

Improving Teacher Quality Through Quality Professional Training and Inclusive Education (Inclusive Education: Welcoming Diversity in Schools)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the importance of improving teacher quality through high-quality professional training to support the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The focus of the study is directed at how systematically designed and sustainable training can improve teacher competency, both in pedagogical, professional, social, and personality aspects, so that they are able to deal with student diversity with a humanistic and adaptive approach. The method used is library research, by reviewing various literature sources such as books, scientific journals, previous research results, and relevant educational policies. Data were analyzed descriptively qualitatively to obtain a comprehensive picture of the relationship between teacher professional training and the implementation of inclusive education. The results show that high-quality professional training plays a significant role in developing teachers who are reflective, innovative, and have high social sensitivity to the needs of diverse students. Furthermore, inclusive education becomes a forum for actualizing teacher professionalism in creating a learning environment that is fair, participatory, and respectful of diversity. Thus, improving teacher quality and the implementation of inclusive education complement each other in realizing an excellent, humanistic, and socially just education system.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key pillar in building civilization and the progress of a nation. Within it, teachers play a key role, determining the quality of the learning process and outcomes. Teacher quality is a key factor in creating superior human resources with character and the ability to compete in the global era. Therefore, improving teacher quality through high-quality professional training is an undeniable

necessity. Professional teachers not only possess pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies, as mandated by Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, but also are able to adapt to changing times, developments in educational technology, and the increasingly diverse needs of students. In this context, teacher training is not merely a formality, but rather a continuous development process that must be designed systematically, contextually, and oriented toward capacity building and learning innovation in schools (Brussino, 2021).

High-quality professional teacher training provides teachers with the opportunity to continuously update their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward learning. Through training, teachers can understand more effective teaching strategies, utilize digital technology in learning, and create interactive and enjoyable learning environments. Training also provides a forum for professional reflection for teachers to assess their teaching practices, address weaknesses, and develop new approaches relevant to student characteristics. In the era of digital transformation and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, teachers are required to be more adaptive and creative in implementing project-based learning, differentiation, and humanistic formative assessment. Therefore, teacher training programs must equip participants with practical skills and broad insights to become lifelong learners (Kim & Lindeberg, 2012).

Furthermore, improving teacher quality is inextricably linked to the demand for inclusive education. Inclusive education is an approach that values diversity and ensures that all children, regardless of ability, social, economic, cultural, or physical background, have equal opportunities to learn together in a regular school environment. This principle is based on the values of justice, equality, and respect for human rights. In Indonesia, the concept of inclusive education has become a primary focus in efforts to achieve educational equity, as stipulated in Minister of National Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009. However, its implementation in the field still faces various challenges, particularly in terms of teacher preparedness to deal with students with diverse needs (Assefa & Zenebe, 2024).

Teachers in an inclusive education system are required to possess a high level of social sensitivity and empathy, as well as an understanding of various differentiated learning strategies to best meet the needs of each child. Without the support of relevant professional training, teachers will struggle to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students. Therefore, quality professional training must include materials that instill inclusive values, such as understanding children with special needs (ABK), a strengths-based approach, and collaboration between teachers, parents, and support staff. This training will develop teachers who are not only technically competent but also possess social and spiritual sensitivity in their education (Moran, 2007).

Improving teacher quality through quality professional training and strengthening inclusive education are two complementary elements. Professional training serves as a means of developing teachers' capacity to adapt to the new educational paradigm that emphasizes diversity and equality. Meanwhile, inclusive education provides moral and philosophical direction so that every learning process is oriented towards respect for differences. The synergy between the two will produce an educational ecosystem that is humanistic, innovative, and socially just. With qualified and inclusive teachers, schools will become a growing space for every child to develop their full potential, while reflecting the face of Indonesian education as advanced, open, and equitable.

2. METHODS

The research method used in this study is library research, which is research conducted by reviewing various relevant literature sources to obtain in-depth data and information on the topic being studied, namely improving teacher quality through quality professional training and the implementation of inclusive education. Researchers collected data from various sources such as books, scientific journals, previous research results, education policy reports, and official government documents related to teacher professional development and inclusive education. The research steps include problem identification, collection of relevant library materials, recording and content analysis, and drawing conclusions based on the results of data synthesis. Data analysis was conducted descriptively qualitatively with the aim of

describing interconnected concepts, theories, and empirical findings, thereby producing a comprehensive understanding of the importance of professional training for teachers in realizing quality and equitable inclusive education (Nguyet, 2010).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Urgency of Improving Teacher Quality in the Era of Educational Transformation

Teachers are one of the most vital elements in the education system, playing a key role in developing the nation's next generation with character, intelligence, and high competitiveness. The quality of a country's education is largely determined by the quality of its teachers, as teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but also moral role models, learning facilitators, and motivators for students' continued development. In this era of educational transformation marked by technological advances, globalization, and shifting learning paradigms, improving teacher quality is an urgent need that cannot be ignored. The world of education is now moving toward more flexible, interactive, and student-centered learning. Therefore, teachers are required to have adaptive skills to current developments, including the use of digital technology, mastery of innovative learning methods, and critical and creative thinking skills in classroom management(Wu, 2024).

The Indonesian government's policy, through the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, emphasizes the importance of teachers as drivers of change. This curriculum requires teachers to no longer be merely instructors who convey information, but rather facilitators who guide students to discover their potential and learning interests independently. In this context, qualified teachers are not only those with strong academic knowledge, but also those with balanced pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. Pedagogical competency enables teachers to understand student characteristics and choose appropriate teaching methods; personal competency helps teachers serve as role models in attitudes and morals; social competency enables teachers to interact effectively with various stakeholders; and professional competency serves as the foundation for teachers' continuous self-development in line with advances in science and technology. Therefore, improving teacher quality is a strategic necessity to address the challenges of 21st-century education, which demands flexibility, collaboration, and innovation.

However, in practice, many challenges remain in efforts to improve teacher quality. These include limited access to relevant professional training, a lack of support from educational institutions for teacher competency development, and low motivation among some teachers to update their skills. Many teachers in remote areas still face limited facilities, resources, and opportunities to participate in adequate training or certification programs. Furthermore, the misperception persists that the teaching profession is static and does not require continuous competency updating. In this dynamic era, learning takes place not only in the classroom but also across various digital platforms and broader social contexts. Teachers who fail to keep pace with these developments will struggle to adapt to the needs of increasingly critical and creative students. Therefore, awareness of the importance of lifelong learning must be firmly embedded in every teacher so they are always ready to face new challenges in the world of education(Opertti, Walker, & Zhang, 2014).

Beyond individual challenges, the education system also bears a significant responsibility in creating an environment that supports teacher quality improvement. The government, educational institutions, and the community need to work together to provide sustainable, needs-based professional development programs. Teacher training should not be ceremonial or merely an administrative formality, but should be designed to produce real changes in teaching practice. Training models based on reflective practice, peer learning, and collaboration between teachers can be effective strategies for improving teacher professionalism. Furthermore, the role of learning communities such as Teacher Movers or School Learning Communities is crucial in creating spaces for teachers to share experiences, discuss, and innovate together to improve the quality of classroom learning(David Wijaya, 2019).

The urgency of improving teacher quality in the era of educational transformation extends beyond the technical aspects of teaching to encompass values, attitudes, and professional commitment to their profession. Teachers must have a passion for continuous learning and adaptation to become agents of change in education. Continuous improvement in teacher quality will have a direct impact on improving the quality of students, ultimately strengthening the nation's competitiveness on the global stage. Therefore, investing in teacher quality development is not merely a necessity, but a key foundation for building a superior, inclusive education system (Rosmalily & Woollard, 2019).

Quality Professional Training as a Strategy for Developing Teacher Competence

Quality professional training is key to improving teacher competence and professionalism in the modern education era. Professional teachers are not created instantly, but rather through a continuous coaching and development process that is systematically designed and oriented to field needs. Professional training plays a strategic role in improving teachers' pedagogical, professional, social, and personal skills, as stipulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. Through well-planned training, teachers not only acquire new knowledge but also improve their teaching practices to make them more effective, contextual, and student-centered. Amidst curriculum changes, technological advances, and the demands of globalization, training is a crucial tool for teachers to adapt to the ever-evolving dynamics of education. Therefore, professional training is not merely an administrative formality, but rather a long-term investment in developing the quality of human resources in the education sector (Noviantara, Juliartha, & Kartika, 2025).

Quality professional training should be designed based on an analysis of real needs in the field, rather than simply following short-term trends or policies. This means that training delivery must take into account the school context, student characteristics, and teachers' initial abilities. One effective approach to training is problem-based learning, where teachers are trained to identify the learning problems they face and find solutions through collaboration and critical reflection. This approach trains teachers to think analytically, creatively, and adaptably to challenges that arise in the classroom. Furthermore, training should emphasize hands-on practice so that participants not only understand theory but also are able to implement it in real life. For example, training in the use of digital learning technology should not only consist of lectures but also include practical exercises using learning applications, creating interactive media, and evaluating technology-based learning outcomes (Sindelar, Adams, & Leko, 2014).

In the context of 21st-century education, teacher professional training must also be oriented toward mastering digital competencies. Teachers are required not only to master subject matter but also to integrate information technology into the teaching and learning process. Technology-based training enables teachers to utilize digital platforms, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), online learning applications, and interactive media to enrich students' learning experiences. Through this type of training, teachers will be able to create dynamic, interactive learning that aligns with the characteristics of the digital generation. Furthermore, training can also serve as a platform for developing teachers' digital literacy skills, enabling them to select and use learning resources critically and ethically. This way, teachers become not only users of technology but also creators of educational innovations relevant to current developments (Muqorrobin, 2023).

An effective professional training model also needs to prioritize the principles of andragogy, namely adult learning that emphasizes the experiences, needs, and motivations of participants. In this regard, teachers, as training participants, need to be positioned as active learners with field experiences to share and reflect on together. Mentoring and coaching approaches have also proven effective in developing teacher professionalism on an ongoing basis. Through mentoring, senior teachers can share their teaching experiences and strategies with new teachers, while coaching helps teachers find solutions to their professional challenges through constructive dialogue and self-reflection. With this training system, teacher competency development becomes more personalized, relevant, and sustainable (Kalsum, 2025).

Beyond the method, the quality of training is also greatly determined by the quality of the instructors, materials, and policy support from the educational institution. Training instructors should be practitioners or academics with direct experience in the field of education, so they can provide concrete examples and applicable solutions for participating teachers. Training materials must be designed with sustainability and relevance in mind, addressing curriculum changes and community needs. Governments and educational institutions need to support training implementation by providing budgets, facilities, and policies that allow teachers to continue learning without being burdened by excessive administrative duties (Maki, 2024).

Inclusive Education as a Reflection of Teacher Professionalism and Humanism

Inclusive education is a concrete manifestation of the application of humanitarian values and teacher professionalism in the world of education. This concept is rooted in the principle that every child, regardless of physical, intellectual, social, economic, or cultural conditions, has an equal right to receive a quality and meaningful education in a regular school environment. Inclusive education not only focuses on accepting children with special needs (ABK), but also encompasses all forms of diversity present in the classroom, such as differences in learning styles, family backgrounds, and academic abilities. Therefore, inclusive education requires teachers to possess social sensitivity, empathy, and strong pedagogical skills in managing student differences fairly and wisely. Teachers are at the forefront of creating a school that is welcoming to all children, where every student feels accepted, valued, and has equal opportunities to develop (Muqorrobin, 2024).

Teacher professionalism in the context of inclusive education is evident in their ability to adapt learning strategies to suit individual student needs. Teachers are required to differentiate their teaching, namely by adjusting materials, processes, and assessments so that each child can learn according to their potential. This requires a deep understanding of student characteristics, including those with special needs, as well as skills in creating a learning environment that supports the active participation of all students. Teachers must also be able to collaborate with various parties, such as special needs teachers, school psychologists, parents, and the community, in developing effective and adaptive learning strategies. This collaboration reflects the professionalism of teachers who work not only individually but also as part of a team committed to building an inclusive and equitable education system (Karya, 2022).

Furthermore, inclusive education also serves as an arena for developing humanistic character in teachers. Teachers no longer act merely as transmitters of knowledge but also as figures who instill the values of empathy, tolerance, and respect for differences. In inclusive education, teachers learn to see the potential of each child, not their shortcomings. This attitude reflects a humanistic perspective rooted in the thinking of educational figures such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who emphasized the importance of valuing individual uniqueness and creating an environment that supports students' self-actualization. Teachers with a humanistic perspective treat students equally and compassionately, thus creating a harmonious educational relationship between educators and students. These humanistic values not only enrich teachers' personalities but also shape a more inclusive and humanity-oriented school culture (Paramansyah & Parojai, 2024).

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia still faces various challenges, particularly related to teacher readiness in implementing it. Many teachers have not received adequate training in inclusive learning strategies, and therefore still struggle to teach students with diverse needs. Therefore, professional training focused on inclusivity is crucial for improving teacher capacity. Such training should encompass a theoretical understanding of inclusion, differentiated teaching practices, individual ability-based assessment, and strengthening the values of empathy and tolerance. Through quality professional training, teachers will be better prepared to face the challenges of heterogeneity in the classroom and be able to implement a strength-based learning approach, rather than a weakness-focused approach (Rasmitadila, Rachmadtullah, Humaira, & Mediatama, n.d.).

Furthermore, inclusive education also serves as a benchmark for the success of improving teacher quality overall. Professional teachers with an inclusive perspective demonstrate not only high academic

competence but also strong interpersonal skills and a deep moral awareness. They are able to make the classroom a safe learning space that respects diversity. By implementing inclusive values, teachers contribute to building a more just, empathetic, and respectful society. Ultimately, inclusive education is not just a pedagogical strategy, but also a social movement that reflects the progress of human civilization. Therefore, investing in professional teacher training with an inclusive orientation must be a top priority in national education policy. Only with professional, reflective, and humanistic teachers can inclusive education be fully realized as the foundation for building a just and humane education system in Indonesia (Pasaribu, Radiana, Wicaksana, & Salarasati, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

Improving teacher quality through high-quality professional training is key to facing the challenges of modern education while realizing equitable, inclusive education. Competent and virtuous teachers are not only required to master pedagogical aspects and learning technology, but also to possess social sensitivity and a commitment to humanitarian values in education. Contextually and sustainably designed professional training can shape teachers who are reflective, creative, and adaptive to change. Furthermore, inclusive education is a concrete manifestation of teacher professionalism oriented towards respect for diversity and providing learning opportunities for all children without discrimination. With the synergy between improving teacher competence and the implementation of inclusive education, the Indonesian education system can develop to be more humane, innovative, and responsive to the needs of each student, building a future generation with character and high competitiveness.

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