



## **Building Quality Special Education Teachers in Inclusive Schools: A Recruitment and Professional Development Analysis in Banjarmasin City**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the recruitment system, selection mechanisms, and professional development for special education teachers in Banjarmasin City using an explanatory sequential research design. In the first stage of the research, quantitative data was collected through questionnaires distributed to special education teachers. The sampling technique used in this study was probability sampling with simple random sampling. The sample size was determined based on the Slovin formula with an error margin of 5%, which was 60 special education teachers. Next, qualitative data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation with relevant stakeholders. The data analysis techniques used in the qualitative research stage were (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation, and (4) conclusion drawing. The quantitative research results revealed that most of the respondents were women aged 25–34 years, had a bachelor's degree in special education, and had more than five years of teaching experience in positions of honor. Correlation analysis showed a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.502$ ) between the recruitment system and teacher professional development, which contributed 25.2% ( $R^2 = 0.252$ ). These findings confirm that a good recruitment system can improve teacher professionalism, which ultimately supports the success of inclusive education. Meanwhile, qualitative results show that the recruitment of special education teachers in Banjarmasin follows regional regulations by involving the education office and inclusive schools. Although a bachelor's degree in special education is preferred, the limited number of graduates requires flexibility in the recruitment process. The main challenges include budget constraints and the lack of qualified teachers, thus requiring supportive policies, increased funding, and collaboration with universities to improve the quantity and quality of teachers. Professional development is carried out through various training programs, but still faces obstacles in the form of budget constraints and the lack of a continuous evaluation system.

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## **Introduction**

Inclusive education is one of the main concerns in the Indonesian education system, particularly in ensuring the rights of students with special needs to obtain quality education services. The success of inclusive education is influenced by many factors, one of which is the availability of special education teachers who have adequate competence and quality. Inclusive education itself is an educational service provided in regular schools for students with special needs, with an emphasis on meeting individual needs without neglecting the unique potential and talents of each child (Putri et al., 2025). Since 2003, Indonesia has continued to develop its inclusive education system to ensure the sustainability of the program. This progress is evident from the increasing number of schools at various levels implementing inclusive education, indicating positive progress toward the creation of a more inclusive education system (Suharyati et al., 2025). Although various efforts have been made



to promote inclusive education, there are still obstacles that hinder its full implementation. Therefore, serious attention from all stakeholders in the education system is very important. One of the crucial challenges is the gap between inclusive education policy and practice in Indonesia (Phytanza et al., 2022). These obstacles include limitations in curriculum adaptation, suboptimal learning planning, and a lack of support facilities for students with special needs, including the availability of special education teachers (Saputri, 2025). In this context, special education teachers play an important role in adapting to various dynamics while providing appropriate support to students with special needs in inclusive schools.

The presence of special education teachers in Indonesia is vital, especially in strengthening the implementation of inclusive education (Silaban & Damanik, 2025). These teachers act as facilitators in the learning process while supporting students with special needs in public schools. The attitudes and competence levels of special education teachers, particularly their pedagogical understanding and skills, significantly impact the success of inclusive education practice. This knowledge is a key factor in determining their effectiveness in managing classrooms and providing services tailored to the diverse needs of students (Yusuf, 2024). Additionally, ongoing support and training are absolutely necessary to enhance teachers' capacity and effectiveness in the context of inclusive education. The Ministry of Education and Culture regulation stipulates that teachers must master four main competencies, namely pedagogical, professional, personal, and social, which reflect the complexity of the teacher's role in the context of inclusive education (Famella, 2025). Although this regulation has become the basis for the implementation of special education in Indonesia, there are still a number of challenges that need to be addressed. One of these challenges is the lack of fundamental changes in the initial training of prospective special education teachers, as well as the absence of a collaborative approach in teacher education programs, which hinders the optimal implementation of inclusive practices (Redhana, 2024). Additionally, continuous professional development and the provision of support for special education teachers are urgent needs to enhance their confidence, flexibility, and effectiveness in inclusive educational settings (Isroani et al., 2024). Another challenge faced by schools providing inclusive education is the difficulty in recruiting special education teachers.

Banjarmasin is one of the cities that plays an important role in the implementation of inclusive education. The city continues to strive to create a more welcoming and open environment for people with disabilities, particularly in terms of access to education. In 2017, there were 42 inclusive schools, and this number increased in 2018 to 51 inclusive schools and 7 special schools for children with special needs (Vikalista et al., 2021). However, there are still various challenges, such as the limited number of qualified and committed teachers to support inclusive education. Additionally, the South Kalimantan Provincial Education and Culture Office has not yet provided appropriate needs assessments for special education teachers in inclusive schools. Another challenge faced by Banjarmasin is the limited availability of special education teachers, both in terms of quality and quantity. The recruitment process also faces obstacles, including a shortage of human resources with a background in special education and a lack of policies that support effective selection. However, the role of special education teachers is crucial in providing educational services that meet the needs of students with special needs. Due to their inadequate educational backgrounds, some teachers find it challenging to meet the learning demands of their students. In addition, efforts to improve the quality of special education teachers have not been optimal. Opportunities for training and competency development remain limited, so advanced training programs and professional development have not been able to fully support the improvement of competencies among recruited teachers.

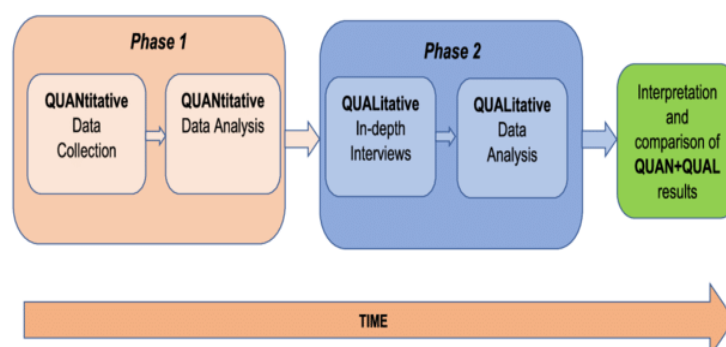


Previous studies on inclusive education in Indonesia have mostly focused on policy implementation (Phytanza et al., 2022), teacher competence in classroom practice (Yusuf, 2024), or public perceptions of inclusive education (Junaidi et al., 2021). However, research that specifically examines the relationship between the recruitment system and the professional development of special education teachers is still very limited. Most studies only discuss general recruitment challenges without analyzing their impact on teacher professionalism (Murni et al., 2024), or focus on professional development programs without linking them to recruitment mechanisms (Khairani et al., 2024). This creates a knowledge gap regarding how recruitment policies and processes affect the quality of professional growth of special education teachers in inclusive schools. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing recruitment and professional development mechanisms in an integrated manner, with a case study in the city of Banjarmasin.

Based on the issues discussed above, this study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the recruitment system and process as well as efforts to improve the quality of special education teachers in Banjarmasin City. This study also focuses on examining the relationship between recruitment mechanisms and special education teachers' perceptions of their professional development. By analyzing weaknesses in the recruitment system and processes, as well as identifying professional development needs, this study is expected to provide comprehensive recommendations to improve the quality of inclusive education, particularly in the areas of recruitment and development of special education teachers, who play a vital role in the success of inclusive education. The findings of this study are also anticipated to be used as a guide by the government in creating more efficient plans to improve the hiring process for special education teachers, make sure that its execution complies with current laws and regulations, and meet the demands of inclusive schools for trained teachers. It is also anticipated that this study will help create more focused programs for special education teachers' professional growth and career progression.

## **Research Method**

This study applies a mixed approach with an explanatory sequential design. Explanatory Sequential Design is a mixed research design where researchers first collect and analyze quantitative data, followed by collecting and analyzing qualitative data to better understand or explain the quantitative results (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The selection of methods and designs is based on considerations of the breadth and complexity of professional development for special education teachers in inclusive schools, which requires a combination of quantitative methods to obtain measurable data and qualitative methods to deepen and enrich previous quantitative findings. This approach is considered relevant for examining the complexity of educational dynamics, particularly those related to quality management. In the first stage, quantitative data is collected and analyzed to identify patterns and relationships between variables related to the recruitment and development of special education teachers. Subsequently, the qualitative stage is conducted to explore the quantitative results in greater depth through in-depth interviews with informants selected using purposive sampling techniques. This approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding, not only based on numbers and statistics, but also through a more narrative and contextual perspective.



**Picture1. Explanatory Sequential Design Procedure**

The study population comprised 200 special education teachers employed in inclusive schools within Banjarmasin City. From this population, a sample was selected based on shared characteristics. Probability sampling was employed using a simple random sampling approach (Creswell, 2017). The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 60 special education teachers. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to systematically assess relevant indicators, including the effectiveness of recruitment, training, and professional development initiatives for special education teachers in Banjarmasin City. Quantitative analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was applied to illustrate general trends in recruitment and development programs aimed at enhancing the quality of special education teachers in the city. Descriptive statistics included the calculation of mean, median, maximum score, minimum score, range, sample variance, and standard deviation. Meanwhile, inferential analysis was conducted through normality tests, linearity tests, and Pearson correlation tests.

The second stage of this study is qualitative research, where the researcher collects and analyzes qualitative data to answer the first and second research questions. The goal is to understand the system and process of recruiting special education teachers in Banjarmasin City, as well as to examine the design and implementation of training programs and quality improvement for special education teachers in Banjarmasin City. The method used is multi-site, which is a qualitative approach involving case studies in more than one location to understand similar or interconnected phenomena. Thus, the research is not limited to one context but also compares it across different places to find patterns, variations, or differences that emerge (Creswell, 2018). In this study, three data collection techniques are used, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted with reference to the four-stage framework developed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which includes: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation, and (4) drawing conclusions.

To ensure the validity of the findings, the researcher applied credibility testing through source triangulation and technique triangulation. In addition, several strategies were implemented to address potential bias and ensure the trustworthiness of the data. First, member checking was conducted by confirming interview results with participants to verify accuracy and interpretation. Second, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal to document assumptions, perspectives, and decisions during the research process, thereby minimizing personal bias. Third, peer debriefing with academic colleagues was used to critically review coding and interpretation processes. Furthermore, audit trails were developed to provide transparent documentation of data collection and analysis procedures. These steps strengthened the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the qualitative findings beyond the use of triangulation alone.



## **Results and Discussion**

### **Special Education Teacher Recruitment System in the City of Banjarmasin**

#### ***Regional Policies and Regulations***

The results of interviews with the South Kalimantan Provincial Education Office and the Banjarmasin City Education Office show that the recruitment mechanism for special education teachers in inclusive schools has a legal basis. At the provincial level, recruitment refers to Regional Regulation Number 3 of 2013 and the Governor's Regulations of 2012 and 2023, which emphasize academic qualifications, professional competencies, and good physical and mental conditions. Local governments are required to place at least one special education teacher in each inclusive education unit, but implementation still faces obstacles and requires flexibility. At the city level, the Mayor Regulation of Banjarmasin Number 63 of 2022 Article 16 regulates that the PTK sector prepares planning for the needs and recruitment of special education teachers in early childhood education, non-formal education, elementary schools, and junior high schools. Although regulations are available, implementation still poses challenges, thus requiring comprehensive strategies. Nationally, the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 70 of 2009 mandates that every district/city has inclusive schools with special education teachers. The main constraint is the limited training for teachers, both in quantity and quality, making many teachers unprepared to teach students with special needs (Nurfadhillah, 2021). The solution requires collaboration between the government, schools, and the community, an increase in funds and resources, the provision of infrastructure, and ongoing training. Thus, although regulations exist at the provincial and city levels, the implementation of special education teacher recruitment faces obstacles.

#### ***Standards of Qualifications and Competencies***

The majority of special education teachers in Banjarmasin and South Kalimantan are graduates of Special Education programs, especially at SMPN 8 and SMKN 2 Banjarmasin. The limited number of special education graduates has led some schools, such as SDN Kebun Bunga 1, to recruit graduates from other majors (BK, PGSD, PG PAUD, Psychology) who are willing to teach inclusively (Aryani, 2024). Across the country, individuals aiming to become special education teachers must obtain a bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline and complete a PPG program (Khairani, 2024). Besides academics, teachers must master learning technology and build partnerships with parents and the community (Hardianto, 2022). Pedagogical competence is key, encompassing an understanding of the needs of students with special needs, learning strategies, assessments, evaluations, and curriculum modifications (Hasan, 2022). Teachers without a background in Special Education still face limitations in competence (Yusuf et al., 2023). The role of teachers includes pedagogical aspects (learning, planning, interventions, alternative curriculum) and non-pedagogical aspects (administration, emotional support, fostering independence) (Blatchford et al. in Amalia & Kurniawati, 2021). Competence enhancement is carried out through workshops, training, MGPK forums, and additional programs such as speech therapy, arts, and sensory integration (Rahmawati et al., 2023), making pedagogical competence a determinant of the success of inclusive education and the quality of learning for students with special needs.

### **The Recruitment Process of Special Education Teachers in the City of Banjarmasin**

#### ***Recruitment Process***

The recruitment of special education teachers in Banjarmasin and South Kalimantan starts with school needs reported to the Education Department, with city authorities managing elementary and junior high schools, and the provincial department overseeing senior high and vocational schools. This division reflects clear governmental responsibilities. Recruitment success depends on teacher quality; Basuki (2019) highlights the need for systematic, data

driven processes, while Alfiyanto (2022) emphasizes academic standards, professional competencies, certification, and teachers' physical and mental conditions, which affect learning outcomes for students with special needs. Continuous support is crucial for retention: orientation and mentoring programs improve retention (Leong & Said, 2024), experienced mentors aid adaptation (Bock et al., 2021), and preparation programs addressing special education needs produce better-prepared teachers (Goldhaber et al., 2022). Faz & Hafiz (2023), stresses recruitment and salary standards, competency development, and stakeholder communication. With competency-based selection, effective mentoring, and coordination between schools and departments, recruitment can be optimized and positively impact students with special needs.

### ***Administrative Procedures***

The research shows that the recruitment of special education teachers in Banjarmasin City follows a systematic administrative procedure, starting from job vacancy announcements by the Education Office, registration with administrative documents, document selection, school placement, and interviews, ending with a Decree (SK) for successful applicants. However, all 60 surveyed teachers (100%) remain in honorarium status without ASN or PPPK appointments due to the recruitment mechanism relying on school proposals without accompanying formal formations. This status limits welfare and professional development. Susmiyati & Zurqoni (2020) note that job instability can reduce motivation and learning effectiveness, while Ramli et al. (2023) stress the importance of welfare and development opportunities, and Ramadhan (2020) emphasizes that competent teachers depend on supportive recruitment policies and formal appointments. Therefore, Banjarmasin's recruitment policy should not only meet staff demand but also enhance teacher welfare and professionalism through ASN or PPPK appointments.

### ***Selection Test***

The interviews reveal that the recruitment of special education teachers in Banjarmasin lacks uniform and structured selection standards, often relying solely on interviews without special tests, varying by school policies. This may impact educator quality, highlighting the need for a systematic selection process to ensure teachers possess competencies suited for students with special needs. Effective recruitment is crucial for educational quality but faces challenges, including finding candidates with the ideal mix of academic qualifications, experience, and bilingual skills, as well as budget constraints and limited training programs for new teachers (Syahri, 2024). Additionally, recruitment often remains opaque and dependent on foundations without transparent mechanisms (Murni et al., 2024). Thus, systematic and transparent policies are necessary to ensure that recruited teachers meet the needs of students with disabilities.

## **Development of the Quality of Special Education Teachers in Banjarmasin City**

### ***Training and Development Program***

The development of special education teachers' quality in Banjarmasin City is supported through government and school programs, such as Technical Guidance (Bimtek) from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Education Office. A survey of 60 teachers showed that 48% attended 3–4 training sessions, 45% more than 4 sessions, and 7% only 1–2 sessions in the past year, indicating high awareness of professional development despite limited access for some. Teachers also use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) for flexible self-learning and the Special Education Teacher Working Group (KKG-GPK) for monthly practice-sharing sessions, although accessibility and effectiveness challenges remain. Kurnia et al. (2024) stress the need for continuous training with varied methods, including online and mentoring support. Best practices elsewhere, such as Bandung's



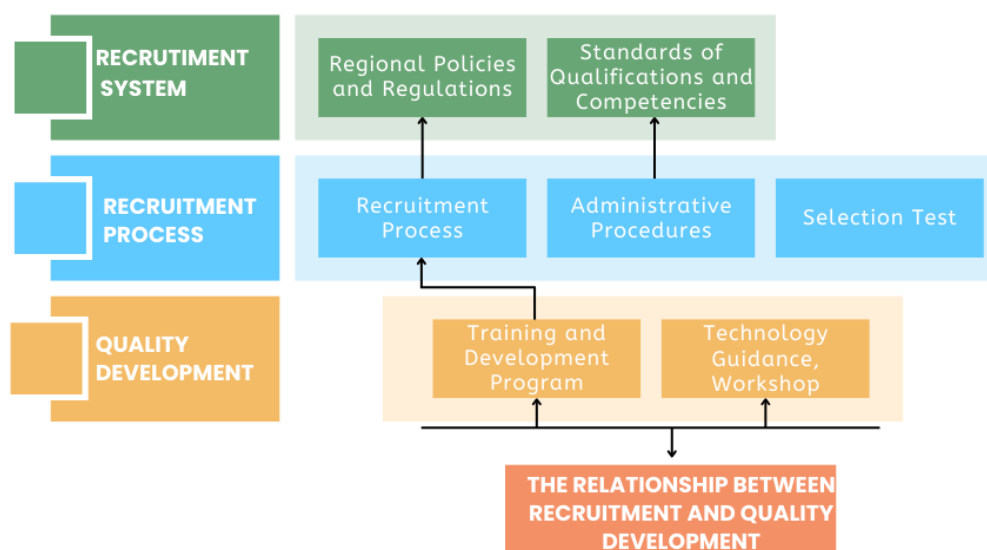
Inclusion Working Group (Mayya et al., 2019), show the importance of structured training management. Frequency of training and experience with students with special needs influence teachers' perceptions of inclusive education (Junaidi et al., 2021), while positive attitudes and motivation are also vital (Dini, 2023). Digital learning solutions (Lohmann et al., 2019) and attention to teacher welfare (Sims, 2020) are additional considerations. Overall, teacher quality in Banjarmasin has improved through active training participation, but effectiveness, equitable access, method diversity, and welfare support should be strengthened to enhance competencies and inclusive education quality.

### **The relationship between the Recruitment System and the Quality of Professional Development**

The research results show that the linearity test using the deviation from linearity method yields a significance value of  $0.333 > 0.05$ , indicating that the relationship between the recruitment system (variable X) and the quality of professional development (variable Y) is linear. This means that the better the recruitment system implemented by the Education and Culture Office of Banjarmasin City, the higher the quality of professional development for special education teachers. A selective, transparent, and competence-based recruitment process has proven to enhance teachers' readiness to participate in training and foster a sense of being valued in their career development. These findings are in line with Human Resource Management (HRM) theory, which asserts that effective recruitment can enhance teachers' motivation and performance in professional development. The correlation test also strengthens this result, with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and a correlation coefficient of 0.502, indicating a positive relationship of moderate strength. Thus, the better the recruitment system is implemented, the higher the teachers' perception of the quality of the professional development program.

Pasarela's research (2024) also supports this finding, that quality recruitment can enhance teachers' professionalism because they feel more valued and motivated to participate in intensive training. A good recruitment system can also build teachers' trust in professional development policies, making them more active in improving their competencies. Although the relationship found is categorized as moderate, the results still indicate that improvements in the recruitment system have a positive impact on the quality of professional development for special education teachers. In addition, collaboration among teachers in an inclusive context plays an important role in building a community of practice that supports the enhancement of learning experiences for students with special needs. As implemented in Ireland through collaboration between classroom teachers, learning support teachers, and resource teachers (Shevlin et al., 2020), similar collaborations could serve as a model for the city of Banjarmasin. Therefore, the mechanisms for selection, distribution, and support for teachers need to be continuously improved so that professional development is sustainable and has a real impact on the quality of inclusive education.

To provide a clearer understanding of the research findings, a concept map is presented below to illustrate the relationship between the recruitment system, the professional development of special education teachers, and their impact on inclusive education in Banjarmasin City.



**Picture 2. Research Findings Concept Map**

The findings of this study carry important conceptual implications. First, the positive correlation between recruitment systems and professional development confirms the relevance of Human Resource Management (HRM) theory in the context of inclusive education. Recruitment is not only an administrative procedure but also a determinant of teacher motivation, professionalism, and readiness to participate in training. This extends the theoretical understanding that effective recruitment policies can serve as a foundation for building sustainable teacher competence, particularly in special education settings. Additionally, the results highlight the need to view recruitment and professional development as an integrated system rather than two separate processes, providing a new conceptual model for the management of special education teachers. From a practical perspective, the study underscores several key directions for policy and practice. First, education offices and schools need to establish transparent, competency-based recruitment standards to ensure that recruited teachers meet the pedagogical and professional demands of inclusive classrooms. Second, improving professional development requires consistent budget allocation, equitable access to training, and the integration of evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of training programs. Third, the shortage of qualified graduates in special education necessitates collaboration with universities to expand and strengthen teacher preparation programs. Finally, enhancing teacher welfare through formal appointments (ASN/PPPK) is critical for improving job stability, motivation, and long-term commitment to inclusive education. These practical implications provide actionable insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and teacher education institutions in strengthening the quality of inclusive education through systemic improvements in recruitment and professional development.

## Conclusion

The special education teacher recruitment system in Banjarmasin City and South Kalimantan refers to regional regulations and involves the education department as well as inclusive schools/special schools. Ideally, teachers should have a Bachelor's degree in Special Education (PKh/PLB), but the limited number of graduates makes recruitment flexible, including from other disciplines with relevant competencies. The process is structured starting from reporting needs, opening vacancies, selection, to the issuance of appointment



letters, with external strategies through social media. Teacher quality development is carried out through training and programs such as Bimtek, PMM, and KKG-GPK, although facing obstacles in budget, access to training, and post-training evaluation. Analysis shows that the recruitment system has a significant impact on the quality of teacher professional development ( $r = 0.502$ ;  $R^2 = 0.252$ ). Therefore, the improvement of policies, budget support, and collaboration with higher education institutions is essential to strengthen the quantity, quality, and professionalism of special education teachers in supporting inclusive education.

### Recommendation

Based on the research findings, several strategic steps can be taken to improve the recruitment system and the quality of special education teachers. Local governments and educational agencies need to establish competency-based recruitment policies, optimize teacher distribution, and organize ongoing professional development programs. Schools and principals are expected to provide support, supervision, and training opportunities for teachers, as well as actively propose the needs for special education personnel. Special education teachers are encouraged to continuously enhance their competencies independently by engaging in structured self-learning through online learning platforms (such as Merdeka Mengajar or MOOCs), reading the latest research in the field of special education, and regularly reflecting on their teaching practices to identify areas for improvement. They can also participate in professional associations, workshops, or seminars, either offline or online, to stay updated on innovative strategies and policies related to inclusive education.

In addition, building professional networks can be achieved by actively joining teacher forums such as the KKG-GPK, participating in online communities of practice, and initiating peer discussions or lesson study sessions with fellow teachers. Through these activities, teachers can exchange teaching experiences, share best practices, and collaboratively find solutions to the challenges faced in inclusive classrooms. By combining independent learning and collaborative networking, special education teachers will be better equipped to improve their professional competencies and effectively support students with special needs. Future researchers are advised to broaden the scope of their studies, analyze the effectiveness of training programs, and examine factors that influence the sustainability of teaching professions to support higher quality inclusive education.

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