

Adaptive Capacity in Inclusive Education Management: A Case Study of a Primary School in Palopo City

Kapasitas Adaptif dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Inklusif: Studi Kasus pada Sekolah Dasar di Kota Palopo

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Abstract: *Inclusive education at the primary school level faces a gap between the demand for responsive services addressing diverse student needs and the limited resources available to schools, requiring managerial capacity that not only performs formal organizational functions but also adapts to contextual constraints. This study aims to analyze the implementation of inclusive education management based on the functions of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC), identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and examine the adaptive strategies developed by the school. A qualitative approach with an interpretivist paradigm and case study design was employed at SDN 11 Dangerakko, Palopo City, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed through coding, categorization, and theme development, supported by source and method triangulation and member checking. The findings indicate that the POAC functions have been implemented but are not yet fully institutionalized. Limitations in special education personnel, teacher competence, facilities, adaptive learning resources, and individualized evaluation are addressed through school leadership, teacher collaboration, instructional adaptation, resource optimization, and gradual service development. Adaptive capacity is shown to be a critical mechanism enabling the continuity of inclusive education under resource constraints, although as a single-site case study these findings are context-specific rather than statistically generalizable. Adaptive practices nevertheless need to be transformed into a more structured, documented, and sustainable management system.*

Keywords : Adaptive capacity; inclusive education management; school leadership; teacher collaboration; primary education.

Abstrak: *Pendidikan inklusif pada jenjang sekolah dasar menghadapi kesenjangan antara tuntutan layanan yang responsif terhadap keberagaman kebutuhan peserta didik dan keterbatasan sumber daya yang dimiliki sekolah, sehingga menuntut kapasitas manajerial yang tidak hanya menjalankan fungsi organisasi secara formal, tetapi juga mampu beradaptasi dengan keterbatasan kontekstual. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi manajemen pendidikan inklusif berdasarkan fungsi Planning, Organizing, Actuating, dan Controlling (POAC), mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat, serta mengkaji strategi adaptif yang dikembangkan sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan paradigma interpretivis dan desain studi kasus di SDN 11 Dangerakko, Kota Palopo, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis melalui proses koding, kategorisasi, dan pengembangan tema, yang diperkuat dengan*

triangulasi sumber dan metode serta member checking. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keempat fungsi POAC telah diimplementasikan, tetapi belum sepenuhnya terlembagakan. Keterbatasan tenaga pendidik khusus, kompetensi guru, fasilitas, sumber belajar adaptif, dan evaluasi individual diatasi melalui kepemimpinan sekolah, kolaborasi guru, adaptasi pembelajaran, optimalisasi sumber daya, dan pengembangan layanan secara bertahap. Kapasitas adaptif terbukti menjadi mekanisme penting yang memungkinkan keberlanjutan pendidikan inklusif di tengah keterbatasan sumber daya, meskipun sebagai studi kasus tunggal, temuan ini bersifat kontekstual dan tidak dimaksudkan untuk digeneralisasi secara statistik. Meskipun demikian, praktik adaptif tersebut perlu ditransformasikan menjadi sistem manajemen yang lebih terstruktur, terdokumentasi, dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci : Kapasitas adaptif; manajemen pendidikan inklusif; kepemimpinan sekolah; kolaborasi guru; pendidikan dasar.

Introduction

Inclusive education has increasingly shifted from being understood merely as an agenda for expanding educational access toward a systemic approach that requires schools to respond effectively to learner diversity. Inclusion does not simply mean placing students with special educational needs in regular classrooms; rather, it requires schools to remove barriers to participation and learning through appropriate policies, organizational practices, teaching strategies, assessment systems, human resources, infrastructure, and collaboration with families and communities. The Global Education Monitoring Report emphasizes that inclusion requires changes across multiple dimensions of education systems, including governance, financing, curriculum, teacher development, infrastructure, and community engagement (UNESCO, 2020). Thus, the success of inclusive education at the primary school level depends not only on what teachers do in classrooms but also on how schools organize and mobilize their institutional resources to respond to learner diversity.

The issue is particularly significant at the primary school level, where teachers and school leaders directly encounter substantial variations in students' academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and learning needs. The implementation of inclusive education therefore requires not only teachers' professional competencies but also organizational conditions that enable them to adapt educational practices to diverse learner needs. Vantieghem et al. (2023), for example, demonstrate that teachers' competencies for inclusive education involve not only positive beliefs about diversity but also the capacity to recognize learner differences, establish supportive learning environments, interact effectively with students, and collaborate with colleagues and parents. Similarly, teacher collaboration has been identified as an important mechanism through which inclusive practices are exchanged, co-constructed, and coordinated among educators (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). These findings suggest that inclusive education cannot be sustained solely through individual teacher commitment; rather, it requires organizational arrangements that facilitate collaboration, professional learning, and coordinated responses to learner diversity.

This perspective positions inclusive education as a school management issue, rather than solely a pedagogical concern. Schools are required to translate the principles of inclusion into planning, role allocation, human-resource development, resource provision, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Research in Indonesian primary schools indicates that the implementation of inclusive education continues to encounter difficulties related to planning, human resources, teacher knowledge, funding, infrastructure, and monitoring mechanisms (Amalia et al., 2024). Similarly, the management of inclusive education encompasses the management of curriculum, students, teachers, financing, facilities and infrastructure,

community relations, and specialized services (Yusuf & Fajari, 2025). These findings indicate that the implementation of inclusion requires schools to integrate multiple managerial functions rather than treating inclusion as an isolated instructional program.

Nevertheless, the existing literature remains relatively fragmented in explaining how schools manage inclusive education as an organizational process. Previous studies have frequently emphasized teacher competence, teacher attitudes, classroom practices, school leadership, or policy implementation as separate dimensions. Research on inclusive education needs stronger theoretical approaches capable of explaining how inclusive systems are actually developed and transformed in practice (Nilholm, 2021). In the Indonesian context, studies of inclusive education management have begun to address school-level management, but differences in institutional capacity and resource availability mean that schools may develop substantially different ways of implementing inclusion (Yusuf & Fajari, 2025). Consequently, an important question remains insufficiently addressed: how do schools maintain and adapt inclusive education management when the resources and institutional support available to them are less than ideal?

This gap is particularly relevant in public primary schools located outside major urban centers. The synthesis of previous studies presented in the present research indicates that inclusive education at the primary school level continues to face persistent challenges, including limited human resources, inadequate availability of special education support teachers, insufficient inclusive infrastructure, limited pedagogical competence among regular teachers, and weak systems for evaluating services for students with special educational needs. At the same time, previous research has tended to examine classroom implementation, school leadership, or inclusive education policy separately, while comprehensive analyses of school management through the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) remain relatively limited, particularly in public primary schools in regional contexts.

The resource issue is important because the implementation of inclusive education does not always occur under conditions of organizational readiness. Schools may be expected to provide inclusive services even when they lack specialized personnel, adequate facilities, adaptive instructional resources, or specific evaluation instruments. This situation raises an important analytical distinction between resource availability and organizational capacity to respond to constraints. A school may have limited resources while still developing mechanisms to sustain inclusive practices through leadership, collaboration, role adjustment, and the creative use of existing resources. Conversely, the existence of formal inclusive policies does not necessarily guarantee that inclusive management has become an institutionalized practice. This distinction provides an important entry point for examining adaptive capacity within inclusive education management.

In this study, adaptive capacity refers to the school's ability to adjust organizational practices, mobilize available resources, develop alternative responses, and coordinate collective action when confronted with changing demands and resource constraints in the implementation of inclusive education. The concept is not used to suggest that resource limitations are acceptable or that adaptation can substitute for adequate institutional support. Rather, adaptive capacity is examined as a mechanism through which schools respond to implementation gaps while attempting to sustain inclusive educational services. From a leadership perspective, school leaders play an important role in establishing a vision for inclusion, developing collaborative environments, and mobilizing available organizational resources (Pedaste et al., 2024; Valdés, 2021). Inclusive school leadership can therefore contribute to organizational adaptation by connecting the school's inclusive goals with the practical capacities of teachers and other stakeholders.

This perspective is particularly relevant to the case of SDN 11 Dangerakko in Palopo City, Indonesia. The school is a public primary school that serves a diverse student population and has developed an organizational commitment to inclusive education. However, the empirical evidence indicates that its inclusive practices have developed in the context of limitations in human resources, specialized facilities, adaptive instructional materials, and individualized evaluation systems. Inclusive practices have nevertheless continued through the initiatives of the principal and teachers, collaborative work, and adjustments to classroom practices. At the same time, these practices have not yet been fully institutionalized as a comprehensive inclusive management system. This makes SDN 11 Dangerakko a particularly relevant case for examining how inclusive education management operates when organizational resources are incomplete but the school continues to provide inclusive services.

To analyze this phenomenon, this study employs the Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) framework as an analytical lens for examining the management of inclusive education. Planning is used to examine how the school identifies needs, establishes programs, and allocates resources; organizing focuses on the distribution of responsibilities, coordination, and collaboration; actuating examines how managerial plans are translated into educational practices; and controlling examines monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up actions. Rather than treating POAC as a rigid linear sequence, this study views these functions as interconnected processes through which schools organize and adjust their responses to inclusive education demands. This approach is consistent with the empirical findings of the present study, which indicate that the four managerial functions are present at SDN 11 Dangerakko but differ in their level of development. Planning tends to remain general rather than fully needs-based, organizing relies substantially on task distribution and collaboration, implementation demonstrates adaptive classroom practices, while monitoring has not yet been fully supported by individualized evaluation instruments.

The analytical value of this approach lies in moving beyond the question of whether POAC functions are present toward examining how these functions interact with adaptive organizational responses. In other words, the study does not assume that the mere existence of planning, organizing, implementation, and monitoring automatically produces effective inclusive management. Instead, it examines how schools use these managerial functions to respond to resource constraints and how adaptive practices emerge within that process. The empirical evidence suggests that the continuity of inclusive education at SDN 11 Dangerakko is supported substantially by collaborative practices and the initiative of school personnel, rather than by a fully established institutional system. This raises a further question concerning sustainability: whether adaptive practices that initially depend on individual commitment can be transformed into institutional capacities that remain sustainable over time.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze adaptive capacity in inclusive education management through a case study of SDN 11 Dangerakko, a public primary school in Palopo City, Indonesia. Specifically, the study examines: (1) how the POAC management functions are implemented in inclusive education; (2) the supporting and constraining factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education management; and (3) the strategies developed by the school to respond to opportunities, challenges, and resource limitations. These objectives are consistent with the research questions formulated in the present study, which examine the implementation of management functions, factors affecting effectiveness, and the opportunities, challenges, and strategies involved in managing inclusive education.

The novelty of this study lies in addressing the research gap identified above, namely the limited attention given to how schools with incomplete resources sustain inclusive education as an organizational process, by conceptualizing adaptive capacity as the explanatory mechanism

that connects the presence of POAC management functions with their actual continuity in practice. On this basis, this study makes two principal contributions. Theoretically, it extends the discussion of inclusive education management by shifting attention from the availability of organizational resources toward the ways in which schools develop adaptive responses when such resources are constrained. Rather than presenting adaptive capacity as a substitute for adequate resources, the study conceptualizes it as an organizational mechanism that helps schools sustain inclusive practices while institutional systems are still developing. Empirically, the study provides a contextualized account of how leadership, teacher collaboration, resource utilization, and adaptive practices interact in a public primary school in a regional Indonesian context. The study therefore contributes to a more nuanced understanding of why inclusive education may continue to operate even when the institutional conditions required for fully developed inclusive management have not yet been achieved.

Importantly, the study argues that adaptive capacity should not become an excuse for postponing the institutional fulfillment of inclusive education. Adaptive practices may enable schools to respond to immediate constraints, but long-term sustainability requires these practices to be transformed into institutionalized systems involving clearer role distribution, continuous professional development, appropriate resource planning, systematic monitoring, and more comprehensive evaluation of student development. The findings of the present study similarly indicate that adaptive practices have helped sustain inclusive education at the school level, but that their long-term sustainability requires a transition from individual- and experience-based practices toward a more systematic institutional framework.

Thus, the central argument of this study is that the effectiveness of inclusive education management cannot be understood solely in terms of whether schools possess adequate resources or formally implement managerial functions. It must also be understood in terms of how schools mobilize existing capacities, adapt managerial practices, and transform individual and collaborative responses into sustainable organizational systems. This perspective provides the conceptual basis for examining adaptive capacity as an important dimension of inclusive education management in resource-constrained primary school contexts.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm and adopted a case study design. The study aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of how adaptive capacity is manifested in inclusive education management at the primary school level, particularly through the implementation of the Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) functions. The analysis focused not only on the formal implementation of managerial functions but also on how school leaders and teachers adjusted management practices, mobilized available resources, developed collaborative arrangements, and formulated alternative responses to resource constraints in the provision of inclusive education.

The study was conducted at SDN 11 Dangerakko in Palopo City, Indonesia. The school was purposively selected because it implements inclusive education and provides a relevant context for examining the management of inclusive services under conditions in which resources are not yet fully adequate. The research process took place from January to July 2026, with field data collection conducted in April 2026. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement, strategic roles, and knowledge of the implementation of inclusive education at the school. The participant group comprised the school principal, teachers, a special education support teacher, and parents of students with special educational needs. Additional participants were identified through snowball sampling where further information was considered necessary.

The researcher served as the primary instrument throughout the data collection and interpretation processes, supported by interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation instruments. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The interviews explored participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategies concerning inclusive education management. Observations were conducted to capture managerial practices and the implementation of inclusive educational services within the natural school setting. Documentary data were examined to obtain information concerning school planning, programs, internal policies, and relevant administrative and educational records. The use of multiple data collection techniques enabled the researcher to compare information across sources and strengthen the contextual understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently and iteratively. Interview data were analyzed through coding, categorization, pattern identification, and the development of central themes. Observation data were organized according to relevant activities, behaviors, and situations recorded during fieldwork, while documentary evidence was examined to corroborate and contextualize findings from interviews and observations. The POAC framework served as an analytical lens for examining the implementation of management functions, while adaptive capacity provided the interpretive focus for understanding how the school responded to the gap between the demands of inclusive education and the resources available to the school. Thus, the analysis did not treat POAC as a rigid linear sequence but examined how managerial functions interacted with adaptive responses in the everyday implementation of inclusive education.

The trustworthiness of the findings was strengthened through source and technique triangulation, member checking, systematic documentation, and researcher reflexivity. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, special education support teacher, and parents. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing interview findings with observations and documentary evidence. Member checking was undertaken by confirming summaries of information and preliminary interpretations with relevant participants to clarify meanings and reduce the possibility of misinterpretation. Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process by critically considering the researcher's position and potential influence on data collection and interpretation.

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. The study was conducted after obtaining research permission from the relevant institutional authorities and the school. Participants' rights, comfort, and confidentiality were respected during data collection and reporting. Information that could compromise participant confidentiality was treated carefully and was not unnecessarily disclosed in the presentation of the findings.

The study has several limitations. As a single-site case study, its findings are context-specific and are not intended to provide statistical generalization. The interpretation of participants' experiences may also be influenced by the perspectives of both participants and the researcher. These limitations were addressed through the use of multiple data sources and data collection techniques, member checking, systematic documentation, and researcher reflexivity. Despite these limitations, the case study provides an in-depth account of how adaptive capacity operates in the management of inclusive education within a primary school context characterized by resource constraints.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Inclusive Education Management

The findings indicate that inclusive education management at SDN 11 Dangerakko has been implemented through four interrelated management functions: planning, organizing,

actuating, and controlling. These functions are reflected in the management of student admission, curriculum and instruction, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, task allocation, coordination among school personnel, inclusive classroom practices, supervision, and evaluation. However, the implementation of these functions has not yet been fully supported by a comprehensive and integrated inclusive education management system. Several practices remain dependent on coordination among school personnel, individual initiative, and adjustments to the resources available at the school. The overall pattern of implementation is presented in Table 1

Tabel 1. Implementation of Inclusive Education Management at SDN 11 Dangerakko

Management Function	Main Findings	Forms of Implementation	Conditions and Limitations
Planning	Planning covers students, curriculum and instruction, human resources, and facilities and infrastructure	Admission of students with special educational needs, instructional adjustments, teacher capacity development, and gradual facility development	Planning remains largely general and is not yet fully based on the individual needs of students with special educational needs
Organizing	Roles and responsibilities among school personnel have been distributed	The principal coordinates inclusive education, while teachers and education personnel perform responsibilities according to their roles	The organizational arrangement is not yet supported by a complete specialized support structure; the absence of a permanent special education support teacher places additional responsibility on classroom teachers
Actuating	Inclusive instruction is implemented in regular classrooms with adjustments to learner needs	Students with and without special educational needs learn together, supported through task modification, instructional adjustments, and additional assistance	Adaptations occur primarily through teachers' classroom practices and are not yet fully supported by formally documented individualized programs
Controlling	Monitoring is conducted through supervision, observation, discussion, and evaluation	The principal supervises instruction, observes classroom practices, communicates with teachers, and follows up on identified difficulties	Monitoring is not yet fully supported by systematic instruments for documenting individual progress among students with special educational needs

Source: Interview, observation, and documentary data, 2026

As shown in Table 1, all four management functions are present in the implementation of inclusive education, although their depth and degree of institutionalization vary. Planning has provided a general managerial foundation by addressing students, curriculum and instruction, human resources, and school facilities. The school has also pursued facility development incrementally in accordance with its available capacity. Nevertheless, the planning process has not yet been fully translated into individualized planning based on the specific characteristics and educational needs of students with special educational needs. In particular, the findings indicate limited formal mechanisms for identifying individual needs, determining appropriate instructional adjustments, allocating specific resources, and establishing individualized service targets.

The organizing function is reflected in the distribution of responsibilities among the principal, classroom teachers, subject teachers, and education personnel. The principal assumes a coordinating role, while teachers remain the primary actors in delivering educational services. Coordination and communication among teachers also constitute important mechanisms for responding to the diverse needs of students. However, the organizational arrangement has not been accompanied by a fully developed specialized support structure. The absence of a permanent special education support teacher means that a substantial proportion of the responsibility for supporting students with special educational needs remains with classroom teachers. Thus, organizing is functionally present, but its implementation continues to rely heavily on existing personnel and internal coordination rather than on a specialized and fully institutionalized support system.

The actuating function is most visible in everyday classroom practices. Students with special educational needs participate in learning activities together with other students in regular classrooms, while teachers adjust instructional delivery, learning tasks, and the intensity of individual assistance according to students' conditions. Interview findings indicate that learning materials are generally provided within the same classroom learning process, but students who require additional assistance receive greater attention from teachers. This finding demonstrates that inclusive education at the school is not limited to placing students in the same physical classroom; it also involves practical adjustments in teaching and assistance. Nevertheless, these adjustments are predominantly embedded in teachers' day-to-day practices and have not yet been fully supported by formally documented individualized educational programs.

The controlling function is implemented through principal supervision, classroom observation, communication and discussion with teachers, as well as periodic evaluation and follow-up. These mechanisms indicate that the school does not simply implement inclusive education programs but also monitors their implementation and responds to emerging difficulties. However, the monitoring process remains more oriented toward the overall implementation of school activities than toward systematically documenting the individual progress of students with special educational needs. The controlling function is therefore operational, but its capacity to generate individualized evidence for evaluating inclusive educational outcomes remains limited.

Taken together, the findings reveal a gap between the presence of management functions and their degree of institutionalization within inclusive education management. Planning exists but is not yet fully needs-based; organizing operates but faces limitations in specialized human resources; actuating demonstrates the clearest forms of classroom-level adaptation; and controlling is conducted but lacks a sufficiently systematic individualized evaluation mechanism. The implementation of inclusive education at SDN 11 Dangerakko can therefore be characterized as functionally established but institutionally incomplete.

This pattern is particularly important for understanding the subsequent findings. The central issue is not simply whether the four management functions are implemented, but how the school sustains inclusive education when some of the formal systems and resources required for inclusive provision remain incomplete. This question provides the basis for examining the enabling and constraining factors and, subsequently, the adaptive strategies through which the school maintains inclusive educational services.

Enabling and Constraining Factors in Inclusive Education Management

The implementation of inclusive education management at SDN 11 Dangerakko takes place within a context characterized by both enabling conditions and structural constraints. The findings indicate that school leadership, collaboration among school personnel, and parental support provide important internal resources for sustaining inclusive educational practices. At the same time, the implementation remains constrained by uneven teacher competencies, the absence of a permanent special education support teacher, limited inclusive facilities and infrastructure, and restricted financial resources. These factors do not operate independently; rather, they interact in shaping the school's capacity to organize and sustain inclusive educational services.

Table 2. Enabling and Constraining Factors in the Implementation of Inclusive Education Management at SDN 11 Dangerakko

Factor	Main Finding	Influence on Implementation	Existing Condition
School leadership	The principal plays an active role in directing and coordinating inclusive education	Provides direction, supervision, teacher development, and coordination	Represents a major internal strength in sustaining inclusive services
School-wide collaboration	Teachers and education personnel collaborate in responding to students' needs	Facilitates task sharing, communication, discussion, and peer learning	Helps mitigate the effects of limited specialized personnel
Parental support	Parents provide support for the education and development of students with special educational needs	Supports educational processes and communication between home and school	Support exists but has not yet developed into consistent active involvement across service processes
Human resource competence	Teacher competence in inclusive education remains uneven	Affects planning, instruction, assessment, and individualized support	Only one teacher has completed certified inclusive education training
Availability of special education support teachers	The school does not have a permanent special education support teacher	Classroom and subject teachers assume additional support responsibilities	Increases the workload associated with providing individualized assistance

Facilities and infrastructure	Specialized facilities and adaptive learning media remain limited	Restricts the range and effectiveness of instructional and individualized support strategies	Resource rooms, low-distraction learning spaces, and adequate adaptive learning media are not yet available
Financial resources	Funding for the development of inclusive services remains limited	Influences the school's capacity to improve facilities, teacher development, and support services	Development is undertaken incrementally according to available resources and priorities

Source: Interview, observation, and documentary data, 2026.

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that school leadership constitutes one of the most significant enabling factors in sustaining inclusive education at the school. The principal's role extends beyond formal task allocation to include coordination, supervision, communication with teachers, and encouragement of professional development. In practice, this leadership functions as a mechanism for mobilizing available resources and coordinating school personnel to respond to the needs of students with special educational needs. Observation and documentary evidence further indicate the existence of teacher task distribution, an inclusive education implementation team, academic supervision, teacher learning groups, and administrative documents supporting the program. Although these mechanisms remain under development, their presence provides an organizational foundation for inclusive education management.

Collaboration among school personnel constitutes another important enabling factor. The findings show that teachers share responsibilities, communicate about students' needs, discuss instructional challenges, and engage in peer learning. Through these practices, responsibility for inclusive education is distributed across available personnel rather than concentrated in a single individual. Parental involvement also contributes to this support structure. Parents are positioned as partners in supporting the development of students with special educational needs, although their involvement has not yet become consistently active across all aspects of inclusive service provision.

Despite these enabling conditions, the school faces significant human resource constraints. Teacher competence in inclusive education remains uneven, with only one teacher reported to have obtained a certificate in inclusive education training. This situation limits the distribution of specialized knowledge across the teaching workforce and increases reliance on individual experience and initiative. The implications extend beyond classroom instruction to the preparation of learning materials, assessment, and the development of services that respond more specifically to the characteristics and needs of individual students with special educational needs.

The limitation of human resources is compounded by the absence of a permanent special education support teacher. Consequently, responsibilities that could otherwise be supported by specialized personnel must be assumed by classroom and subject teachers. This arrangement increases teachers' workload and limits the school's capacity to provide individualized support consistently. Nevertheless, the findings also show that the absence of specialized personnel has not resulted in the discontinuation of inclusive services. Instead, the school responds through

task sharing and collaboration among teachers, allowing existing human resources to be mobilized more flexibly.

Another major constraint concerns inclusive facilities and infrastructure. SDN 11 Dangerakko does not yet have facilities specifically designed to accommodate the needs of students with special educational needs, including a resource room, low-distraction learning spaces, and adequate adaptive learning media. The limitation extends beyond physical infrastructure to the availability of instructional resources that can accommodate individual learning needs. Consequently, teachers have fewer options for adapting instruction and must frequently rely on existing facilities and their own pedagogical adjustments.

Financial constraints further influence the pace and scope of inclusive education development. Limited funding means that improvements in facilities, teacher competence, and support systems cannot be implemented simultaneously. The school therefore adopts a gradual approach, prioritizing interventions according to available resources and perceived needs. This condition suggests that financial limitations affect not only the availability of physical resources but also the school's ability to develop a more comprehensive and integrated inclusive education system within a relatively short period. The findings consequently position human resources, specialized support personnel, facilities, and financing as interconnected constraints rather than isolated deficiencies.

Importantly, the relationship between enabling and constraining factors is not merely additive but interactive. The strengths available within the school partially compensate for structural limitations. For example, limited access to a special education support teacher is addressed through task sharing and teacher collaboration; limitations in facilities are addressed through the use of existing resources and instructional adjustments; and weaknesses in the formal service system are partly managed through communication, supervision, and ongoing evaluation. Thus, constraints do not simply restrict implementation; they also create conditions in which school actors develop practical responses to maintain inclusive services.

This interaction reveals a significant pattern in the case. The continuity of inclusive education at SDN 11 Dangerakko is not determined solely by the availability of formal resources, but also by the school's ability to mobilize and reorganize the resources that are available when formal support is insufficient. However, this adaptive response should not be interpreted as evidence that structural resources are unnecessary. The findings indicate that an excessive reliance on individual commitment and creativity may create institutional vulnerability when there are changes in school leadership, teacher assignments, educational personnel, or student characteristics.

Overall, the findings demonstrate a dynamic relationship between internal school capacity and structural constraints. Leadership, collaboration, and parental support help sustain inclusive education, but they do not fully substitute for professional human resources, accessible facilities, and a structured support system. The implementation at SDN 11 Dangerakko can therefore be understood as occurring within a tension between resource limitations and organizational responsiveness. This tension provides the empirical basis for identifying adaptive capacity as an important characteristic of the school's management of inclusive education.

The findings also suggest that the central challenge is not simply the presence of resource deficiencies, but how the school responds to those deficiencies without allowing them to disrupt the continuity of inclusive services. This observation leads directly to the next section, which examines the adaptive strategies developed by the school, particularly through leadership, teacher collaboration and peer learning, resource optimization, and the gradual development of inclusive services.

Adaptive Strategies in Managing Inclusive Education

The implementation of inclusive education at SDN 11 Dangerakko demonstrates that the school does not merely respond to existing constraints through routine administrative measures. Instead, the school develops a number of adaptive strategies to maintain the continuity of inclusive services while gradually improving their quality. These strategies emerge as responses to uneven teacher competence, the absence of permanent special education support teachers, limited facilities and learning media, and restricted financial resources. The findings indicate that the strategies are interconnected rather than implemented independently. Human resource development is supported by school leadership, limitations in specialized personnel are addressed through collaboration, instructional constraints are managed through classroom adaptation, and infrastructure limitations are addressed through gradual development.

Table 3. Adaptive Strategies in Managing Inclusive Education at SDN 11 Dangerakko

Adaptive Strategy	Main Finding	Form of Implementation	Strategic Function
Strengthening teacher competence	Teacher competence in inclusive education is uneven	Encouraging teachers to improve competence and facilitating supporting activities	Reduces the impact of limited specialized expertise
Leadership and coordination	The principal actively facilitates problem solving	Continuous discussion, direction, supervision, and coordination with teachers	Enables rapid responses to emerging problems
Teacher collaboration and peer learning	Teachers share experiences and seek solutions collectively	Teacher learning groups, consultation, task sharing, and communication	Compensates for the absence of permanent specialized personnel
Adaptation of learning services	Learning activities are adjusted to student conditions	Adjustment of assignments and instructional approaches according to students' needs	Maintains student participation despite limited adaptive resources
Parental involvement	Parents are involved in supporting students with special needs	Communication with teachers and the principal and, when necessary, parental assistance in class	Extends support beyond the classroom
Gradual development of services	School development is adjusted to existing capacity	Gradual planning for teacher development and supporting facilities	Allows continuous improvement without requiring simultaneous fulfillment of all needs

Source: Interview, observation, and documentary data, 2026

The first strategy concerns strengthening teacher competence. The findings show that the school recognizes teachers as a key resource in sustaining inclusive education. Although not all teachers have received specialized inclusive education training, the principal encourages

teachers to improve their competence and facilitates activities that support the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers also demonstrate willingness to adjust their instructional practices according to student conditions. This indicates that the school's response to limited formal expertise is not simply to wait for additional specialized personnel, but to develop the capacity of existing teachers.

The second strategy involves leadership and continuous coordination. The principal functions not only as an administrative coordinator but also as a facilitator when teachers encounter difficulties in supporting students with special needs. Problems are discussed through direct consultation and collective discussion, allowing decisions to be adjusted to the specific circumstances encountered in classrooms. This leadership practice enables the school to mobilize existing human resources rather than relying exclusively on formally established specialist structures.

A closely related strategy is teacher collaboration and peer learning. Because the school does not have a permanent special education support teacher, responsibility for supporting students with special needs remains largely with classroom teachers, with support from the principal and parents. Teachers use learning groups and direct consultation with the principal to discuss classroom problems and exchange experiences. Observation also showed that teachers coordinate their respective responsibilities in responding to students' needs. Thus, collaboration functions not merely as a communication mechanism but as a practical way of redistributing expertise and responsibility within a resource-constrained environment.

The fourth strategy is adaptation of learning services. The school responds to limitations in adaptive learning media and specialized instructional resources by adjusting learning activities to students' conditions. Teachers reported that although the available learning media are generally used for all students, assignments are adjusted according to individual student circumstances. This finding is important because it demonstrates that inclusion is not implemented solely through the availability of specialized facilities; adaptation also occurs through teachers' day-to-day instructional decisions. At the same time, the findings indicate that such adaptation remains largely practice-based and has not yet been fully institutionalized through comprehensive individualized planning and documentation.

The school also employs parental involvement as a complementary strategy. Parents are provided opportunities to communicate directly with teachers and the principal and, under certain circumstances, to accompany their children during classroom activities. This arrangement becomes particularly relevant when the school faces limitations in specialized personnel. Rather than treating responsibility for students with special needs as belonging exclusively to teachers, the school attempts to establish shared responsibility between school and family. However, the broader findings indicate that parental involvement is not yet consistently active, meaning that this strategy remains supportive rather than fully institutionalized as a systematic partnership mechanism.

The final strategy is gradual development of inclusive services. The school does not attempt to address all structural limitations simultaneously. Instead, improvements in teacher competence, facilities, and supporting systems are planned according to the school's existing capacity and priorities. The findings show that this gradual approach allows the school to continue improving inclusive services even when the complete set of ideal resources cannot yet be provided.

Taken together, these strategies reveal an important pattern in the management of inclusive education at SDN 11 Dangerakko. The school's response to resource limitations is characterized by mobilization, redistribution, adaptation, and gradual development. The absence of a permanent special education support teacher, for example, does not automatically terminate

inclusive services because the school redistributes responsibilities among teachers and strengthens coordination. Similarly, limitations in facilities are partly addressed through instructional adaptation and the use of available resources. The evidence therefore suggests that the continuity of inclusive education is supported not only by formal resources but also by the school's capacity to reorganize and utilize existing resources in response to changing needs.

However, the findings also reveal a critical limitation of this adaptive strategy. Adaptation cannot substitute indefinitely for institutional capacity. When inclusive practices depend heavily on individual teacher commitment, principal initiative, informal communication, and accumulated experience, their sustainability may become vulnerable to staff mobility, leadership changes, or changes in students' needs. The present study evidence therefore points toward the need to transform successful adaptive practices into more structured institutional mechanisms, including more specific service documentation, identification and assessment procedures, adaptive instructional planning, prioritized facility development, and monitoring and evaluation focused on the development of students with special needs.

Accordingly, the adaptive strategies identified in this study should not be interpreted simply as evidence that limited resources are sufficient for inclusive education. Rather, they demonstrate how a school maintains educational continuity under conditions of incomplete institutional support. The central finding is that adaptive capacity functions as an operational mechanism that enables the school to bridge the gap between the requirements of inclusive education and the resources currently available. Yet, for this capacity to contribute to long-term sustainability, adaptive practices need to be progressively institutionalized rather than remaining dependent on individual initiative. The overall pattern identified in the study is therefore one of adaptive management under structural constraints, in which leadership, collaboration, instructional adaptation, and gradual development collectively sustain the implementation of inclusive education.

Adaptive Capacity as a Theoretical Complement to POAC in Inclusive Education Management

The findings indicate that the implementation of inclusive education management at SDN 11 Dangerakko has not developed uniformly across the four management functions. Planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling are all present, but their institutional maturity varies. Planning remains relatively general, organizing operates primarily through task distribution and interpersonal coordination, actuating is more visible in teachers' day-to-day instructional adaptations, while controlling is conducted through supervision and general evaluation without a fully developed individualized monitoring system. This pattern suggests that the existence of management functions does not automatically imply the existence of a fully institutionalized inclusive management system. Rather, the effectiveness of management depends on the extent to which these functions are interconnected and translated into responses to individual students' needs. This interpretation is consistent with recent research showing that inclusive education is difficult to realize merely through formal policy structures because implementation requires organizational changes in leadership, professional competence, collaboration, and classroom practice (Amalia et al., 2024; Nilholm, 2021; Sirkko et al., 2024)

The findings further explain why the POAC functions at SDN 11 Dangerakko can continue despite incomplete institutional structures. The key explanation is the school's capacity to mobilize existing organizational resources rather than its possession of complete specialized resources. The principal does not merely perform an administrative function but actively coordinates teachers, facilitates discussion, encourages professional learning, supervises classroom practices, and redistributes responsibilities when specialized personnel are unavailable. This finding reinforces the argument that inclusive leadership is not simply a matter

of having a positive attitude toward inclusion but involves translating inclusive values into organizational decisions and daily practices. School leaders' vision was found to be a particularly strong predictor of their attitudes toward inclusive education practices, while leadership in developing contexts can function as a lever for overcoming organizational and resource-related barriers (Opoku, 2023; Pedaste et al., 2024). Inclusive leadership requires leaders to respond to diversity through organizational and interpersonal practices rather than relying solely on formal structures (Bhowmik et al., 2023).

The role of leadership in this study is particularly important because the school operates in a context where specialized human resources are insufficient. The absence of a permanent special education support teacher means that responsibility for supporting students with special educational needs is partially redistributed to classroom and subject teachers. Consequently, leadership becomes a mechanism for converting individual teacher commitment into collective organizational action. This interpretation is supported by evidence that distributed leadership contributes directly to teachers' differentiated instruction and indirectly through teacher leadership and professional competence (Wang & Tian, 2023). Similarly, leadership contributes to organizational resilience through collective teacher efficacy, suggesting that organizational capacity is not generated exclusively by material resources but can emerge from shared beliefs and collective action among organizational members (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). Thus, the leadership observed at SDN 11 Dangerakko can be understood not simply as adaptive leadership in the narrow sense, but as a process of activating and redistributing existing organizational capacity in response to resource constraints.

The finding that teachers compensate for limited specialized personnel through collaboration and peer learning can also be explained through the relational dimension of inclusive practice. Inclusive education requires teachers to move beyond isolated classroom responsibility because the diversity of student needs often exceeds the expertise of individual teachers. At SDN 11 Dangerakko, informal discussion, consultation, task sharing, and collective problem-solving become mechanisms for compensating for the absence of permanent specialized support. More intensive forms of teacher collaboration, particularly synchronization and co-construction, are associated with differentiated instructional practices (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). Similarly, collaboration in inclusive settings develops through interconnected processes of planning, classroom implementation, and evaluation, while school-level management conditions influence the quality of such collaboration (González-Fernández & Iturra, 2024). However, collaboration should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of a mature inclusive system. Although collaboration is widely considered essential for inclusion, the empirical mechanisms through which collaboration produces better inclusive practices remain insufficiently established (Grosche & Moser Opitz, 2023). Therefore, in the present case, collaboration should be interpreted as an adaptive organizational mechanism that helps the school sustain services under conditions of limited specialization rather than as evidence that resource shortages have been fully resolved.

The uneven competence of teachers provides another explanation for why inclusive management at the school remains adaptive rather than fully systematic. The findings show that only limited teachers have received specialized inclusive education training, while classroom teachers are nevertheless required to make instructional adjustments for students with special educational needs. This creates a gap between the formal expectation of inclusive education and teachers' actual professional capacity. Inclusive teaching competence involves not only knowledge but also beliefs and efficacy, while teachers' self-efficacy, perceived need for expert guidance, and attitudes significantly influence their intentions to implement inclusive practices. Similar concerns are evident in research on teacher awareness and attitudes, where positive

orientations toward inclusion do not necessarily mean that teachers possess sufficient knowledge and practical competence to implement inclusive instruction (Chow, 2024; Vantieghem et al., 2023). Consequently, the adaptive practices observed in this study can be understood partly as a response to a competence gap: teachers develop practical adjustments through experience, peer consultation, and leadership support because formal professional preparation has not yet fully institutionalized inclusive expertise.

The finding that teachers adjust assignments, explanations, assistance, and learning approaches even though these adaptations are not always supported by individualized planning documents is particularly significant. It demonstrates a distinction between adaptive practice and adaptive management systems. At the practice level, teachers can respond flexibly to students' immediate needs; at the institutional level, however, such adaptations need to be documented, coordinated, monitored, and incorporated into subsequent planning. Research on teacher agency provides a useful explanation for this phenomenon. Teacher agency in inclusive education can be conceptualized as a change-making process in which teachers mobilize enabling conditions and strategies to produce educational and relational outcomes (Andreoli et al., 2024). Similarly, teachers' agency in inclusive practices depends on their ability to connect inclusive initiatives with existing curriculum and on management support (Hendriksen et al., 2024). Thus, the instructional adaptations found at SDN 11 Dangerakko should not be interpreted merely as individual teacher creativity. They represent a form of situated professional agency that emerges because teachers must bridge the gap between students' needs and the limited formal support available to them.

At the same time, the findings reveal the boundary of adaptive capacity. Adaptation enables continuity, but it does not eliminate structural constraints. The absence of specialized personnel, limited facilities, restricted financing, and weak individualized monitoring continue to shape the quality and sustainability of inclusive services. This distinction is important because an organization may successfully adapt to constraints in the short term while remaining institutionally vulnerable in the long term. Research on organizational resilience in schools provides a useful theoretical parallel. Leadership and collective teacher efficacy can strengthen organizational resilience under conditions of pressure and resource limitations (Valdés, 2021). However, resilience should not be equated with the normalization of inadequate resources. In the present case, the school's adaptive capacity should therefore be understood as a mechanism that enables continuity under imperfect conditions, while institutional strengthening remains necessary to reduce dependence on individual commitment.

This interpretation also explains why the management system at SDN 11 Dangerakko appears stronger in implementation than in documentation. The school is able to respond to students because organizational members possess tacit knowledge, relational trust, practical experience, and willingness to cooperate. However, when practices remain primarily dependent on individuals, they may become vulnerable to staff turnover, leadership changes, or increasing student needs. This issue is reflected in studies showing that inclusive education often experiences a gap between policy intentions and actual implementation. Structural forces can undermine inclusive education even when school communities demonstrate commitment, while teachers frequently have to negotiate tensions between inclusive rights, assessment requirements, and institutional structures (Moehlen et al., 2024; Rangarajan et al., 2023). The present findings therefore suggest that the central problem is not the absence of commitment to inclusion but the incomplete institutionalization of that commitment into procedures, documentation, professional roles, and evaluation mechanisms.

The absence of a specialized individualized monitoring system is particularly consequential because controlling is supposed to provide information that feeds back into subsequent

planning. In the present case, supervision occurs and teachers receive direction and feedback, but monitoring has not yet developed into a systematic mechanism for documenting individual progress in academic, social, emotional, participation, and independence dimensions. This explains why the POAC functions cannot yet operate as a fully integrated cycle. Research on inclusive education increasingly emphasizes that assessment and monitoring should not merely determine whether students are present in regular classrooms but should examine their participation, learning, and development. Inclusion should be understood in terms of participation and agency rather than simple physical placement, while continuing tensions remain between inclusive policy ideals and the actual organization of special education support (Lakkala et al., 2024; Sirkko et al., 2024). The implication is that controlling in inclusive education must be more than general supervision: it needs to generate student-level information that can influence planning, resource allocation, instructional adaptation, and subsequent evaluation.

Taken together, these findings support a more nuanced interpretation of the relationship between POAC and adaptive capacity. POAC remains useful because it explains the basic managerial functions through which the school organizes inclusive education. However, POAC alone does not sufficiently explain why these functions remain operational when the organizational system is incomplete. The concept of adaptive capacity provides the missing explanatory dimension by showing how leadership, collaboration, teacher agency, resource redistribution, and incremental development enable the school to maintain inclusive practices under constraints. In other words, POAC explains what management functions are performed, whereas adaptive capacity explains how those functions are sustained and modified when the conditions required for their ideal implementation are not fully available. This distinction constitutes the principal theoretical contribution of the present study. Rather than proposing adaptive capacity as a new management theory, the study identifies it as an empirical organizational capability emerging at the intersection of inclusive leadership, teacher collaboration, professional agency, and resource constraints.

The findings therefore extend previous research in an important way. Much of the recent literature examines inclusive education through particular dimensions such as teacher competence, leadership, collaboration, attitudes, or differentiated instruction (Lindner et al., 2023; Mudhar et al., 2024; Paloniemi et al., 2023; Wang & Tian, 2023). The present case connects these dimensions within a single school-level management process. The contribution is not the claim that SDN 11 Dangerakko represents an ideal inclusive school, but rather that the case demonstrates how a regular public primary school can maintain inclusive practices despite incomplete resources by mobilizing its social and organizational capacities. This finding is especially relevant to developing and resource-constrained educational contexts, where waiting for all ideal conditions to be fulfilled may delay the realization of inclusive education. Nevertheless, adaptation should function as a transitional mechanism toward stronger institutional capacity rather than become a permanent substitute for professional staffing, accessible infrastructure, individualized planning, and systematic evaluation.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that the sustainability of inclusive education depends on the transformation of individual adaptive responses into institutional learning. Leadership must progressively translate informal coordination into formal structures; teacher collaboration needs to evolve into systematic professional learning; instructional adaptations need to be supported by documented individualized plans; and supervision needs to generate evidence that informs subsequent planning and resource allocation. Such institutionalization would allow the adaptive capacity demonstrated by SDN 11 Dangerakko to move beyond short-term problem solving toward organizational learning and sustainable inclusive management. This interpretation is consistent with recent research that conceptualizes resilient and inclusive schools as

organizations capable not merely of surviving constraints but of learning, reorganizing, and improving their practices collectively (Amalia et al., 2024; Anderson & Ringer, 2024; Carrington et al., 2024; Feng et al., 2025; Tripathi, 2025). Thus, the central implication of this study is that adaptive capacity is most valuable not when it compensates indefinitely for institutional weakness, but when it becomes the mechanism through which institutional capacity is progressively built.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that inclusive education management at SDN 11 Dangerakko, Palopo City, has been implemented through the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, although these functions have not yet been fully institutionalized as a comprehensive management system. Planning has addressed students, curriculum, human resources, and facilities; organizing has been carried out through the distribution of responsibilities and coordination among school members; teachers have adapted instructional strategies, learning tasks, and assistance according to students' conditions; and controlling has been conducted through supervision, observation, communication, evaluation, and follow-up. However, several of these practices remain general, insufficiently documented, and not yet systematically oriented toward the individual needs of students with special educational needs. These findings confirm that the study has achieved its objective of examining the implementation of inclusive school management while revealing a gap between the functional operation of management practices and the institutional maturity of the inclusive management system. The continuity of inclusive education under these resource constraints is strongly influenced by the school's capacity to mobilize and optimize available resources: principal leadership, teacher collaboration, and parental support constitute important organizational and social resources that enable the school to sustain inclusive services despite limitations in specialized personnel, facilities, and professional support. In this context, adaptive capacity emerges as an important mechanism explaining how management functions continue to operate when ideal organizational conditions are not fully available, reflected in the school's ability to adjust task allocation, strengthen collaboration, modify instructional practices, and optimize existing resources in response to emerging needs.

Theoretically, this study extends the application of the POAC framework in inclusive education management by demonstrating that identifying the presence of management functions is insufficient to explain how inclusive practices are sustained in resource-constrained settings; while POAC explains what management functions are performed, the concept of adaptive capacity helps explain how these functions are maintained, modified, and integrated in response to contextual constraints, so that the effectiveness of inclusive education management depends not only on the formal existence of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, but also on the school's ability to mobilize leadership, collaboration, teacher competence, and available resources in context-sensitive ways. Practically, these findings imply that strengthening inclusive education requires two processes to occur simultaneously: maintaining the school's adaptive capacity and strengthening its institutional foundations, so that adaptive practices that have emerged through leadership, collaboration, and instructional adjustment are transformed into more structured, documented, and sustainable procedures rather than serving as a justification for maintaining structural limitations. Education authorities and school managers should therefore provide systematic support through continuous teacher professional development, access to specialized personnel, development of accessible learning facilities and resources, and adequate funding, while at the school level, inclusive management should be strengthened through needs-based planning, clearer distribution of responsibilities, sustained

teacher learning and collaboration, systematic documentation of adaptive instructional practices, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that provide meaningful feedback on students' development, with collaboration with parents moving beyond moral or informal support toward more active and sustained partnerships. As a single-site case study, however, these findings are context-specific and are not intended to provide statistical generalization, so that the transferability of the adaptive strategies identified here to schools with different resource conditions and institutional contexts remains an important consideration for future application.

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