



The Role Of The Disability Services Unit In Improving The Quality Of Vocational Skills For Students With Special Needs

Nuniek Prahesti Wijayanti^{1✉}, Fitri Nopyanti², Oleh³, Yusi Nurkholidah⁴, Lilis Suwandari⁵

Universitas Islam Nusantara

Email : [1nuniekprahesti@gmail.com](mailto:nuniekprahesti@gmail.com)

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive vocational education is a strategic effort to guarantee educational rights for students with special needs (MBK). This study aims to analyze the role of the Disability Service Unit (ULD) in improving the quality of vocational skills for MBK at the Bandung Culinary Academy. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, data was collected through interviews and document review. The results show that ULD plays a strategic role in planning, implementation, and evaluation through needs assessment, intensive mentoring, and Individualized Learning Programs (PPI). This role has a positive impact on increasing independence, practical skills, and job readiness. However, obstacles remain in terms of human resources, facilities, and lecturer competence.

Keywords: *Disability Services Unit, inclusive education, vocational skills, students with special needs, vocational education.*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education at the higher education level demonstrates a commitment to fulfilling the right to education for all citizens, including students with special needs. In the context of vocational education, implementing inclusive education presents more complex challenges because it demands practical skills, occupational safety, and graduates' readiness to enter the industrial world. Therefore, a service system is needed that can ensure optimal access, participation, and learning success for students with special needs.

The Indonesian government, through various regulations, has emphasized the obligation of higher education institutions to provide inclusive education, one of which is through the establishment of Disability Service Units (ULD). ULDs serve as strategic units that provide academic and non-academic services for students with disabilities, including needs assessments, learning assistance, provision of appropriate accommodations, and facilitating coordination between students, lecturers, and the institution. The existence of ULDs is a crucial factor in creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment in higher education.

Numerous studies have shown that well-managed disability services contribute positively to the academic success, independence, and skills development of students with special needs. In the context of vocational education, the role of the Disability Unit (ULD) is not limited to academic support but also includes practical mentoring, adapting skills-based learning, and strengthening student work readiness. However, the implementation of ULD services in vocational higher education still faces several challenges, such as limited human resources, accessible facilities, and lecturer competency in inclusive pedagogy.

The Bandung Culinary Arts Academy (ATB), a vocational education institution specializing in culinary arts and culinary arts, has implemented inclusive education by accepting students with special needs and establishing a Disability Services Unit (UDU). Students with special needs at ATB participate in theoretical and practical learning alongside regular students, supported by mentoring from the ULD and peer tutors. This model provides opportunities for students with special needs to develop vocational skills directly in an authentic learning environment. However, this practice also requires systematic service management to ensure learning remains safe, adaptive, and oriented toward competency achievement.

Based on this background, this research is crucial to conduct an in-depth examination of the role of the Disability Services Unit in improving the vocational skills of students with special needs at the Bandung Culinary Arts Academy. This research is expected to provide an empirical overview of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of ULD services in the context of inclusive vocational education, as well as serve as a reference for the development of

inclusive education policies and practices in vocational higher education.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of the Disability Services Unit (DSU) in improving the vocational skills of students with special needs at the Bandung Culinary Arts Academy (ATB). A qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on the processes, meanings, and experiences of the research subjects within the context of inclusive vocational education.

Research Subjects and Location

The research was conducted at the Bandung Culinary Arts Academy, a vocational college that provides inclusive education. The research subjects were selected purposively, namely those directly involved in the planning and implementation of inclusive education services. The research subjects included the Director of ATB, the Head of the DSU, the Head of the Culinary Arts Study Program, the mentors of students with special needs, and the students with special needs. This subject selection was intended to obtain comprehensive data from various perspectives on policy, managerial, learning implementation, and direct student experiences.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, documentation studies, and limited observations. In-depth interviews were used to gather information related to the policy, planning, implementation, and evaluation of DSU services in supporting inclusive vocational learning. The documentation study included a review of policy documents, ULD Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Individual Learning Programs (PPI), and reports on mentoring students with special needs. Limited observations were conducted to obtain a concrete picture of the implementation of vocational practice learning and the role of mentors in supporting students with special needs.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively, using an interactive analysis model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Interview data was transcribed, categorized, and coded based on the research focus, namely the role of ULD in improving the vocational skills of students with special needs. Data presentation was presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding of the relationships between findings. Conclusions were drawn gradually and continuously verified throughout the research process.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity, this study employed source and technical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from various informants, while technical triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, documentation, and observations. Furthermore, the

researcher conducted member checks with informants to ensure the data matched the actual situation.

With this research method, it is hoped that the research results will be able to provide a complete and valid picture of the role of the Disability Services Unit in improving the vocational skills of students with special needs in an inclusive vocational education environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The implementation of inclusive education at ATB is an institutional policy integrated into the university's vision and mission. ATB sets a maximum admission limit of 5% of the regular student population to maintain service quality. Technical planning for inclusive education, including the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and service guidelines, is fully managed by the ULD (University Unit for Learning).

The ULD plays a crucial role in conducting initial assessments of students with special needs to identify barriers, learning needs, and potential vocational skills that can be developed. The assessment results form the basis for developing an Individual Learning Program (ILO) tailored to each student's individual characteristics.

During the learning process, students with special needs attend inclusive classes alongside regular students for both theory and practical courses. The ULD plays a role in providing intensive mentoring through professional mentors and peer tutors. This mentoring is provided directly in the classroom and in the practical kitchen to ensure students can participate in the learning process safely and optimally.

The mentors serve as facilitators, sign language interpreters, and practical mentors for students with hearing impairments or developmental disabilities. Mentoring strategies include simplifying instructions, strengthening work discipline, fostering independence, and supervising safety in the practical kitchen. This role has been proven to help students master basic culinary skills such as cutting techniques, pastry processing, and beverage production.

Evaluation of the learning of students with special needs is carried out flexibly and comprehensively. Students who successfully meet learning outcomes receive a diploma and transcript, while students who do not meet academic standards are given a certificate of participation along with a report on their vocational development.

The results of the study indicate an increase in independence, self-confidence, and vocational skills among students with special needs after receiving mentoring from the ULD. Students are able to produce marketable culinary products and have a clear future orientation, such as job readiness and entrepreneurial plans.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the management of inclusive vocational

education at ATB has been implemented in line with the principles of inclusive education, namely access, participation, and sustainability of services for students with special needs. The existence of the ULD as a special unit is a key factor in the more systematic and structured management of inclusive education.

The policy of limiting the number of students with disabilities to 5% reflects a realistic approach to inclusive education management, where quality of service is prioritized over quantity. This finding aligns with the view that inclusive education in vocational education requires adequate human resources, facilities, and a mentoring system to ensure safe and effective learning.

In terms of implementation, the use of a regular curriculum with individual adjustments demonstrates the application of the principle of learning differentiation. Intensive mentoring, peer tutoring, and modified evaluations are good practices in inclusive vocational education. This reinforces the finding that inclusive education in higher education does not always require a specific curriculum, but rather flexibility in its implementation.

However, limited infrastructure and lecturer competency remain major challenges. This situation demonstrates the need to strengthen institutional capacity, both through ongoing training and the development of accessible facilities, to ensure the sustainability of inclusive vocational education in ATB.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research and discussion on the management of inclusive vocational education for students with special needs at the Bandung Culinary Arts Academy, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1. Planning for inclusive vocational education at ATB has been carried out institutionally and structured. This is demonstrated by the policy for admitting students with special needs, which is integrated into the institution's vision and mission, and the establishment of a Disability Services Unit (ULD) as a dedicated unit responsible for planning, managing, and supervising inclusive education services. The ULD plays a crucial role in developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), initial assessments, and developing Individual Learning Programs (PPI) for students with special needs. 2. Implementation of inclusive vocational education is carried out through an inclusive classroom model with intensive mentoring. Students with special needs participate in learning alongside regular students, both in theory and practical courses. Learning adjustments are made through mentoring, material simplification, the use of sign language, and the involvement of peer tutors. This approach allows students with special needs to continue to receive vocational learning experiences that are authentic and relevant to the world of work. 3. Evaluation of learning for students with special needs is adaptive and developmentally oriented. The evaluation system not only emphasizes academic achievement but also considers the development of vocational skills, independence, and work attitudes. Students who achieve the learning outcomes

receive a diploma and transcript, while students who have not met the outcomes are given a certificate of participation accompanied by a descriptive progress report. 4. Support for infrastructure and human resource competencies remains a major challenge. Although practice facilities can be shared, limitations in physical accessibility and assistive technology are still felt. Furthermore, lecturer training on inclusive pedagogy remains limited, so the role of mentors and ULDs is very dominant in supporting the learning process of students with special needs.

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