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Structured Professional Learning Community Innovation to Enhance Teacher Collaboration in Inclusive Elementary Schools.

Inovasi Komunitas Belajar Profesional Terstruktur untuk Meningkatkan Kolaborasi Guru pada Sekolah Dasar Inklusi.

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Abstract

General Background The transition toward student-centered pedagogical paradigms necessitates continuous professional development and robust cooperation among educators. **Specific Background** Inclusive primary institutions require educators to address highly diverse learner needs, yet heavy administrative duties and standardized planning often restrict cooperative instructional design. **Knowledge Gap** Current literature rarely explores how specific administrative practices facilitate cooperative professional networks to support differentiated instruction at the primary level. **Aims** This study investigates the mechanisms through which administrators facilitate cooperative networks to support diverse educational environments. **Results** Findings from a qualitative case study at SDN 002 Kombeng reveal that while administrators act as facilitators through routine coordination meetings, implementation remains suboptimal. Severe time constraints, excessive regulatory duties, and a lack of structured programmatic design prevent these interactions from maturing into sustainable professional networks. **Novelty** This research specifically identifies the operational disconnect between theoretical administrative roles and the practical execution of cooperative pedagogical planning in remote educational settings. **Implications** Institutional managers must transition from compliance-based supervision toward structured instructional guidance by institutionalizing scheduled cooperative planning sessions and data-driven reflective dialogues.

Highlights

- ♦ Excessive regulatory duties and severe time constraints restrict cooperative pedagogical planning among educators.
- ♦ Routine coordination meetings currently prioritize administrative compliance over sustainable professional development strategies.
- ♦ Transforming institutional culture requires structured reflective dialogues and data-driven instructional decision-making frameworks.

Keywords

Instructional Administration; Cooperative Pedagogy; Differentiated Instruction; Professional Development; Case Study

INTRODUCTION

Education is important in improving the quality of human resources through the promotion of intellectual, social, emotional and moral development. Besides passing on knowledge, education gives people the abilities they need to adjust to society's fast-changing demands. Therefore, quality education is a common responsibility of governments, educational institutions and communities. This commitment can be seen in Indonesia in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create the atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that students can develop their potential to have intelligence, personality and noble character. This view stresses that education should not only improve academic achievement but also develop character, creativity, and the competence of lifelong learning (Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20 of 2003; UNESCO, 2017; UNESCO, 2020). Recent trends in the practice of education have changed the instructional paradigm from teacher-centered teaching to student-centered learning. In this paradigm teachers are expected to be facilitators who design meaningful learning experiences that accommodate the students' different abilities, interests and characteristics of learning rather than simply as transmitters of knowledge. Such transformation requires teachers to continue to improve their professional competence and to collaborate with colleagues to generate innovative and responsive instructional practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2019).

One of the most important developments to support this educational change is the implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive education means giving all learners equal opportunities, including students with disabilities and other special educational needs, to participate in the same educational environment without discrimination. Inclusive education is not about identifying the limitations of students but about removing barriers to learning and participation and valuing diversity as an educational resource. This approach contributes to the development of more equitable and democratic education systems, fostering equal educational opportunities, social participation and respect for individual differences (Ainscow, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Inclusiveness in education is increasingly implemented but still difficult, especially in elementary schools. Elementary teachers must address more diverse student characteristics and simultaneously meet curriculum standards. Heterogeneous classrooms require differentiated instruction, differentiated learning, continuous assessment and collaborative problem solving among educators. Teachers frequently find it challenging to identify instructional practices that can address the diverse learning needs of students without adequate professional support (Tomlinson, 2017).

Collaboration among teachers has been widely recognized as a critical factor in strengthening inclusive educational practices. Professional learning communities, built on collaboration, offer teachers a space to share experiences, talk through classroom challenges, reflect on their teaching methods, and work together to create more effective teaching approaches. Professional learning communities encourage continuous professional development through reflection, shared responsibility, and collective inquiry to improve student learning outcomes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2019). However, the implementation of teacher collaboration in inclusive elementary schools still faces heavy obstacles. Heavy workloads often restrict opportunities for collaborative planning and professional reflection. Moreover, many schools still lack a strong culture of collaboration and teachers often report a lack of knowledge of the principles of inclusive education and differentiated approaches to teaching. Instructional planning is often individualized, learning materials are still very much standardized and the results of diagnostic assessments are not routinely used to inform variations in instruction. In the long run, these constraints limit the effectiveness of inclusive learning environments and impede meaningful participation of students with diverse educational needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Another key issue is the role of school principals as instructional leaders. Although many schools have regular meetings of teachers and academic supervision, these activities normally focus on mainly administrative issues, rather than collaborative instructional improvement. This way professional learning communities often work in a haphazard way instead of a structured and sustainable approach to teacher professional development. Limited leadership support constrains opportunities for collaborative reflection and innovation in inclusive teaching practices (Hallinger, 2018; Fullan, 2020). Preliminary observations in the research setting indicated several practical problems consistent with these concerns. Classroom instruction was still predominately teacher-centered, with lectures and standardized assignments for all students regardless of their learning readiness, interests, or learning profiles. Teachers identified challenges in modifying instructional materials, developing differentiated learning activities, and allowing enough time for collaborative planning. Also, analysis of instructional documents revealed that lesson plans and teaching modules were largely standardized and did not sufficiently reflect differentiated instructional principles required in inclusive classrooms. These findings highlight a major disconnect between the principles of inclusive education and their application in everyday classroom practice.

Previous studies have shown the importance of teacher collaboration in improving inclusive education. Friend and Cook (2017) found that collaboration between classroom teachers and special education teachers improves the effectiveness of instruction for students with special educational needs. In a similar vein, Vescio et al. (2016) noted that engagement in professional learning communities encourages reflective teaching practices and has a positive impact on student achievement. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) also contended that collaborative professional learning builds teachers' capacity to develop inventive instructional strategies, and Ainscow (2020) highlighted that effective inclusive schools are marked by robust collaborative cultures among educators. Although these findings are promising, relatively little research has explicitly explored how school leadership facilitates teacher collaboration through professional learning communities to support inclusive instructional practices at the elementary school level. So the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the school principal in strengthening teacher collaboration through the professional learning communities to improve the implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools. This research is anticipated to provide practical recommendations for school leaders, teachers and educational policy makers in building sustainable professional learning communities that support high-quality inclusive education through identifying existing challenges and collaborative practices.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research design with a case study approach to explore teacher collaboration in a professional learning community within an inclusive elementary school. The qualitative approach was selected as it allowed the researcher to investigate the participants' experiences, perceptions, interactions, and collaborative practices in their natural setting, without interfering with the phenomenon being studied (Moleong, 2017; Creswell, 2018). The study focused on the forms of teacher collaboration, the implementation of the school-based professional learning community, the challenges of teachers and the role of the principal in facilitating sustainable collaborative practice. This research was conducted at SDN 002 Kombeng. SDN 002 Kombeng is an elementary school located in a remote area that has implemented inclusive education but is still experiencing problems in the form of structured teacher collaboration. The research was conducted between February and May 2026, in the second semester of the academic year 2025/2026. The research process included preparation, collection of field data, data analysis, interpretation and preparation of report. Participants were one school principal, 18 classroom teachers and six subject teachers. They were identified because of their direct participation in school leadership, instructional planning, classroom instruction, and professional learning community activities.

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered by direct observation and in-depth interviews with the principal and teachers. The observations focused on collaborative lesson planning, division of responsibilities, instructional coordination, professional communication, collective reflection, dissemination of good practices and teacher participation in teacher working groups or school-based professional learning communities. The interviews were related to: school policies, leadership support, teachers' understanding of collaboration, existing practices of collaboration, communication patterns, perceived benefits, obstacles and strategies to improve collaboration. Secondary data consisted of lesson plans or teaching modules, annual and semester programs, meeting minutes, professional learning community programs, attendance records, activity schedules, photographs, academic supervision reports and student learning records. The researcher was the main instrument and directly involved in the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Moleong, 2017). Instruments used to support the research were an observation guide, semi-structured interview guides for the principal and teachers, and a documentation review format. The observation guide included five dimensions: collaborative instructional planning, collaborative teaching implementation, professional communication, instructional reflection, and professional development. The interview guides consisted of open-ended questions that allowed participants to describe their experiences and perspectives in detail. At the same time, the consistency between the results of interviews, observations, and documented school practices was evaluated using the documentation review format.

Data credibility was ensured through technique triangulation, source triangulation, member checking, and direct researcher engagement in the field. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation, while source triangulation involved comparing information provided by the principal, classroom teachers, and subject teachers. Member checking was carried out by confirming the interpreted findings with the participants to ensure that the data accurately represented their experiences. The data were analysed interactively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Relevant data were selected, coded, categorised, and organised into themes, then presented in narrative descriptions, tables, or matrices before conclusions were formulated based on recurring patterns, relationships, and meanings identified throughout the research process (Creswell, 2018; Flick, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Collaboration Process within the Professional Learning Community

The results showed that collaborative lesson planning has not yet become a professional practice at SDN 002 Kombeng. Based on classroom observations and document analysis, teachers generally prepared lesson modules and instructional materials independently in accordance with their individual teaching responsibilities. Joint planning activities were rare, especially before academic supervision or when implementing specific school programs. As one teacher described:

"We usually prepare our teaching materials individually. We only discuss them with other teachers during meetings or when the principal specifically asks us to do so."

Further document analysis showed that most lesson plans and teaching modules were individually designed and did not represent collaborative planning or differentiated instructional design to address the diverse learning needs of students. Furthermore, there was no formal schedule or school program that specifically regulated collaborative lesson planning activities. Thus, collaborative planning remained incidental rather than a routine part of teachers' professional practice. The observations also indicated that conversations about lesson planning were often informal and took place during break times, routine staff meetings or when teachers were experiencing specific difficulties in the classroom. The main discussions were on administrative matters, not on how to better teach or develop new and inclusive ways of teaching. Interviews with the principal confirmed that whilst teachers were encouraged to share ideas and learning experiences, time and heavy workloads did not allow for systematic collaborative planning. As a result, lesson planning continued to be an individual teacher effort rather than an organized collective decision-making process.

This condition is a formidable challenge in the context of inclusive education because collaborative planning is required to ensure that the instructional strategies are aligned with the diverse needs of all learners. Without structured collaborative forums, teachers have fewer opportunities to share professional knowledge and good instructional practices and to create adaptive learning strategies. This calls for enhanced collaborative planning to improve instructional quality and support more responsive inclusive learning. Some of the activities that realized teacher collaboration were informal discussions,

coordination between classroom teachers, and involvement in Teacher Working Group (KKG) meetings. But the collaborative practices were restricted in scope and did not possess intensity and sustainability. Classroom observation suggested that the majority of teachers were still teaching independently in their own classrooms. Professional interactions related to teaching and learning were relatively few. Collaborative work between classroom teachers usually consisted of simple consultations related to students' learning conditions and needs of learners with special educational needs. As one teacher commented:

"Sometimes we discuss students or teaching materials with other teachers, but we have never taught together in the same classroom."

Analysis of the documents showed that collaborative instructional models such as co-teaching, lesson study and peer observation were not systematically implemented. Likewise, Teacher Working Group meetings concentrated primarily on administrative matters and routine school duties, rather than discussions of inclusive instructional strategies or differentiated learning practices. Observational findings also revealed that collaboration occurred spontaneously whenever teachers experienced instructional challenges. Teachers often sought advice from colleagues about classroom management, teaching strategies or how to support students with special educational needs. Yet the interactions were still reactive and short-term as they were not supported by structured collaborative mechanisms. The principal's interviews also showed that scheduling, teaching, and administrative loads limited chances for more intensive collaboration, including peer observation, collaborative reflection, and joint instructional innovation.

From an inclusive education perspective, the limited implementation of teacher collaboration diminishes the schools' ability to respond effectively to diverse student learning needs. Therefore, there is a need for more systematic collaborative activities such as peer observation, collaborative teaching, reflective meetings and professional mentoring to strengthen teachers' professional competence and improve inclusive classroom practices. The study found that reflective practice had not yet been systematically implemented in the school's professional learning community. Most teachers reflected individually about their teaching in the classroom. Reflection about student learning outcomes, instructional challenges and improvement strategies was collective and only occurred occasionally. "said one teacher:

"Usually, we reflect on our own. We do not have a special forum to discuss learning outcomes together."

Further, the analysis of documents also confirmed this finding as there was no evidence of collective reflection reports or shared evaluation records on classroom instruction. Further, staff meetings were observed to focus more on administrative issues than on discussing teaching practices or talking about the progress of students' learning. As a result, reflection has not yet been used as a collaborative professional learning activity to promote ongoing instructional improvement. The lack of structured reflective practice restricts opportunities for teachers to collectively assess the effectiveness of instruction, identify common challenges in the classroom, and develop evidence-based strategies for improvement. Therefore, creating opportunities for regular reflective discussions in the professional learning community can be an effective way to promote teachers' professional learning and improve instructional quality in inclusive classrooms.

The results indicate that a professional learning community has been formally established through regular teacher meetings and Teacher Working Group (KKG) activities. But its role as a tool for ongoing professional development remains limited. Existing activities are mostly incidental, lack a structured schedule, seldom use student learning data as a basis for discussion, and seldom focus on solving authentic instructional problems encountered by teachers. Meetings among teachers still emphasized administrative issues, rather than instructional improvement and collaborative problem solving, according to observations. Interviews similarly indicated that teachers reported little benefit from participation in the professional learning community in terms of developing innovative instructional strategies or inclusive teaching practices. In general, the findings suggest that the school's professional learning community has not yet been a functioning, sustainable forum for collaborative professional development. By strengthening the organization of the professional learning community through regular collaborative meetings, data informed discussions, reflective inquiry, and systematic follow-up actions, the professional learning community would be better able to contribute to improving teacher professionalism and the quality of inclusive education.

The results show that the collaboration of teachers at SDN 002 Kombeng has not yet become a fully functioning Professional Learning Community (PLC). There is still a largely informal, unsystematic and individual initiative basis to collaborative practices rather than being embedded in the professional culture of the school. Teachers work independently throughout the instructional process, including lesson planning, classroom implementation and evaluation of learning. Collaborative activities are usually restricted to regular meetings or particular issues, rather than as part of continuous professional learning. These findings are reflected in the lack of collaborative lesson planning, limited opportunities for collective reflection, and little use of student learning data to inform instructional decision making. In addition, the existing collaborative forums, such as teacher meetings and Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG) activities, are still more focused on administrative matters than instructional improvement. Thus, these forums have not been an arena for the development of shared professional knowledge and improvement of teaching quality.

DuFour et al. (2016) define an effective Professional Learning Community as a shared focus on student learning, a collaborative culture, and an ongoing commitment to improving educational outcomes. Likewise, Stoll and Louis (2020) stress that effective PLCs are founded upon ongoing reflection, professional conversation, evidence-based decision making, and collective accountability for student achievement. The results of this study indicate that these core characteristics are not yet fully achieved at SDN 002 Kombeng. Thus, there is a need to strengthen systematic collaboration, reflective practice, and data-informed professional learning so that the existing teacher community can be transformed into a sustainable Professional Learning Community.

Forms of Professional Learning Community Activities

The result showed that the professional learning community at SDN 002 Kombeng is implemented through several activities, namely teacher meetings, Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG) activities, informal discussions among teachers and academic supervision. These activities provide teachers with an opportunity to communicate with one another and interact professionally. But it is not yet fully implemented to support collaborative professional learning or continuous instructional improvement. The main means of communication and coordination between the school principal and teachers are teacher meetings. The classroom observations showed that these meetings are regularly held and usually discuss school operational issues including annual and semester program preparation, task allocation, assessment preparation, administrative management, and evaluation of school activities. From the interview findings, teacher meetings are an essential way of communicating school policies and addressing some of the challenges that teachers face in the execution of their professional duties. Teachers also use these meetings to coordinate the implementation of school programs and to share information about day-to-day instructional activities.

But the results indicate that conversations in teacher meetings are still largely administrative. There is relatively little attention to issues closely associated with instructional improvement: teaching strategies, student learning outcomes, lesson reflection, differentiated instruction, and collaborative problem solving. Consequently, teacher meetings have not yet worked at their best as a professional learning forum that encourages reflective practice and collaborative instructional development. A stronger pedagogical focus on these meetings would serve teacher professional development and the improvement of inclusive learning practices. One of the formal teacher professional development programs to improve pedagogical competence is through collaborative learning, called The Teacher Working Group (KKG). Based on document analysis and interview data, teachers of SDN 002 Kombeng actively participate in KKG activities held at school cluster and district levels. Participants said that KKG activities offer chances to share experiences, get updated educational information and discuss curriculum implementation with colleagues from other schools. These activities also extend the professional networks of teachers and help in sharing instructional resources and teaching experiences.

However, the findings point to the fact that the potential of KKG as a professional learning community has not been fully exploited to support inclusive education. Discussions continue to revolve around curriculum implementation and administrative requirements with relatively little attention paid to topics related to differentiated instruction, collaborative lesson planning, inclusive teaching strategies, classroom problem-solving, and reflective practice. Therefore, the contribution of KKG in reinforcing the collaborative practice among teachers is suboptimal. KKG should strengthen collaborative inquiry, lesson study, peer learning, reflective conversations and sharing of evidence-based pedagogical practices to further contribute to inclusive education. Such improvements would allow KKG to operate more effectively as a sustainable professional learning community that enhances teacher competence and increases the quality of inclusive classroom instruction.

The findings show that the professional interaction among the teachers is limited to informal talk and occasional coordination of classroom issues. Collaborative instructional practices such as lesson study, peer observation, co-teaching, and joint problem-solving have yet to be integrated into teachers' professional routines. Therefore, there are still relatively few opportunities for teachers to learn from their colleagues collectively. In Communities of Practice (CoP) learning takes place through continuous participation in shared professional activities where individuals share experiences, build collective knowledge and improve practice together (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). Communities are built on the basis of shared engagement, a shared professional purpose, and the continuous development of collective expertise through active participation. The present findings indicate that these features are not yet fully established in the school. There are still few professional interactions and collective learning activities are still rare. Additionally, limited implementation of collaborative reflection reduces opportunities for teachers to learn from classroom experiences and share effective instructional practices. Consequently, the teacher community has yet to mature into a CoP that can systematically support ongoing professional development and instructional innovation.

The Principal's Role in Strengthening Teacher Collaboration

The results show that the principal has played many important roles in enabling the teacher collaboration in the school's professional learning community. The principal acts as a facilitator by providing opportunities for teachers to interact through ongoing teacher meetings, Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG) activities and school-based instructional programs. These forums provide opportunities for teachers to share information, coordinate teaching activities and discuss issues related to the school. However, the study found that there is no structured or long-term program specifically designed to strengthen collaborative professional learning among teachers. Collaborative activities have thus far been largely incidental and have not yet developed into a sustainable professional culture. The principal always motivates teachers to make efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to enhance cooperation. The results of the interview revealed that teachers were often encouraged to share their experiences, communicate effectively and participate actively in school activities. However, this motivation has been expressed mostly as verbal encouragement and has yet to be supported by strategic initiatives such as collaborative lesson planning, peer mentoring, lesson study or structured professional learning programs that could systematically improve collaborative practices.

The results show that the principal acts as an academic supervisor by conducting periodic classroom supervision. The major focus of supervisory activities, however, is on administrative compliance particularly completeness of lesson plans, teaching modules and other instructional documents. Little attention is paid to instructional reflection, peer collaboration, or professional dialogue about classroom practice. As a result, academic supervision has not yet been a means to promote collaborative inquiry, reflective practice and continuous professional learning among teachers. In addition, the role of

principal as an instructional leader has not been fully optimized yet. Although the principal showed a commitment to inclusive education, the study showed little effort to build a collaborative school culture, use student learning data as evidence to inform instructional decision-making, promote collective reflection, or establish a sustainable professional learning community. The findings suggest that there is a need to develop instructional leadership to foster a collaborative culture where teachers are constantly learning from each other, improving instructional practices, and jointly improving the quality of inclusive education.

The results show that the principal has some attempts to support teachers in terms of regular staff meetings, academic supervision, Teacher Working Group (KKG) activities and continuous encouragement to improve quality of instruction and professional collaboration. These measures indicate the principal's commitment to teacher development and the sustainability of the school. Nevertheless, the role of the principal as an instructional leader has not yet been fully optimized to develop a collaborative professional culture. According to Hallinger (2018), instructional leadership entails the development of a clear instructional vision, administration of teaching and learning programs, supervision of instructional quality, and development of conditions to facilitate ongoing teacher learning. In this study, academic supervision focused more on administrative compliance, specifically whether instructional documents were complete, rather than on fostering professional dialogue, collaborative reflection, or instructional improvement. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the principal has not yet systematically used student learning data to inform instructional decision-making, organized structured reflective discussions, or established sustainable professional learning communities. These findings correspond with Leithwood et al. (2020) who stress that effective school leadership should enhance teachers' professional capacity and foster a collaborative learning culture throughout the school. Therefore, it is important to strengthen the principal's instructional leadership to cultivate a sustainable culture of teacher collaboration in inclusive schools.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Teacher Collaboration

The result showed several factors that support the development of teacher collaboration in the professional learning community in SDN 002 Kombeng. The harmonious interpersonal relationship among teachers is a major supporting factor, which creates a positive atmosphere for communication, mutual assistance and exchange of teaching experiences. Teachers appeared open to seeking help from colleagues when faced with instructional challenges and generally had positive professional relationships. In addition, the principal's support for teacher activities fosters collaboration by creating opportunities for discussion through teacher meetings, Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG) activities, and other school programs. Another important facilitating factor is the availability of collaborative forums, especially regular teacher meetings and KKG activities. These forums have not yet functioned optimally as professional learning communities, but they do offer teachers opportunities to communicate, coordinate instructional activities and share educational information. Moreover, results of the interview show that teachers are aware of the importance of cooperation for improving the quality of teaching, solving problems in the classroom and increasing their professional competence. This knowledge is a good social capital to create a stronger collaborative culture in the school.

However, several barriers impede the success of effective teacher collaboration despite these positive conditions. The most frequently mentioned obstacle is lack of time, as the weight of administrative tasks leaves little room for collaborative lesson planning, professional reflection and peer learning. In addition, a strong individual work culture is still evident in that many teachers continue to prepare instructional materials and conduct classroom activities independently, rather than through collaborative processes. Findings also reveal that teachers' understanding of professional learning communities remains relatively limited and that collaborative activities are more oriented toward administrative coordination than ongoing professional learning and instructional improvement. Institutional factors also constrain the development of sustainable collaboration. The absence of a systematically designed collaboration program suggests that collaborative activities are mainly incidental and based on individual initiative rather than being embedded in the school's professional development agenda. Additionally, the academic supervision still focuses on administrative compliance (e.g., completeness of instructional documents) instead of promoting collaborative reflection, peer observation, and evidence-based instructional improvement. Thus supervision has not yet become an effective mechanism for enhancing collaborative professional practice.

The results show that in general teacher collaboration in the professional learning community at SDN 002 Kombeng has begun to develop, but has not yet formed an established and sustainable professional culture. Current collaborative practices are still ad hoc and have not been systematically embedded in teachers' daily professional activities. Therefore, improving instructional leadership, offering formal collaborative programs, practicing reflective activities, and streamlining professional learning community's activities are vital for promoting sustainable teacher collaboration and quality inclusive education.

A key element of effective inclusive education is collaboration with other teachers to help teachers meet the diverse learning needs of all students. Teachers can work together on practices to share the responsibilities, co-design instructional strategies, adapt learning activities and provide adequate support for students with diverse abilities, including students with special educational needs. Collaboration enables teachers to effectively implement differentiated instruction, coordinate educational services, and develop flexible learning environments to meet individual student needs (Friend & Cook, 2017). Collaborative efforts also promote problem solving and shared responsibility for student learning outcomes — both are key principles of inclusive education. However, the results show that the learning practices in SDN 002 Kombeng are still relatively uniform and have not implemented the differentiated learning principles well. Collaboration among classroom teachers is usually limited to informal consultation and has not developed into more intensive practices such as co-teaching, collaborative lesson planning, or joint evaluation of student learning. The findings suggest that inclusive education implementation continues to face significant challenges in establishing a sustainable collaborative system that can support

diverse learners effectively.

The study identified a number of factors that act as barriers to effective teacher collaboration. The biggest challenge is time constraints due to the heavy administrative work which limits the possibility for teachers to participate in collaborative planning, reflective discussions, and professional development activities. This means teachers are spending more time on administrative work than collaborative instructional improvement. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2019), building social capital is essential for sustainable professional collaboration. Social capital includes the sharing of knowledge and expertise, mutual trust, and positive professional relationships. The interpersonal relationships between teachers in SDN 002 Kombeng are harmonious, but these elements have not yet developed into a strong collaborative professional culture. Teachers are still primarily using their own practices and not collective professional learning. A second major hurdle is the absence of a structured collaboration program that systematically integrates collaborative activities into the professional duties of teachers. The professional learning activities currently taking place are incidental and are not supported by clear objectives, regular schedules or systematic follow-up. Therefore, the professional learning community has not effectively functioned as a sustainable mechanism for improving the teacher competence, strengthening the collaborative practice and enhancing the quality of inclusive education yet.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study concluded that the collaboration of teachers in the professional learning community in SDN 002 Kombeng was carried out through teacher meetings, activities of the Teacher Working Group (KKG), informal discussions, and academic supervision. However, these collaborative practices have not yet become a structured, systematic, and sustainable professional culture. Most instructional responsibilities of teachers are still carried out individually. Current professional learning activities are still mostly administrative rather than collaborative lesson planning, collective reflection, data-informed decision-making, and continuous instructional improvement. In addition, despite the principal's dedication towards supporting teacher collaboration, the role of instructional leadership has not been fully optimized in the establishment of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that supports collaborative learning and improves the quality of inclusive education. The findings suggest that school principals should enhance their instructional leadership by developing structured and sustainable professional learning community programs that emphasize collaborative lesson planning, collective reflection, evidence-based decision-making and continuous professional development. Teachers are encouraged to participate more actively in collaborative learning activities, to share professional knowledge and effective instructional practices, and to strengthen cooperation in planning, implementing, and evaluating inclusive learning. Schools should develop policies to institutionalize collaborative professional learning as part of their organizational culture. Education authorities should provide ongoing training, mentoring, and professional support to principals and teachers to enhance collaborative competencies. It is recommended that future research examine the effect of teacher collaboration on student learning outcomes, differentiated instruction, instructional innovation, and the effectiveness of inclusive education in a variety of educational settings.

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