

Resource Center (PSB) "PUSPA": Role in the Assessment Process Admission of New Students with Special Needs (PPDB) in Inclusive Schools

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Abstract: This descriptive qualitative research examines the role of the Resource Center (PSB) "PUSPA" in the Student Admission (PPDB) Assessment process for Children with Special Needs (ABK) at Al Firdaus Inclusion Elementary School Surakarta. The background issue is the existing barriers in inclusive PPDB in Indonesia, where assessment is often administrative, non-comprehensive, and subjective, leading to inappropriate interventions. The presence of a Resource Center is considered strategic for building organizational capacity and support. The study's findings indicate that PSB "PUSPA" plays a transformational role as an organizational catalyst, shifting the PPDB process from merely administrative to an integrated biopsychosocial mechanism. Its primary role is coordinating multidisciplinary assessment and proactive intervention planning. The assessment strategy shifts from screening to mapping and planning, supported by a centralized structure (hub) and a collaborative system involving parents. The core value adopted is a strength-based education approach, supported by diagnostic assessment skills and Individualized Learning Plans (PPI/SMART Plan). In conclusion, PSB "PUSPA" successfully reformulates the PPDB assessment into an integrated mechanism, strengthened by the alignment of organizational elements (McKinsey 7S). This innovation shifts the paradigm from selection to planning, which reinforces organizational cohesion, professional legitimacy, and equity in inclusive practice. This model demonstrates that inclusivity is a managerial and organizational issue requiring a structured system and a strength-based approach.

Keywords: PSB "PUSPA", PPDB Assessment, Children with Special Needs, Inclusive Education

Abstrak: Pelaksanaan pendidikan inklusif di Indonesia sering terkendala oleh proses Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) yang cenderung administratif, tidak komprehensif, dan subjektif, mengakibatkan intervensi yang tidak tepat. Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan peran strategis Pusat Sumber Belajar (PSB) "PUSPA" di SD Inklusi Al Firdaus Surakarta dalam asesmen PPDB ABK. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa PSB "PUSPA" berperan transformasional sebagai katalisator organisasi. Mereka berhasil mengubah proses PPDB dari sekadar administrasi menjadi mekanisme biopsikososial terpadu. Peran utamanya adalah mengoordinasikan asesmen multidisiplin dan perencanaan intervensi proaktif. Strategi asesmen bergeser dari penyaringan (screening) menjadi pemetaan dan perencanaan, didukung struktur terpusat (hub) dan kolaborasi dengan orang tua. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah pendidikan berbasis kekuatan (strength-based) dengan keterampilan asesmen diagnostik dan Perencanaan Pembelajaran Individual (PPI/SMART Plan). Kesimpulannya, PSB "PUSPA" mereformulasi asesmen PPDB menjadi mekanisme terintegrasi yang inovasinya terletak pada perubahan paradigma dari seleksi menjadi perencanaan. Model ini memperkuat kohesi organisasi, legitimasi profesional, dan kesetaraan praktik inklusif, membuktikan bahwa inklusivitas adalah isu manajerial dan organisasi yang menuntut sistem terstruktur dan pendekatan berbasis kekuatan.

Kata kunci: PSB "PUSPA", Asesmen PPDB, Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus, Pendidikan Inklusif.

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a global paradigm affirming every child's right to equitable and high-quality educational services that respect diversity. This idea is rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which asserts the fundamental right of every individual to education, and was further strengthened by the Education for All Conference (1990) and the Salamanca Statement (1994), both of which marked a shift from segregative approaches toward educational systems that embrace

differences as a natural part of learning communities. These principles are now embedded within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Target 4.5, which calls for the elimination of all forms of discrimination in educational access, including for children with disabilities and special needs.

In the context of Indonesia, the legal framework for inclusive education is established through Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which guarantees the right of children with special needs to receive educational services appropriate to their abilities and needs. This policy was further reinforced by Ministerial Regulation No. 48/2023, which mandates all schools to transform their educational systems to be inclusive and responsive to student diversity through the provision of reasonable accommodations. However, various studies (Sunardi et al., 2011; Alfianda, 2025) have revealed that practical implementation still faces significant challenges, such as limited human resources, insufficient teacher training, and weak mechanisms for identifying and assessing individual student needs during the admission phase.

The New Student Admission (Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru, PPDB) stage serves as a critical entry point that determines the success of inclusive education implementation at the school level. The assessment process during this phase is crucial for identifying students' learning needs, designing appropriate supports, and ensuring the alignment between each student's potential and the school's service capacity. Unfortunately, in many regular inclusive schools, PPDB assessments for students with special needs remain largely administrative and lack a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach. The absence of an internal support system often leads to subjective identification processes, resulting in mismatched interventions and future adaptation difficulties for students.

Within this framework, the presence of a Resource Center (Pusat Sumber Belajar, PSB) becomes strategically significant. According to Booth and Ainscow (2011), resource centers play a vital role in building a supportive environment and organizational capacity to ensure that all children can learn meaningfully. In Indonesia, this function has begun to develop in several schools through specialized units that provide assessment, intervention, and learning support services for students with special needs. One notable practice can be found at SD Al Firdaus in Surakarta through its PSB known as "PUSPA," which has been institutionally supporting inclusive education since 2003. "PUSPA" not only provides individual services but also serves as a key actor in the PPDB assessment process to determine support strategies for students with special needs.

Nevertheless, few studies have descriptively explored how educational support systems such as PSB "PUSPA" are practically implemented in the PPDB assessment process for prospective students with special needs. A clear understanding of the operational mechanisms, interprofessional coordination, and support strategies utilized by PSB "PUSPA" is essential, as it can serve as a reference for other schools seeking to develop effective inclusive assessment systems. Based on this background, this study aims to describe the role of PSB "PUSPA" in the PPDB assessment process for children with special needs at SD Al Firdaus in Surakarta.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design aimed at generating an in-depth understanding of the dynamics underlying the implementation of the New Student Admission (PPDB) assessment in an inclusive school facilitated by PSB "PUSPA" as an educational support system. Rather than testing hypotheses, the study sought to systematically portray real practices, highlighting how PSB "PUSPA"'s activities, stages, and support mechanisms ensure that the assessment process remains objective, adaptive, and responsive to students' individual needs.

2.2. *Research Site and Participants*

The research was conducted at SD Al Firdaus in Surakarta, an Islamic educational institution that operates PSB "PUSPA" as a resource center providing assistance to teachers, students, and parents. The site was purposively selected due to its established and structured PPDB assessment system managed

by a multidisciplinary team. Participants included members of the PUSPA assessment team, inclusive teachers, the principal, and parents of prospective students.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis.

- a. Interviews explored participants' experiences, perceptions, and decision-making considerations during the assessment process.
- b. Observations captured contextual dynamics from planning and implementation to post-assessment follow-up.
- c. Document analysis involved reviewing assessment instruments, reports, and internal school policies related to student admission and placement.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The researcher coded and categorized data thematically, organized them into descriptive narratives illustrating relationships among actors and contexts, and drew inductive conclusions to construct a comprehensive picture of the inclusive PPDB assessment mechanism.

2.5. Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the study applied source and methodological triangulation, conducted member checking with key informants, and maintained researcher reflexivity, considering the researcher's role as an insider within the school context.

2.6. Analytical Focus

This methodological approach allowed for a comprehensive and nuanced depiction of how PSB "PUSPA" integrates policy, professional practice, and inclusive values in conducting PPDB assessments. The findings are expected to contribute to the refinement of inclusive educational support systems and to inform policy and practice in similar institutional contexts.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to describe the role of the Learning Resource Center (Pusat Sumber Belajar, PSB) "PUSPA" in implementing the New Student Admission (Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru, PPDB) assessment process for Children with Special Needs (Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus, ABK) at Al Firdaus Inclusive Elementary School. The findings are analyzed using the McKinsey 7S Framework to explore the organizational elements that shape the effectiveness of this practice. The framework has been widely applied to analyze institutional alignment within educational contexts (Pascale & Athos, 1981; Raharja, 2009; Pinfield & Rutter, 2019; Nurdin, 2021).

PSB "PUSPA" consists of several key components, including learning resources, facilities, human resources, programs and activities, as well as services for both children and parents. The learning resources comprise various educational play materials designed to stimulate children's sensory and motor development, complemented by collections of literature, training modules, and instructional videos. The available facilities include therapy rooms, a hydrotherapy pool, consultation rooms, medical examination rooms, and a daycare center, all of which support the center's integrative approach to inclusive education.

Services for children are delivered holistically, encompassing academic, psychological, social, and medical aspects. These services include early detection and developmental assessment—covering developmental screenings and case conferences—followed by stimulation and intervention programs. The latter involve the design of compensatory educational plans and pedagogical interventions by special education teachers, as well as medical and therapeutic interventions provided by doctors and therapists. Services for parents are also integral to the center's approach, including the formation of

parent support groups and the facilitation of various parenting programs aimed at strengthening family engagement in the education and care of children with special needs.

PSB "PUSPA" routinely organizes a series of programs and activities, such as Kids Holiday Class, Learn and Joyful, Social Experience, Edutrip, Professional Development for teachers, Parent Talk, and Edutalk. These programs reflect the center's commitment to building an inclusive learning ecosystem that involves educators, families, and students in collaborative and reflective practices. The human resources supporting these initiatives consist of a management team comprising a director, manager, assistant manager, and several service coordinators, along with professional staff that include special education teachers, psychologists, general practitioners, occupational therapists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, and daycare caregivers.

In the context of PPDB assessments for children with special needs, prospective students undergo several stages of evaluation to ensure accurate identification of their abilities and needs. These stages are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. PPDB Assessemnt Process

Stage	Main Objective	Actor Involved	Output / Result
Initial Identification by the school	To identify indications of special educational needs among prospective students during the registration process through observation, parent interviews, and document review.	Homeroom teacher of the target grade level, inclusion team, school principal, parents.	Initial identification form, interview notes, and preliminary student profile.
Assessemnt by PSB "PUSPA"	To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the student's abilities, challenges, and learning needs through a multidisciplinary assessment.	PSB "PUSPA" team (psychologist, special education teacher, occupational/speech therapist if relevant), classroom teacher, inclusion team, parents.	Comprehensive assessment report covering cognitive, social-emotional, communication, adaptive, and basic academic domains.
Compilation of Assessemnt Report	To integrate findings from the school's initial identification and PUSPA's assessment into a unified report that serves as the basis for recommendations.	Joint team of PUSPA and the school (inclusion coordinator, inclusion team, classroom teacher, school principal).	Complete admission assessment report including educational support recommendations and initial intervention plan.
Case Cofference with Parents	To build a shared understanding between the school, PUSPA, and parents regarding the assessment results and initial intervention steps.	School principal, inclusion team, classroom teacher, PUSPA team, parents	Case conference minutes, agreement record on initial services and support, and follow-up action plan.
Development IEP dan SMART Plan	To design an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)	Classroom teacher, inclusion coordinator, special education teacher (shadow teacher), counselor, PUSPA team, parents.	Agreed IEP and SMART Plan document, including curriculum adaptation strategies and environmental supports.

Stage	Main Objective	Actor Involved	Output / Result
	based on assessment results.		
Initial Observation or Monitoring in School Environment	To monitor the student's initial adaptation process at school and evaluate the effectiveness of the provided supports.	Classroom teacher, special education teacher, counselor, inclusion coordinator, PUSPA team.	Observation notes, teacher reflections, and recommendations for adjustment of support.
Follow-up Assessment	To evaluate student development after a certain period (3–6 months) and review the effectiveness of the IEP and SMART Plan.	PUSPA team, classroom teacher, special education teacher, counselor, school principal, parents.	Progress assessment report, revised or updated IEP, and recommendations for continued intervention.

The findings indicate that the PSB “PUSPA” functions as an organizational catalyst that transforms the student admission process (PPDB) from a merely administrative procedure into a mechanism that implements the Biopsychosocial Model (Engel, 1977), through multidisciplinary assessment and proactive intervention planning aimed at optimizing educational outcomes and minimizing the risk of failure.

3.1. Hard Elements Analysis

The hard elements include Strategy, Structure, and System, which are formal and easily identifiable within the school's operational framework. PUSPA fundamentally redefines these elements to better support inclusion.

3.1.1. Strategy

Strategy refers to having a practical plan to achieve predetermined goals and objectives, which also guides the process of selecting the most appropriate approach from a range of alternatives (Peters, 2014). PUSPA's strategy in the admission process for students with special needs (PPDB ABK) has shifted from a screening-oriented approach to one centered on matching and planning. Rather than merely deciding whether a child is accepted or not, the focus of the strategy is to ensure appropriate accommodations and individualized learning plans from the very first day.

Theoretically, initial assessment serves the purpose of mapping and planning instruction. The assessment conducted by the Learning Resource Center “PUSPA” aligns with the principles of Diagnostic Assessment, whose primary goal is to measure students' strengths, weaknesses, and prior knowledge before instruction begins. This information is then used to design meaningful, efficient, and individualized learning experiences for each student (Top Hat, 2024).

This is operationalized through a tiered assessment process that results in output documents such as the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the SMART Plan. Such an approach is consistent with literature emphasizing that individualized pre-school planning is critical for reducing the risk of adaptation failure among students with special needs (DERA, 2010).

This proactive strategy directly addresses one of the main challenges in implementing inclusive education in Indonesia—namely, the lack of a comprehensive identification and assessment mechanism (Sunardi et al., 2011).

3.1.2. Structure

The structure of an organization is typically illustrated through a map or organizational chart (organigram), which provides an overview of the activities and processes within the organization. Such a structure delineates reporting relationships, usually represented by vertical lines (Lubis M. et al., 2009).

In the context of the student admission process (PPDB), the Learning Resource Center “PUSPA” establishes an internal centralized structure—not as part of its formal organizational hierarchy, but rather as a special working group dedicated to handling the admission assessment for students with special needs. Within this group, PUSPA acts as a hub that centralizes information and coordinates the multidisciplinary team. This structure comprises:

Initial Identification Team: Consisting of classroom teachers and inclusion teachers who conduct preliminary identification focusing on academic, self-help, learning readiness, social, and sensorimotor aspects.

Professional Network: PUSPA facilitates coordination with professionals such as therapists, psychologists, pedagogues, and medical experts for advanced assessments, indicating the presence of a functional structure that transcends the internal boundaries of the school.

Managing the admission and assessment process for students with special needs through a focused entity such as PUSPA enables the consolidation of professional human resources, assessment facilities, and referral pathways into an integrated system. This interprofessional coordination model is strongly supported in the literature, which emphasizes that a resource center should serve as a referral hub for building a supportive environment and enhancing organizational capacity (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

Such an approach promotes operational efficiency, as individual schools do not need to independently develop full assessment and intervention capacities. Instead, they can access expertise and materials through a centralized mechanism. For instance, international guidelines from UNESCO-IBE (2022) highlight that inclusion requires collaboration among all stakeholders and systemic support to ensure that every learner is adequately accepted and supported.

A study by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2013) found that systemically structured and centralized service organizations are among the key success factors for inclusive education, particularly in providing support for mainstream schools to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Consequently, the professional legitimacy of the recommendations produced through this system is strengthened, as assessment and intervention planning are carried out by a multidisciplinary team—Involving psychologists, special education teachers, therapists, and general educators—yielding more holistic analyses and recommendations than single-discipline assessments (Alenezi et al., 2022).

This model not only enhances the scientific credibility of recommendations but also reinforces consensus among stakeholders (the school, parents, and PUSPA) because it operates within a professional framework. Thus, for SD Al Firdaus, adopting a centralized model through PSB “PUSPA” represents not only a step toward greater resource efficiency but also a significant advancement in the quality and legitimacy of inclusive education interventions.

3.1.3. System

A system refers to a set of formal procedures carried out routinely. In the context of inclusive education at SD Al Firdaus, the PSB “PUSPA” implements an assessment system based on the principle of collaboration. Collaboration among schools, parents, and professionals serves as a vital foundation for ensuring the effectiveness of educational services for children with special needs. Research findings demonstrate that parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities has a positive correlation with their academic, social, and emotional development (Musendo, 2023). A strong partnership between school and family fosters consistency in intervention strategies between home and school, which in turn accelerates students’ behavioral progress and adaptive skills (Acar et al., 2021).

Each assessment process involves collaboration among the school, parents, and professionals from various disciplines—including psychologists, special education teachers, and therapists. Through centralized coordination, PUSPA ensures that all information gathered from different stakeholders is systematically integrated to design targeted interventions and individualized education programs (IEPs). This collaborative approach is expected to yield educational decisions that are more objective, adaptive, and contextually grounded in the unique needs of each child, while also increasing their opportunities for optimal learning success.

PSB "PUSPA" plays a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining a detailed PPDB (student admission) assessment system through the following components:

- a. Needs Identification System – Utilizes structured instruments for early identification, avoiding subjective judgments.
- b. Multidisciplinary Assessment System – Applies standardized procedures for follow-up assessments conducted by experts to ensure that collected data are valid and comprehensive.
- c. Critical Communication System (Case Conference) – A formal mechanism that involves parents as partners in formulating intervention plans, resulting in shared agreements regarding learning approaches. Parental participation at this stage serves as a key indicator of high-quality inclusive practice, consistent with the policy mandate outlined in Permendikbudristek No. 48/2023.
- d. Evaluation and Finalization System – Includes a one-week classroom monitoring phase followed by a reflective discussion to refine the IEP and SMART Plan, ensuring that these plans function as living documents that have been contextually validated within real learning environments.
- e. Progress Assessment System – Evaluates students' development after a certain period (3–6 months) and reviews the effectiveness of the IEP and SMART Plan to determine necessary revisions or follow-up interventions.

3.2. Soft Elements Analysis

The soft elements involve human and cultural aspects, which are often more difficult to change but are vital for sustaining inclusion.

3.2.1. Shared values

The core shared value upheld by PSB "PUSPA" and the inclusion team is strength-based education. This principle is reflected in the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and SMART Plan documents, which are based on students' strengths rather than merely focusing on their deficits. The implementation of this value fosters a collaborative climate with parents and positions students with special needs not as problematic individuals, but as learners who require specific and tailored educational approaches.

The strength-based approach lies at the heart of modern inclusive philosophy, as it promotes positive identity, student agency, and opportunities to build learning upon existing strengths (UNESCO-IBE, 2024). Empirical evidence and systematic reviews further demonstrate that interventions emphasizing personal strengths are positively associated with well-being, self-efficacy, and learning motivation—all of which are crucial factors for long-term learning outcomes among children with special needs (Taylor et al., 2023; Mueller, 2024).

3.2.2. Skills

The skills component refers to the abilities, qualifications, knowledge, and learning capacity of members within the organization, as well as the extent to which they possess the expertise required for development (Pereg & Inbar, 1996). The presence of PSB "PUSPA" ensures that the school maintains specific core skills essential for inclusive education.

One such competency is Diagnostic Assessment Skills, which involve the ability to conduct in-depth functional identification and assessment. This is a key competency in inclusive education, particularly for children with special needs (ABK). Diagnostic assessment—including evaluations of academic ability, adaptive function, communication, and behavior—forms the foundation for a comprehensive understanding of each student's initial condition. As noted by Cal State LA, "academic diagnostic assessment... is carried out by special education teachers, general education teachers, para-educators, and related service professionals."

Another critical skill is Individualized Planning, which refers to the ability to translate assessment results into concrete IEP documents complemented by measurable SMART Plans (Wright & Wright, 2022).

PSB “PUSPA” also demonstrates Consultation and Mediation Skills, namely the ability to lead case conferences and mediate agreements among experts, teachers, and parents. These skills are vital in achieving shared educational goals (Fernandes, 2021).

3.2.3. Staff

The staff element refers to the organization’s personnel, their group allocation, and role definitions, while taking into account individual skills and competencies (Peters, 2011). PSB “PUSPA” plays a key role in coordinating a diverse staff composition. This includes not only special education teachers (GPK) or shadow teachers but also external professionals temporarily integrated into the PPDB process—such as psychologists, orthopedagogues, physicians, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and physiotherapists.

PSB “PUSPA” ensures that every staff member—from classroom teachers to psychologists—understands their role in the assessment process, thereby forming an integrated and multifunctional inclusion team. The staffing model organized by PSB “PUSPA” represents a tangible form of human resource capacity building within an inclusive school setting (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

3.2.4. Style

The leadership style facilitated by PSB “PUSPA” embodies collaborative, reflective, and transformational characteristics, which are central to inclusive education management practices.

From a collaborative standpoint, PSB “PUSPA” initiates case conferences that routinely involve parents, teachers, specialists, and school representatives to discuss and agree upon the most appropriate learning plans for each child. These forums are not mere channels of one-way communication but rather deliberative spaces where all stakeholders act as equal partners in educational decision-making. This approach strengthens both accountability and collective ownership of the designed programs, while ensuring that family perspectives and the child’s daily experiences become integral parts of educational planning.

The reflective dimension of PSB “PUSPA’s” leadership is evident in the one-week classroom monitoring phase conducted after assessment. During this stage, the inclusion team and PSB “PUSPA” jointly observe the child’s behavior, interactions, and responses in authentic learning contexts. The results of these observations are then discussed in reflective meetings to finalize the IEP and SMART Plan. This process demonstrates that decision-making within PSB “PUSPA” is not based solely on static test results but rather through dynamic, adaptive observation mechanisms that take into account the child’s contextual development. Such reflective leadership fosters a sustainable professional learning culture, where teachers and specialists continually refine their practices based on collective reflection and empirical evidence.

Through the synergy of these two approaches, the leadership at PSB “PUSPA” transcends administrative management toward transformational leadership—a leadership model that inspires a paradigm shift in viewing children with special needs not as “service recipients” but as unique and capable learners with the potential to thrive.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Learning Resource Center (PSB) “PUSPA” at SD Al Firdaus performs a transformational function in redefining the student admission assessment (PPDB) process for children with special needs—from a conventional administrative procedure into an integrated biopsychosocial mechanism. By aligning all organizational components through the McKinsey 7S framework, PSB “PUSPA” exemplifies how inclusive education can be institutionalized systemically through the coherent integration of both structural and cultural dimensions within the organization. The key innovation lies in the paradigmatic shift from an orientation of screening and selection toward mapping and planning, underpinned by multidisciplinary collaboration, advanced diagnostic assessment competencies, and the systematic development of Individual Learning Programs (PPI) and SMART Plans.

As a cross-professional coordination hub, PSB “PUSPA” reinforces organizational cohesion, enhances professional legitimacy, and promotes equity in inclusive educational practices. The model contributes theoretically to the field of inclusive education management by demonstrating that inclusivity is not solely a pedagogical concern but also a managerial and organizational construct that demands structured systems, distributed expertise, and shared values grounded in a strength-based educational philosophy. Future development of this model may involve scaling its implementation across school networks, optimizing digital data systems for continuous monitoring, and establishing professional learning communities that foster reflective, evidence-informed, and sustainable inclusive practices.

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