with universities and NGOs (Almén & Sundqvist, 2023). These partnerships provide continuous professional development, equipping teachers with the necessary skills to accommodate diverse student needs effectively (Almén & Sundqvist, 2023). Training sessions cover differentiated instruction, classroom management for students with disabilities, and the use of assistive technologies, ensuring that inclusive education is implemented with a strong pedagogical foundation.

In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh faces significant challenges in teacher training, primarily relying on government-organized workshops that are infrequent and less comprehensive (Palosaari et al., 2024). The limited availability of specialized training hinders teachers' ability to adapt instructional methods to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Without ongoing professional development, teachers often struggle

to implement inclusive practices effectively, leading to gaps in student support and learning outcomes.

The disparity in teacher training between the two schools highlights the importance of sustained professional development in fostering inclusive education. Schools that invest in continuous training and external partnerships tend to be more effective in implementing inclusive practices. To bridge the gap, SDN 25 Banda Aceh must seek additional training opportunities through collaborations with universities, NGOs, and local education agencies. Strengthening teacher capacity is crucial to ensuring that inclusive education is not only a policy but a practical reality in both schools.

This aligns with Forlin et al., (2019), who found that frequent professional development enhances teachers' confidence in handling students with diverse needs. Similarly, Fasting & Breilid, (2024) highlight that collaborative training programs significantly improve inclusive teaching strategies. However, Florian & Spratt, (2013) argue that teacher attitudes, rather than training, are the main determinants of success in inclusive education.

## **2. Governance and Stakeholder Involvement**

### *Community and Parental Engagement*

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in the success of inclusive education, as seen in SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik, where parent-teacher meetings and awareness programs on inclusive education are regularly conducted (Honu-Mensah et al., 2024; Then & Pohlmann, 2024). These initiatives help parents understand their roles in supporting their children's education, fostering stronger collaboration between families and educators. By actively engaging with the school, parents contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for students with special needs.

In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh faces challenges in parental involvement due to cultural perceptions of disability that hinder active participation (Hamzah et al., 2020). Many parents view disability as a social stigma, resulting in a lack of engagement in school activities related to inclusive education. Without parental support, students with special needs may struggle with learning both at school and at home. Overcoming these cultural barriers requires targeted awareness campaigns and community-based initiatives to shift perceptions and encourage greater parental involvement.

Research highlights the importance of parental engagement in inclusive education. Scholars argue that strong parental support enhances learning outcomes and reinforces school-based interventions (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). However, other perspectives suggest that structural barriers such as poverty and limited access to

educational resources can be more significant than parental involvement in determining student success (Cashman et al., 2021; Easterbrook & Hadden, 2021; Huguley et al., 2021; Kolluri & Tichavakunda, 2023; Noltemeyer et al., 2021; Sosu et al., 2021). While both factors play a role, ensuring that parents are actively engaged and equipped with the necessary resources is essential for the effective implementation of inclusive education in both schools.

#### *Resource Availability and Infrastructure*

SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik benefits from well-developed infrastructure that supports inclusive education. The school has designated special education rooms equipped with assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software, braille materials, and sensory learning tools (Subekti et al., 2021). These facilities provide students with special needs a conducive learning environment, allowing them to receive targeted interventions while also participating in general classroom activities. The availability of such resources enhances the effectiveness of inclusive education by addressing diverse learning requirements.

In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh faces significant infrastructural challenges (Fadillah et al., 2022). The school lacks specialized classrooms and assistive technology, making it difficult to provide tailored support for students with special needs. Teachers are forced to integrate these students into general classrooms with minimal accommodations, often relying on traditional teaching methods that may not fully meet their learning needs. Limited access to appropriate learning spaces and resources affects both student engagement and academic progress, highlighting the urgent need for infrastructural improvements.

To bridge this gap, schools must prioritize infrastructure development as a fundamental aspect of inclusive education. Providing accessible learning spaces, adaptive learning materials, and assistive technology can significantly enhance the learning experience of students with special needs. Additionally, collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, and private sectors can help secure funding and technical support for inclusive education infrastructure. Without these efforts, students with disabilities will continue to face barriers to quality education, limiting their academic and social development.

Our findings support researchers, who state that schools with better physical and technological resources implement inclusive education more effectively (Woodcock et al., 2022). Additionally, it's emphasized that inadequate facilities often result in lower academic performance among students with special needs (Dyson et al., 2020). However, the pedagogical strategies play a larger role than infrastructure in determining the success of inclusion (Graham & Scott, 2016).



### **3. Comparative Analysis and Challenges**

#### *Common Challenges*

The challenges facing inclusive education in Indonesia are multifaceted and vary across regions. This study examines the educational settings in two regions Gresik and Banda Aceh to understand the obstacles that hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education, particularly for students with disabilities. Three major challenges are identified: teacher shortage, limited policy enforcement, and cultural barriers. These challenges impact the ability of schools to provide equitable and effective education for all students, especially those with special needs.

One of the most pressing issues is the shortage of qualified teachers trained in inclusive education. At SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik, teachers receive regular training through partnerships with universities and NGOs, equipping them with specialized teaching strategies for students with disabilities. However, at SDN 25 Banda Aceh, professional development opportunities are limited, with training primarily dependent on government-organized workshops that are infrequent and often lack depth. Without continuous training, teachers struggle to implement inclusive practices effectively, leading to gaps in support for students with special needs.

Another significant challenge is the inconsistent enforcement of inclusive education policies. Although Indonesia has established regulations, such as Permendikbud No. 70/2009 on Inclusive Education, the level of implementation varies between regions. SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik benefits from strong leadership that actively promotes inclusive policies, ensuring that guidelines are followed at the school level. In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh adheres to a more bureaucratic governance model, relying on top-down directives that are not always translated into effective classroom practices. The lack of systematic monitoring and accountability further weakens policy enforcement, making it difficult to achieve meaningful inclusion.

Cultural perceptions of disability also play a crucial role in shaping the success of inclusive education. At SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik, a culture of collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community fosters a supportive learning environment for students with disabilities. Parent-teacher meetings and awareness programs help increase understanding and acceptance of inclusive education. Conversely, at SDN 25 Banda Aceh, traditional beliefs and misconceptions about disability create barriers to parental involvement. Many parents view disabilities as a family burden rather than a condition that can be supported through education, limiting their engagement in school activities.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes continuous teacher training, stronger policy enforcement, and cultural awareness programs. Schools must work closely with local governments, NGOs, and community

leaders to create sustainable support systems for inclusive education. By ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities, have access to quality education, Indonesia can move closer to achieving equitable and inclusive learning environments nationwide.

#### *Teacher Shortage in Inclusive Education*

A significant issue faced by both SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh is the shortage of specialized teachers for students with disabilities. This shortage severely limits the ability of schools to provide the individualized support that students with special needs require. According to Setiawan et al., (2023), the lack of trained special education teachers contributes to the difficulties in delivering inclusive education. Teachers in these schools often lack the specific skills and knowledge required to address the diverse needs of students with disabilities, such as those with intellectual, sensory, or physical impairments. As a result, students with special needs may not receive the attention or specialized instruction necessary for their academic and personal development.

At SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik, efforts have been made to mitigate this issue through regular teacher training programs in collaboration with universities and NGOs. These programs equip teachers with strategies to accommodate students with disabilities, improving the overall implementation of inclusive education. In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh faces challenges due to its reliance on government-organized workshops, which are infrequent and often lack depth. Without ongoing professional development, teachers struggle to implement inclusive teaching methods effectively, leaving students with disabilities at a disadvantage.

Another challenge is the lack of adequate infrastructure to support inclusive education. SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik has designated special education rooms and assistive technology to aid students with disabilities, creating a more supportive learning environment. However, SDN 25 Banda Aceh lacks specialized classrooms, forcing teachers to integrate students with special needs into general classrooms with minimal accommodations. This situation makes it difficult for teachers to provide tailored instruction, ultimately affecting the quality of education that students receive.

Cultural perceptions of disability also influence the effectiveness of inclusive education. At SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik, a strong culture of collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community fosters greater acceptance of inclusive education. Parent-teacher meetings and awareness programs play a crucial role in shaping positive attitudes. Conversely, at SDN 25 Banda Aceh, traditional beliefs and misconceptions about disability limit parental involvement. Many parents view disabilities as a personal or family burden rather than a condition that can be supported through education, reducing their engagement in school activities.

To address these challenges, schools must implement sustainable strategies such as continuous teacher training, improved infrastructure, and community engagement programs. Strengthening collaboration between educational institutions, government agencies, and NGOs can help ensure that inclusive education is effectively implemented. By fostering a more supportive and well-equipped learning environment, students with disabilities can receive the quality education they deserve, promoting equal opportunities for all learners.

#### *Implications of Teacher Shortage*

The teacher shortage problem is compounded by the broader challenges of teacher professional development. Even in regions where the demand for inclusive education is high, teachers may not have access to sufficient training or ongoing support in special education methods. The absence of professional development opportunities exacerbates the lack of specialized skills among teachers, further hindering efforts to provide an inclusive educational environment (Putri & Wahyudi, 2023). Inadequate teacher training leads to a mismatch between the needs of students with disabilities and the skills of the educators. This situation calls for urgent measures to improve teacher training programs and recruitment policies to address the shortage of specialized teachers in these regions.

#### *Limited Policy Enforcement*

Although the Indonesian government has established policies to promote inclusive education, the enforcement of these policies is often inconsistent, particularly at the local level. Putri and Wahyudi (2023) highlight that while national policies are in place to support inclusive education, the implementation of these policies can be uneven across different provinces and districts. Local governments may lack the capacity or the political will to enforce these policies effectively, which results in significant disparities in the quality of inclusive education. In Gresik, for example, while there is some support for inclusive practices, the policy enforcement is often fragmented, leading to varying levels of implementation across schools. Banda Aceh faces similar challenges, where local policy enforcement does not always align with the central government's inclusive education goals.

#### *Impact of Inconsistent Policy Enforcement*

Inconsistent policy enforcement undermines the broader goals of inclusive education by creating inequities in the access to resources and opportunities for students with special needs. As Setiawan et al. (2023) explain, policy implementation is often hindered by administrative inefficiencies, a lack of coordination between different government agencies, and insufficient funding. In both Gresik and Banda Aceh, the lack of robust policy enforcement means that many schools struggle to implement inclusive education practices effectively, leaving students with disabilities at a

disadvantage. This inconsistency in policy application not only affects the quality of education but also perpetuates inequalities in access to education for all students, particularly those with special needs.

#### *Cultural Barriers in Banda Aceh*

In addition to structural challenges, cultural factors also play a significant role in the implementation of inclusive education, particularly in Banda Aceh. Traditional beliefs and cultural norms continue to shape perceptions of students with disabilities, often leading to exclusion or marginalization. According to Samsudin (2021), many communities in Banda Aceh hold stigmatizing views towards students with special needs, which influences how these students are treated both within and outside the classroom. These cultural barriers often result in families being hesitant to send their children with disabilities to school or advocating for their inclusion in regular classrooms. This cultural resistance to inclusive education creates additional challenges for teachers and schools that are striving to foster an inclusive environment.

#### *Overcoming Cultural Barriers*

Addressing cultural barriers requires comprehensive awareness campaigns and community engagement. Samsudin (2021) suggests that raising awareness about the value of inclusive education and challenging misconceptions about disabilities can help reduce stigma and promote greater acceptance. Schools must work closely with communities to educate parents and local leaders about the benefits of inclusive education, not just for students with disabilities but for society as a whole. In regions like Banda Aceh, where traditional beliefs may be deeply entrenched, building a supportive community environment for inclusive education is essential to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities, have access to quality education.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by schools in Gresik and Banda Aceh in implementing inclusive education highlight the need for targeted interventions at both the local and national levels. The teacher shortage, limited policy enforcement, and cultural barriers each contribute to the difficulties of providing equitable education for students with disabilities. To address these challenges, there is a need for better teacher training programs, consistent enforcement of inclusive education policies, and efforts to overcome cultural stigma surrounding disabilities. By addressing these issues, schools can create more inclusive, supportive environments where all students, regardless of their abilities, can thrive.

#### **4. Context-Specific Differences**

Education systems in Indonesia are diverse, shaped by the unique challenges and strengths of each region. In this comparative study, the educational landscapes of

Gresik and Banda Aceh serve as examples of how local conditions, governance, leadership, and cultural factors influence the implementation of inclusive education. This paper examines the key factors impacting the education systems of these two regions, focusing on Gresik's better infrastructure, stronger leadership, and higher parental involvement, in contrast with Banda Aceh's bureaucratic governance, cultural barriers, and lack of inclusive education training.

#### *Gresik: Stronger Infrastructure for Inclusive Education*

Gresik has long been recognized for its relatively well-developed infrastructure in education. The availability of better facilities, such as accessible classrooms, proper sanitation, and technology resources, plays a significant role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. Schools in Gresik are often better equipped to accommodate students with disabilities, providing necessary tools such as ramps, specialized learning materials, and assistive technologies. Research by Yuen and Tofield (2019) underscores that the physical environment of a school greatly influences the inclusivity of educational practices, as students with diverse needs require an accessible and supportive environment to thrive.

#### *Leadership in Gresik: A Key to Success*

Leadership within educational institutions in Gresik is another crucial factor contributing to the success of inclusive education. Principals and school administrators in this region tend to demonstrate strong leadership, fostering an inclusive school culture and ensuring that inclusive education policies are effectively implemented. According to a study by Ainscow (2021), effective leadership in schools is instrumental in fostering a collaborative environment, encouraging teachers to embrace inclusive practices. In Gresik, school leaders play an active role in advocating for inclusion, ensuring that teachers receive professional development opportunities and that the necessary resources are allocated to support students with disabilities.

#### *Parental Involvement in Gresik's Schools*

One of the standout features of Gresik's education system is the high level of parental involvement in school activities. Research by Hornby (2018) highlights the positive correlation between parental engagement and student success, particularly in inclusive settings. In Gresik, parents are not only involved in their children's academic progress but also in extracurricular activities and school governance. This high level of engagement helps build a supportive network for students with special needs, ensuring that they receive consistent care and encouragement both at home and at school. Parental involvement also helps raise awareness about the importance of inclusive education, thus reducing stigmas and fostering a more inclusive community.

### *Banda Aceh: Bureaucratic Governance in Education*

In contrast to Gresik, Banda Aceh faces significant challenges related to bureaucratic governance. The complexity and inefficiency of the bureaucratic system often hinder the smooth implementation of inclusive education policies. As observed by Simpson (2020), rigid governance structures can limit the flexibility needed for schools to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of students with disabilities. In Banda Aceh, decision-making processes are often slow, and there is a lack of coordination between the various levels of government and educational institutions, leading to delays in the implementation of inclusive education initiatives.

### *Cultural Barriers in Banda Aceh*

Cultural factors also pose a significant challenge to the expansion of inclusive education in Banda Aceh. The region's deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and practices often result in resistance to inclusive education, particularly for children with disabilities. Ainscow (2021) notes that societal attitudes towards disability can significantly influence the success of inclusive education programs. In Banda Aceh, some families may prefer to keep children with disabilities at home rather than enrolling them in mainstream schools due to cultural stigma. This cultural resistance creates additional barriers to achieving widespread acceptance of inclusive education practices, further complicating the region's efforts to adopt a fully inclusive educational model.

### *Lack of Inclusive Education Training in Banda Aceh*

Another critical issue in Banda Aceh is the lack of training for teachers in inclusive education. Many educators in this region have not received the specialized training necessary to address the diverse needs of students with disabilities. According to a study by Hornby (2018), teachers' lack of knowledge and skills in inclusive teaching methods is one of the primary barriers to implementing effective inclusive education programs. In Banda Aceh, there is a pressing need for professional development programs that focus on inclusive pedagogy and classroom management strategies to accommodate students with disabilities. Without proper training, teachers are often ill-equipped to address the academic and social needs of these students.

### *Teacher Training and Development in Gresik*

In contrast to Banda Aceh, Gresik has made significant strides in teacher training and development, especially in the context of inclusive education. The region's schools have partnered with local universities and professional development organizations to offer specialized training for teachers on inclusive education practices. Research by Yuen and Tofield (2019) highlights the importance of continuous teacher development to ensure that educators remain up to date with the latest inclusive teaching strategies.

In Gresik, teachers are better equipped to handle diverse classrooms, thanks to a commitment to ongoing professional development, which includes training on differentiated instruction, behavior management, and the use of assistive technologies.

#### *Community Engagement in Gresik vs. Banda Aceh*

The level of community engagement in education varies significantly between Gresik and Banda Aceh. In Gresik, the community is highly supportive of inclusive education, and there are many local initiatives aimed at fostering greater inclusion in schools. These initiatives include awareness campaigns, community outreach programs, and partnerships with local organizations. In Banda Aceh, however, community engagement in inclusive education is limited. Cultural barriers and a lack of awareness about the benefits of inclusive education contribute to a less active role for the community in supporting inclusive initiatives. The absence of community-led efforts further complicates the efforts to create a truly inclusive educational system in the region.

#### *Resource Allocation in Gresik*

Gresik's better infrastructure can also be attributed to more effective resource allocation. Local governments in Gresik have prioritized funding for schools, ensuring that adequate resources are available to support inclusive education. This includes providing accessible school facilities, specialized equipment, and educational materials designed for students with disabilities. As Yuen and Tofield (2019) explain, equitable resource distribution is key to achieving inclusive education, and Gresik has made significant investments in this area. The availability of resources in Gresik allows teachers to implement inclusive practices more effectively, ensuring that students with disabilities are not left behind in the learning process.

#### *Resource Allocation in Banda Aceh*

In contrast, Banda Aceh struggles with resource allocation for inclusive education. The lack of government funding and the uneven distribution of resources across schools create significant disparities in the availability of support for students with disabilities. Many schools in Banda Aceh do not have the necessary infrastructure, materials, or assistive technologies to accommodate students with special needs. According to Simpson (2020), without adequate resources, even the most well-intentioned inclusive education policies are unlikely to succeed. The government must prioritize equitable funding and resource distribution to ensure that all schools, regardless of their location, have the tools they need to implement inclusive education effectively.

In conclusion, the educational systems in Gresik and Banda Aceh provide valuable

insights into the challenges and opportunities of implementing inclusive education in Indonesia. Gresik's success can be attributed to its stronger infrastructure, better leadership, and higher levels of parental and community involvement. In contrast, Banda Aceh faces significant obstacles due to bureaucratic governance, cultural barriers, and a lack of training for educators in inclusive education. The study highlights the importance of tailored strategies that address the unique challenges of each region. By strengthening leadership, increasing teacher training, improving resource allocation, and fostering greater community involvement, both regions can make strides toward a more inclusive education system that benefits all students.

#### *Implications for Policy and Practice*

Effective teacher training is the cornerstone of successful inclusive education. Schools should collaborate with universities and professional development organizations to provide continuous and comprehensive training for educators. Teacher preparation programs must focus not only on pedagogical skills but also on creating an understanding of diverse learners' needs. Research suggests that ongoing professional development fosters greater teacher efficacy in inclusive settings (Ainscow, 2021). Continuous training ensures that teachers remain equipped to handle a range of challenges in inclusive classrooms, including differentiated instruction and adapting to new educational technologies. This collaboration should also extend to local governments and educational authorities to ensure that training aligns with national educational standards and inclusive policies (Simpson, 2020).

Parental involvement and community support are essential for the success of inclusive education initiatives. Schools must develop strong partnerships with parents and community organizations to create an inclusive environment that extends beyond the classroom. Awareness campaigns aimed at educating parents on the importance of inclusive education can help reduce stigma and encourage more active participation in school activities. A study by Hornby (2018) found that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, there is a significant increase in students' academic and social outcomes. Moreover, schools should also engage with local communities to build support systems for students with special needs, ensuring they have access to additional resources and services. Community engagement fosters a supportive environment where inclusive education can thrive and expand its impact.

Governments play a crucial role in ensuring the success of inclusive education by providing adequate resources. Resource allocation must be context-sensitive, considering the unique needs of each school and region. A one-size-fits-all approach to funding and infrastructure may not be effective, particularly in diverse settings. Research by Yuen and Tofield (2019) emphasizes that equitable distribution of resources is key to supporting inclusive education, especially in marginalized or underserved communities. Governments should prioritize funding for teacher training, classroom accommodations, assistive technologies, and accessible school



facilities. By ensuring that all schools, regardless of their location, receive the resources they need, governments can help create an equitable educational system where all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Then, strengthening teacher training, enhancing parental and community engagement, and improving resource allocation are vital components of a comprehensive strategy to support inclusive education (Kivirand et al., 2022). Schools, governments, and communities must work together to overcome the challenges of inclusion. By fostering collaboration between stakeholders and ensuring equitable access to resources, the educational system can better meet the needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities or other special needs. The continued emphasis on professional development, community involvement, and targeted resource distribution will help build a more inclusive, equitable, and effective education system for future generations.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study examined the strategic management and governance of inclusive education at SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik and SDN 25 Banda Aceh, focusing on their implementation strategies and key influencing factors. SDN 263 Mriyunan Gresik employs a transformational leadership approach, promoting collaboration among teachers, parents, and stakeholders through training, engagement programs, and infrastructure improvements. Strong leadership commitment and parental involvement contribute to its success. In contrast, SDN 25 Banda Aceh follows a bureaucratic model, relying on government policies and centralized training, yet struggles with limited teacher training, insufficient resources, and cultural barriers. The effectiveness of inclusive education in both schools depends on leadership style, teacher preparedness, parental support, resource availability, and cultural perceptions. Schools with proactive leadership, continuous training, and strong partnerships achieve better outcomes, while rigid structures and resource limitations create challenges. Strengthening teacher training, fostering community involvement, and ensuring fair resource distribution are essential for improving inclusive education. A localized approach that considers specific needs and challenges is crucial for long-term success. While both schools show a commitment to inclusion, their effectiveness varies based on strategic leadership, resource management, and stakeholder collaboration. Future efforts should address policy gaps and create supportive learning environments for all students.

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