



Exploring Teachers' Challenges And Needs In Supporting Inclusive Education For Students With Emotional Or Behavioral Disorders

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the challenges and needs of teachers in handling students with emotional or behavioral disorders at SDN Benteng 3, Sukabumi City. Emotional or behavioral disorders in students pose significant challenges for teachers, as difficulties in understanding and managing such behaviors can impact the effectiveness of teaching and well-being of both teachers and students. Using a qualitative field study approach, this research explores the perceptions, barriers, and needs expressed by teachers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Participants included 16 teachers from SDN Benteng 3, comprising 12 classroom teachers and 4 subject teachers in Islamic education and Physical Education, as well as students identified with emotional or behavioral disorders. The findings indicate several obstacles, such as limited knowledge about emotional or behavioral disorders in students, a lack of specialized training, and minimal institutional support. Teachers highlighted the need for additional training, specialized teaching strategies, and supportive facilities for implementing inclusive education. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions and institutional education to enhance teachers' capacities in inclusive education. This study is expected to serve as a foundation for developing training programs and policies that support teachers in implementing inclusive education.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis tantangan dan kebutuhan guru dalam menangani siswa dengan gangguan emosional atau perilaku di SDN Benteng 3 Kota Sukabumi. Gangguan Emosional atau perilaku pada siswa memberikan tantangan besar bagi guru, karena kesulitan dalam memahami dan mengelola perilaku tersebut dapat mempengaruhi efektivitas pembelajaran dan kesejahteraan guru maupun siswa. Melalui metode studi lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menggali persepsi, hambatan, dan kebutuhan yang dirasakan oleh guru. Data diperoleh dari wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Partisipan adalah Guru SDN Benteng 3 Kota Sukabumi sebanyak 16 Orang yang terdiri dari 12 guru kelas dan 4 guru bidang studi PAI dan Penjas serta Siswa yang terindikasi mengalami gangguan emosional atau perilaku. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya kendala seperti keterbatasan pengetahuan tentang gangguan emosional dan perilaku pada siswa, kurangnya pelatihan khusus, dan minimnya dukungan institusional. Para guru menyatakan perlunya pelatihan tambahan, strategi pembelajaran khusus, dan fasilitas pendukung dalam penerapan pendidikan inklusif. Temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya intervensi yang terarah dan dukungan institusional untuk meningkatkan kapasitas guru dalam pendidikan inklusif. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi dasar untuk pengembangan program pelatihan dan kebijakan yang mendukung guru dalam implementasi pendidikan inklusif.

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INTRODUCTION

In modern education, the inclusive education approach has become a primary focus in providing equal access to education for all children, including children with special needs (CWSN). Inclusive education not only emphasizes the presence of CWSN in general schools but also ensures that they receive the necessary support to reach their full potential in the same environment as their peers without special needs. Aligned with the principles of human rights and equity, inclusive education aims to eliminate barriers to participation and learning for all students, including those experiencing emotional or behavioral disorders. Children with special needs (CWSN) are defined as children who have educational needs different from those of their peers due to physical, mental, emotional, or social conditions that affect their learning processes. CWSN require specialized educational services tailored to their conditions to achieve optimal development (Kauffman & Landrum, 2018; Heward et al., 2017). Among the various categories of CWSN, children with emotional or behavioral disorders are group that demands extra attention due to the complexity of the challenges they face. These disorders involve difficulties in managing emotions or behaviors that can disrupt social interactions and learning processes. Emotional or behavioral disorders in children impact emotional, behavioral, and academic aspects, necessitating comprehensive intervention strategies to support their learning and development in school environments (Heward, 2018; Kauffman, et al., 2020)

Emotional or behavioral disorders in children encompass a wide range of issues, from difficulties in controlling emotions to aggressive behavior or refusal to follow social rules. Children with emotional and behavioral disorders often struggle to adapt to social norms, exhibit high levels of anxiety, and frequently display inappropriate behavior in school settings (Smith, 2012). This leads to challenges in regular classrooms, both academically and socially. The impact of these disorders extends beyond academic performance, affecting students' interpersonal relationship with teachers and peers. In the context of inclusive education, children with emotional or behavioral disorders often face greater challenges compared to other groups of children with special needs. They require not only academic support but also interventions to help them manage emotions, enhance social skills, and adapt to dynamic school environment. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is essential, where children with emotional or behavioral disorders can develop self-control, problem-solving skills, and adequate social skills (Kauffman, et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers and all stakeholders must be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide holistic support for these children. While it is commonly believed that most children with deviant behaviors will grow into normal adults, research indicates different outcomes for children with consistent aggressive, antisocial, or criminal behaviors (Dunlap et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2007; Montague et al., 2011; Tola, 2018; Putri, 2019; Syamaun & Faizin, 2020). Early-onset antisocial behavior carries a higher risk of school dropout, legal issues, substance abuse, social marginalization or even premature death (Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Walker et al., 2005; Budikuncoroningsih, 2017).

Some children with emotional or behavioral disorders do not exhibit aggressive behavior at all. Their primary issue lies in a lack of social interaction with others, a pattern known as internalizing behavior. Although children who are overly introverted or withdrawn do not pose a threat to others like those with antisocial behavior, this tendency still presents a significant barrier to their development. These children rarely interact with peers, have limited social skills, and tend to retreat into a fantasy world (Budikuncoroningsih, 2017). Some may even have excessive fears of certain things without a clear reason (such as phobias), frequently complain of pain or discomfort, and suffer from severe depression (King, Heyne, & Ollendick, 2005; Maag & Swearer, 2005). Therefore, better interventions are needed to facilitate learning for students with emotional or behavioral disorders in accordance with their needs. Children who exhibit antisocial behavior from an early age are at risk of experiencing increasingly serious behavioral problems over time. However, many students with emotional or behavioral disorders face a significant delay between the onset of their disability and the initiation of special education services, or they may never receive such services at all (neglected) (Wagner et al., 2005), making it more challenging to address their approaches by identifying children who are chronically exposed to risk factors or who exhibit problematic behaviors early on (Conroy & Brown, 2006).

Managing students with emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD) in elementary school classrooms is essential for fostering an inclusive educational environment. Students with EBD face unique challenges that can hinder academic progress, social integration, and emotional

development. The Indonesian National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS), the first survey to measure the prevalence of mental disorders among adolescents aged 10-17 years in Indonesia, revealed that one in three Indonesian Adolescents experiences mental health issues, and one in twenty has suffered from a mental disorder within the past 12 months. This amounts to approximately 15,5 million adolescents were diagnosed with mental disorders based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), which serves as the standard reference for diagnosing mental disorders in Indonesia. The study findings revealed that the most common mental disorders among adolescents were anxiety disorders, including social phobia and generalized anxiety disorder, with a prevalence of 3,7%. Major depressive disorder affected 1,0% of adolescents, behavioral disorders 0,9%, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) each affected 0,5%. Only 2,6% of adolescents with mental health issues accessed mental health or counseling services in the past 12 months to address their emotional or behavioral problems. This figure remains significantly low compared to the actual number of adolescents requiring support to manage their mental health issues (Siswanto, 2022).

Elementary school teachers, tasked with promoting inclusion, often lack the resources and training necessary to effectively support these students in their learning (Jones & Smith, 2020; Brown, 2016). This lack of preparation impacts not only students with EBD but also the overall learning environment, potentially affecting classroom dynamics and teacher well-being (Scott et al., 2023). This study addresses these issues by examining the needs of teachers at SDN Benteng 3 Sukabumi City in managing students identified with EBD, bridging a critical gap in teacher preparation and resource requirements in inclusive settings. Inclusive education policies have evolved in Indonesia; However, practical support and teacher training remain limited. Research indicates that teachers feel unprepared to handle students with EBD due to minimal training focused on these disorders (Duong, 2021; Hassan, 2021). Studies have identified that teachers in inclusive classrooms often rely on personal experience rather than evidence-based strategies, further highlighting the need for targeted training and support (Blewitt et al., 2021; Valiente et al., 2020). Insufficient institutional support also significantly contributes to teacher stress, reducing their effectiveness in managing EBD in inclusive classrooms (Sun et al., 2025). However, few studies provide detailed analyses of the needs of elementary school teachers in Indonesia concerning EBD, emphasizing the critical gap this research seeks to address.

This study aims to address this gap by exploring teachers' perspectives on managing EBD in elementary education in Indonesia, utilizing a qualitative case study approach that includes in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. By doing so, the research provides a deeper understanding of the challenges teachers face, their existing knowledge, and the additional resources or training they perceive as necessary to enhance their effectiveness in inclusive settings (Hassan, 2021). While prior research in other contexts has emphasized the importance of equipping teachers with practical strategies, this study focuses on understanding specific needs within the Indonesian context, adding a new dimension to the existing literature. The findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions and institutional support to strengthen teacher's capacities in inclusive education (Paudyal et al., 2023). The results are intended to inform the development of training programs and policies aligned with teachers' needs, thereby improving the effectiveness of inclusive education. Through its findings, this study seeks to contribute to the framework of inclusive education in Indonesia by offering actionable insights to support teachers and reinforcing the role of schools as inclusive learning spaces for all students (Jones & Smith, 2020; Brown, 2019).

RESEARCH METHOD

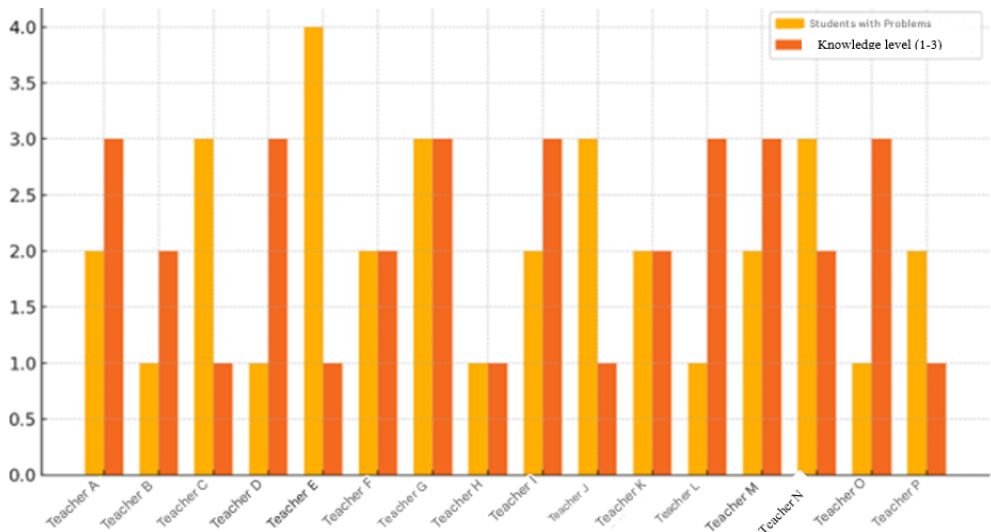
This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore teachers' perceptions and needs in managing students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) at SDN Benteng 3 in Sukabumi City. A qualitative case study is effective in examining complex phenomena related to human interaction within a specific context (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). The study involves 16 teachers from SDN Benteng 3 who teach in regular classes with diverse student populations, including those with EBD. Data were collected through three techniques: in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were employed to delve into the teachers' experiences, challenges, and needs to obtain detailed yet focused data (Patton, 2015). Classroom observations were conducted to examine teacher-student interactions and teaching

strategies, the assertion that observations provide direct insights into actual behaviors and practices in the field (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, school documents such as lesson plans and teachers' journals, were analyzed to enrich the data, and guidelines on document analysis (Bowen, 2009).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following several steps: reading interview transcripts and observation notes to grasp the overall data, coding the data to identify themes, formulating main themes, and reviewing them to ensure consistency and validity (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data triangulation from interviews, observations, and documents was applied to enhance the study's credibility (Denzin, 1978). Furthermore, member checking was conducted by confirming preliminary findings with participants, an essential step for ensuring accurate data representation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing sessions with teachers were also undertaken to minimize bias and enhance analytical objectivity (Patton, 2015). This research method provides a comprehensive approach to understanding teachers' needs within the context of inclusive education, particularly in managing students with EBD.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study identifies the needs and challenges faced by teachers in managing students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), as well as solutions proposed by teachers to address these challenges. Based on the findings presented in Table 1 and the bar chart, it is evident that teachers at SDN Benteng 3 require a deeper understanding and additional support to effectively handle students with EBD. The results of the analysis are illustrated in the bar chart, which displays observational data from classrooms and in-depth interview findings regarding students identified as having EBD. Figure 1 shows a diagram of the identified students with EBD and the level of teacher understanding in recognizing these students. Table 1 provides data from field studies analyzing the teachers' needs in managing students with emotional of behavioral disorders at SDN Benteng 3, Sukabumi City. The total number of teachers observed was 16, consisting of 12 classroom teachers (Grades 1-6) and 4 subject teachers (Islamic Religious Education and Physical Education)



Figures 1. Identification Diagram of Students with EBD and the Level of Teachers' Understanding in Identifying Students with EBD
Source : Author Research Analysis

Based on the findings presented in the diagram above, it is evident that teachers still have insufficient understanding when it comes to addressing students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Observational results indicate that only 4-7 teachers demonstrated adequate knowledge in identifying and managing students with EBD. From the interview, They take the knowledge from PMM (Platform Merdeka Mengajar) e-training. This highlights the need for deeper understanding and additional support for teachers at SDN Benteng 3 in handling such students. This finding aligns with previous studies that reveal teachers often feel inadequately trained to manage students with special needs, especially in inclusive education settings (Sugiarti et al, 2024; Yumpi,

2017; Tirtawati, 2016). The results further suggest that teachers have limited knowledge about emotional and behavioral disorders. In inclusive education theory, teacher competence in understanding students' specific needs is crucial for supporting effective learning (Marisana &Herawati, 2023; Novita et al, 2022). Several studies show that teachers with a deeper understanding of the characteristics of emotional and behavioral disorders are better equipped to adapt their teaching methods and provide appropriate interventions (Ambiyar et al, 2024; Atika, 2024). Therefore, ongoing specialized training can help address this knowledge gap, enhance teaching effectiveness, and foster a more inclusive learning environment. Below is Table 1, which presents the data from interview analyses regarding teachers' needs, challenges, and proposed solutions for managing students identified with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD) :

Table 1. Data from a field study on teachers’ needs analysis in handling students with Emotional or Behavioral disorders (EBD) at SDN Benteng 3, Sukabumi City.

No	Analyzed Aspect	Teachers Need	Challenges Faced	Teachers’ Proposed Solution
1	Knowledge about emotional/behavioral disorders	Teachers need a deeper understanding of the types of emotional and behavioral disorders in students	Lack of formal training on emotional and behavioral disorders in schools	Regular training on emotional and behavioral disorders tailored to schools' needs
2	Appropriate teaching methods	Teachers need specific teaching methods for emotional/behavioral disorders	Lack of guidance or learning modules specifically designed for students with emotional or behavioral disorders	Development of practical modules or guidelines for use in inclusive classrooms.
3	Approaches to behavior management	Teachers need effective behavior management strategies in the classroom.	Difficulty managing students exhibiting external behaviors (aggression) or internal behaviors (withdrawal)	Classroom management training programs focusing on diverse student behavior
4	Emotional support for teachers	Teachers require emotional support in handling students with severe behavioral disorders	Emotional burden caused by dealing with challenging student behaviors and lack of psychological support for teachers	Regular counseling or psychological support for teachers to prevent emotional burnout
5	Facilities and resources	Teachers need facilities to support inclusive learning	Limited access to classrooms conducive to students with emotional or behavioral disorders and inadequate resources	Provision of inclusive classrooms, counseling spaces, and instructional material for special needs
6	Support from schools and parents	Teachers need improved collaboration between schools, parents, and other professionals.	Inconsistent communication between teachers, parents, and specialists in addressing student behavioral issues	Collaboration programs and regular meetings between teachers, parents, and special education consultants

Sources: Author research analysis

Based on Table 1 above, one of the critical aspects identified from teachers’ needs is their need for specialized training related to emotional or behavioral disorders. Such training is crucial for helping teachers recognize the charateristics of these disorders and develop appropriate teaching strategies. Teachers with a deeper understanding of the needs of students with emotional or behavioral disorders are more likely to create a more inclusive learning environment (Musyarifa &

Hendriani, 2021). Without sufficient knowledge, teachers may struggle to fully comprehend students' conditions, which could impact the interventions' effectiveness (Pressley, 2020). Additionally, challenges in managing students' behavior are a major concern. Teachers often face difficulties in handling students exhibiting aggressive or withdrawn behaviors, as classroom management for students with behavioral disorders requires specific strategies (Evans, Harden, & Thomas, 2004). Classroom management training focusing on the behaviors of students with special needs is expected to help teachers create a more conducive classroom climate. Teachers are still using general methods that are often not suited to the needs of students with emotional or behavioral disorders. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of differentiated learning approaches to meet the individual needs of students with behavioral challenges (Anastasia, Agita, & Syakirin, 2023). Specific methods and guidelines tailored to students with behavioral disorders would enable teachers to adopt more adaptive and suitable strategies. For instance, approaches such as project-based learning or experiential learning have proven effective in engaging students with special needs (Eldiva & Azizah, 2019; Lambie, 2020).

Classroom management skills are a primary challenge, particularly when dealing with students exhibiting unstable emotional behavior. According to classroom management theory, teachers require strategies that not only control behavior but also foster a positive and supportive climate (Sanusi, 2023). Research indicates that strategies such as positive reinforcement, establishing clear boundaries, and creating routines can help teachers manage classrooms more effectively (Riden & Maggin, 2022). Training focused on classroom management strategies for students with behavioral disorders would be highly beneficial in this context. Support from schools, in the theory of inclusive education, structural support from the school environment, including physical facilities and human resources, is critical for creating a welcoming learning environment (Walker et al, 2013). The lack of support from schools often hinders teachers from providing optimal interventions. Therefore, schools are expected to provide special rooms or additional resources to support students with special needs. Emotional support for teachers is also a key aspect highlighted in this study. Facing students with behavioral disorders over the long term can lead to emotional exhaustion among teachers, ultimately reducing teaching quality (Riden & Maggin, 2022). Some studies recommend the need for counseling services for teachers to prevent burnout and enhance their psychological well-being (Scott, Bettini & Brunsting, 2023). Teachers experience emotional exhaustion from continuously dealing with students with severe behavioral issues. This condition can lead to burnout, which ultimately diminishes teaching effectiveness. Emotional support for teachers, such as counseling services, can help them manage stress and maintain emotional balance. Providing counseling sessions or supervision by experts would be very helpful for teachers in addressing these challenges and preserving their mental health. Time constraints and high workloads prevent teachers from implementing individualized approaches for students with emotional disorders. According to the theory of differentiated instruction, approaches tailored to individual needs have been proven to enhance participation and learning outcomes for students with special needs. Therefore, providing assistance or support from a specialized team can enable teachers to give more attention to students requiring individualized approaches. This support is essential to reduce teachers' workloads and facilitates the application of more specific approaches (Riden & Maggin, 2022).

Collaboration between teachers and parents is crucial for the success of interventions for students with behavioral disorders. However, suboptimal communication often leads to a lack of mutual understanding between the two parties. According to the theory of parental involvement, effective communication between teachers and parents can enhance the success of interventions and provide emotional support for students (Budikuncoroningsih, 2017). Research shows that regular meetings and open communication can help establish mutual understanding and support student development (Jones & Smith, 2020). Recommendations to develop more intensive collaboration programs could be an effective solution to overcome these challenges. As shown in Tabel 1, communication between teachers and parents is often not optimal, resulting in a lack of agreement on interventions for students needing special attention. This collaboration is essential because parental involvement can provide valuable information about the students' emotional condition, triggers for certain behaviors at home, and the student's response to handling strategies implemented in the family environment (Kauffman, Hallahan & Pullen, 2022). Previous studies have indicated that a collaborative approach between teachers and parents significantly influences the

improvement of adaptive skills in students with emotional or behavioral disorders (King, Heyne, & Ollendick, 2005). When teachers and parents share information and discuss consistent strategies between home and school, students tend to show greater progress in managing their behavior. Furthermore, intensive communication can help teachers understand external factors that may affect students' emotional states, enabling them to adapt teaching or classroom management approaches more responsively. To achieve effective collaboration, regular meeting programs and open communication channels between teachers, parents, and related experts, such as special education consultants or psychologists, are essential. Studies also highlight that regular meetings and multidisciplinary collaboration improve the quality of support for students with special needs. On the other hand, barriers such as time constraints, scheduling conflicts, and differing perceptions between teachers and parents can hinder the effectiveness of this collaboration. Therefore, schools need to design structured communication programs and involve parents in decision-making processes related to student interventions (Hassan, 2021). In practice, regular meetings between teachers and parents can be held at least two or three times per semester or more frequently if necessary. Additionally, schools can leverage technology, such as communication apps or online platforms, to enable more efficient communication between teachers and parents.

In addressing students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), teachers face various challenges that require specific interventions and ongoing support. Based on the findings, several key recommendations have been designed to strengthen the role and effectiveness of teachers in managing students with EBD. These recommendations encompass not only technical aspects but also environmental support and collaboration among stakeholders. One of the primary needs of teachers is a deep understanding of the characteristics and strategies for managing students with EBD. Teachers lacking sufficient knowledge of EBD often struggle to comprehensively identify students' needs. Continuous training programs focused on introducing EBD, identification methods, and specialized intervention techniques are crucial for enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills. Research indicates that skill-based training significantly improves teachers' preparedness to manage students with EBD in the classroom (Heward, Alber-Morgan, & Konrad, 2017). Teachers also require teaching methods specifically designed for students with EBD, as general methods are often ineffective for this group. By developing research-based teaching guides and modules, teachers can access effective tools to accommodate the unique needs of students with EBD. These scientifically grounded modules have the potential to improve teaching effectiveness and assist teachers in selecting appropriate instructional strategies (Pressley, 2020). Managing the behavior of students with EBD presents unique challenges, particularly in situations involving emotional instability. Training in classroom management strategies focused on handling students with EBD can be an effective solution for creating a safe and conducive learning environment. These strategies include managing students' internal and external behaviors, which have been shown to help teachers address behavioral challenges in the classroom (Riden & Maggin, 2022).

Schools must provide specialized facilities that are supportive of students with EBD. For example, quiet rooms or designated areas can help students calm down when experiencing emotional instability. Such facilities are crucial for creating an inclusive learning environment. Research shows that access to these specialized facilities can support students' emotional stability and accelerate their recovery when facing behavioral disruptions (Musyarifa & Hendriani, 2021). Close collaboration between teachers and parents is a vital component of interventions for students with EBD. Optimal communication enables both parties to align their intervention efforts at home and school, creating continuity in addressing students' needs. Regular meetings and open communication channels are strongly recommended to engage parents in their children's education. This alignment fosters mutual understanding in handling students and ensures that support is more targeted and effective (Jones & Smith, 2020). In practice, teachers often find it challenging to provide individual attention to students with EBD due to high workloads. Providing assistance or support teams is a viable solution to help teachers implement individualized approaches for students with special needs. With the assistance of support teams, teachers can focus more on appropriate interventions and provide adequate attention to students with EBD without neglecting the needs of other students. These recommendations reflect a holistic approach to supporting teachers in addressing students with EBD, covering not only pedagogical aspects but also classroom management, emotional support, and collaboration among relevant parties. With proper implementation, these recommendations can improve the quality of inclusive education and create

a learning environment that is responsive to the needs of students with EBD.

CONCLUSION

The importance of a deep understanding and an integrated approach in supporting teachers in addressing students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD) in elementary schools, especially at SDN Benteng 3 Kota Sukabumi cannot be overstated. The findings of this study indicate that teachers require deeper knowledge, effective teaching methods, specialized classroom management strategies, facility support from schools, and strong collaboration with parents. Implementing the provided recommendations, such as ongoing training and the development of relevant teaching guidelines, is expected to enhance teachers' readiness and ability to tackle challenges in inclusive classrooms. On the other hand, the involvement of schools in providing additional support and fostering communication between teachers and parents can strengthen the ecosystem of inclusive education. The prospects for applying this research include the development of more intensive teacher training models based on empirical research and the testing of the effectiveness of various specialized teaching methods that can be adapted to diverse characteristics of students with emotional or behavioral disorders. Furthermore, future research focusing on the implementation of collaboration between teachers and parents in handling students with EBD and measuring its impact on students' well-being and academic achievement is highly encouraged. Thus, this research can serve as a foundation for improving inclusive education policies to make them more comprehensive and applicable.

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