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"Clown Children" Quo Vadis Guarantee Education for Children with Special Needs in the Era of Covid-19

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Article Info

Abstract

Keywords: Clown Children; Covid-19 Era; Inclusive Education This paper aims to analyze education guarantees for children with special needs (ABK) in the Covid-19 era. The focus of the study is the phenomenon of crew members clowning on the streets of Medan City. The theory used in analyzing the data is the theory of implementation of Merilee S. Grindle's policies. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data was collected using an open interview technique, participant observation, and documentation study. Furthermore, the data were analyzed through data reduction techniques, data display, and concluding. This study indicates that the North Sumatra government has been very responsive to inclusive education for children with special needs in the region. This is indicated by two things, namely (1) the declaration of North Sumatra as the Province of Inclusive Education since 2015 and (2) the issuance of the Governor of North Sumatra No. 29 of 2016 concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education as a follow-up to Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009.

Abstrak

Kata kunci: Anak Badut; Era Covid-19; Pendidikan Inklusif Tulisan ini bertujuan menganalisis jaminan pendidikan bagi anak berkebutuhan khusus (ABK) di era Covid-19. Fokus penelitian adalah fenomena ABK yang membadut di jalanan Kota Medan. Teori yang digunakan dalam menganalisis data adalah teori implementasi kebijakan Merilee S. Grindle. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan teknik wawancara terbuka, observasi partisipan dan studi dokumentasi. Selanjutnya data dianalisis melalui teknik reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pemerintah Sumatera Utara sudah sangat tanggap terhadap pendidikan inklusi bagi anak berkebutuhan khusus di daerahnya, hal ini ditunjukkan dengan dua hal yaitu (1) dicanangkannya Sumatera Utara sebagai Provinsi Pendidikan Inklusif sejak 2015 dan (2) terbitnya Peraturan Gubernur (Pergub) Sumatera Utara Nomor 29 Tahun 2016 tentang Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusif sebagai tindak lanjut Permendiknas Nomor 70 Tahun 2009.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an intermediary between humans and their survival (Valencia, 2018; Chapman, Flaws & Heron, 2006; Assingkily & Rohman, 2019). The dynamism of science and technology proves how much human needs education(Nour, 2013; Sada, 2017; Lee, 2010). The urgency of education is regulated in Law as the main priority of the life of the Indonesian people (Judge, 2016).

Every child in Indonesia has the right to education, including children with special needs. It is stated in the mandate of the National Education System Law Article 5 paragraph (2), "Citizens who have physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and social disabilities are entitled to special education." Thus, it is clear that the state guarantees the right to education for children with special needs (Muslim, 2020; Raihani, 2018; Suherman & Sulistyowati, 2009).

Of course, the needs of children with special education needs are the same as the needs of children in general, plus special treatment (Sheehy & Budiyanto, 2014: 1143-1161). Special education and special attention should be the right that they get (Sheehy & Budiyanto, 2015: 469-485). Furthermore, through related agencies and ministries, the government must implement the mandate of this Law properly.

The reality in the field does not reflect the integrity of the implementation of the policy, obtained by the 2016 BPS National Socio-Economic survey data, that out of a total of 4.6 million children who are not in school, 1 million of them are children with special needs (BPS, 2016). Even more ironic, in Medan, some children with special needs were found who had to clown amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the protection of the rights to life and education rights of children with special needs in Medan was quite questionable. Children who ideally study in classrooms get eligible learning facilities instead of a clown on the streets of Medan City. It is as described by Assingkily & Sit. (2020), that during the Covid-19 pandemic, children, as well as parents, began to get frustrated with the prospect of an online education world. For this reason, since childhood, the children have tried to earn money to survive in the city.

North Sumatra is one of the regions declared and inaugurated as an inclusive education province since 2015 (Gracia, 2015). Responding to this inauguration, the North Sumatra government issued a policy related to inclusive education for children with special needs in the region (Governor of North Sumatra Regulation, 2016). In the North Sumatra Governor Regulation number 32 of 2019, the procedures for the admission of new students for special education in North Sumatra Province are regulated in such a way. Among them, in the second part, Chapter on Procedures and Mechanisms for Admission of New Students, Article 3, it is explained that the new student admission system is divided into 3 (three) pathways, namely the zoning route, the achievement pathway, and the parent/guardian transfer path. At the same time, the vocational high school does not use a distance zoning system.

In connection with the implementation of policies and the reality of Children with Special Needs who clown in Medan City, Grindle (1980), in his theory, states that the successful implementation of a policy can be identified from two main factors, namely content of policy and context of implementation. This theory will be used to analyze data related to education insurance for children with special needs in the Covid-19 era by looking at the case of children with special needs who clown on the streets of Medan City.

Relevant research related to "clown children" and education assurance for children with special needs has been studied from various aspects by previous researchers. Among other things, research by Assingkily & Sit. (2020), which informs about the phenomenon of the rampant "clown children" on the streets of Medan during the Covid-19 era. Sitompul's (2017) research describes a review of social and legal aspects of children who work as clowns. This is part of the government's lack of seriousness in protecting children's learning rights through related agencies.

In line with the research above, Husna, Yunus, & Gunawan (2019) emphasize that education is an absolute right that every child must obtain with special needs. Even in the legal dimension, the

state is obliged to facilitate it (Rachman, 2020). Zulfatri (2015) views education as an effort to create social interaction for "clown children".

This study aims to analyze the problems that have not been studied before, namely, the inconsistencies between particular education policies for special needs children and their implementation and the reality of those who clutter the streets of Medan City in the Covid-19 pandemic. Through this research, it is hoped that it can become a scientific treasure regarding the implementation of special education policies for children with special needs and can be used as a reference source for the North Sumatra government, especially Medan City, in following up on children's education (including children with special needs) during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the case of the clown crew will be immediately resolved by the applicable policy.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The case study method "deliberately" was chosen because it is appropriate to discuss and explore contemporary matters (Yin, 2009: 25). This research aims to analyze the phenomenon of children with special needs clowning on the streets of Medan City using the Merilee S. Grindle policy theory to analyze the policy content and implementation of the policies of the North Sumatra provincial government regarding education assurance for children with special needs. This research was conducted from June to December 2020.

The data was collected using individual in-depth interviews, either directly with informants or indirectly (via smartphone media). Participant observation looks at the condition of children with special needs clowning on the streets of Medan City and documentation studies as data that "perfects" the validity of the research. This effort is carried out regarding health protocols, so alternatives via WhatsApp and other social media platforms are constructive in the data collection process. The data were analyzed using (1) data reduction techniques, namely sorting out the data needed in the study, while data or information that was "a little" far from the focus of the research was filtered; (2) data display, this stage, furthermore, the outline of the research flow is shown in Figure (1) below.

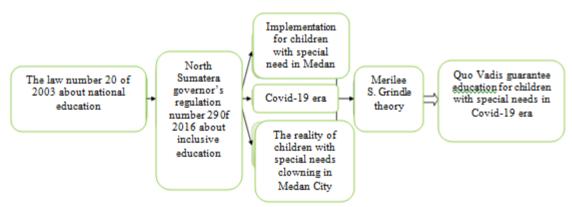


Figure 1. Research Flow (Logical Framework).

Participants in this study were HR (children with special needs who clowns), NZP & GD (2 "Clown Boys", HR's friends), ANT (HR's friend who toured the clown), Mrs. RN (Medan City resident), Mrs. MR (City Citizen). The selection of participants was carried out according to the demographics of the research background, and participants stated that they were willing to provide the data needed in this study. The following is information on participant data.

Table 1. Name of Informant			
No.	Full name	Age	Information
1.	HR	16 years	Children with special needs (speech
			impaired)
2.	NZP	12 years	HR's friend, "Clown Boy"
		old	
3.	GD	10 years	HR's friend, "Clown Boy"
4	ANT	27 years	Senior HR Goes Around Clowning
5.	MRs. RN	46 Years	Residents of Medan City
6.	MRs. MR	40 Years	Residents of Medan City

Guaranteeing the validity of the research data was carried out using triangulation techniques. Triangulation is done by comparing the results of interviews between one participant and another on the same theme (Creswell, 2009: 191). This technique is intended to capture data with various methods and methods, furthermore by crossing the information obtained so that the data obtained is more complete and as expected.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The identity of the "Clown Boy" category of children with special needs in Medan City

HR is a 16-year-old child with special needs (speech impaired) who resides in Medan. Children of his age would undoubtedly attend class X high school level/equivalent, in contrast to HR, who, after graduating from SDLB, had to work odd jobs, including clown during the covid-19 pandemic.

According to the narrative of Nazla (HR's friend), "...HR works together with us every day, become a clown child at traffic light around Merdeka field (Merdeka walk). Even though HR can't talk, so, he was always accompanied by one of our bosses to go around looking for money." It is clear from NZP's presentation that HR is a speech-impaired child who works as a "clown boy" traveling around every day.

Based on the information above, it is known that HR is the only son of the AR and BSW pair. Sixteen years old and has not graduated from elementary school. He worked odd jobs with ANT and started clowning in early March 2020. HR is also a child with speech impairment (a child with special needs). Since childhood, due to the low family economy, HR has had to be independent in finding snacks and living expenses even though he was a child with disabilities with a speech impairment.

When asked directly, HR, represented by ANT who accompanied him, replied, "... HR has been working with the crew since he graduated from SDLB, we usually do odd jobs. But because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it seems that clowns are suitable to earn a fortune. Thank God, I can earn 70 thousand-80 thousand every day." On this basis, it is known that HR has been clowning since the Covid-19 pandemic as of March 2020, and has started to be followed by other friends since June 2020.

ANT knew that HR was the only child of the couple Mr. AR and Mrs. BSW. His parents also worked odd jobs every day, so that since she was young, HR was "required" to independently find snacks and his living expenses, including by clowning on the streets. Furthermore, ANT explained that HR only went to the elementary school level due to limited costs, and HR's experience of being bullied at school made him uncomfortable. In the interview excerpt, ANT had said, "... rather than HR being bullied at school. It is better that he just works with the crew. You can even get money."

Children with Special Needs Activities Clown on the Street of Medan City

Clowning is a "lucrative" job for children because every day, they can earn Rp. 70,000 up to Rp. IDR 80,000 just dancing on the streets of Medan, especially at traffic lights, gas stations, and other crowded places. According to the narrative from GD (one of the "clown children"), "... so this clown is not tired, it's just a matter of dancing. We rented the loudspeaker music and clown costumes from the boss." The job of clowning is seen as simple by children because it does not require special skills. Supports the narrative of GD, Assingkily & Sit. (2020) explains that "Clown Boys" is a lively job for children in Medan during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to NZP (one of the "clown child"), the tools needed by the "clown boy" for performance or actions are quite simple, namely costumes, small speakers, cans (a place for money that is offered when entertaining). Moreover, all the equipment is rented at once by the "clown boy" from their boss at a cost ranging from Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 80,000 according to the size of the costume being rented.

Mrs. MR, a resident of Medan City, said, "... this clown boy is very entertaining, the songs played are also familiar to children. It is not uncommon for us to give 5 thousand to 10 thousand when we feel entertained. Of course, one side is also sorry to see them because they are still children, Sir. "In line with that, Mrs. RN also said, "... yes we are sorry, Sir, see these children, they are still young and have to work to earn money, so I am happy to see them entertain and I also often take my children to see them perform."

Education Guarantee for Children with Special Needs

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System article 5 paragraph (2) reads, "Citizens who have physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and social disabilities are entitled to special education." It is evident in this policy that children with special needs get the same rights as other children, namely the right to receive special education.

Special education is a unique education service system for children with special needs (Mahabbati, 2014: 31-46). Furthermore, the development of this special education also applies to inclusive schools, namely schools that require children with special needs to be served at the closest school, in "normal" classes with their age friends (Praptiningrum, 2010; Herawati, 2016; Chamidah, 2010).

In an effort to implement the above policies, the Governor of North Sumatra issued Governor Regulation No. 29 of 2016 concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education in North Sumatra Province. This policy regulates the procedures and procedures for implementing inclusive education, both in regencies and cities in North Sumatra Province.

Ideally, the governor's regulation policy above will guarantee education for children with special needs in North Sumatra Province. From financing, they provide learning facilities, assistance in developing self-potential and skills, and the availability of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. It seems that the policy has not been fully implemented in North Sumatra. Based on information obtained from Anton, that HR is a Child with special needs with speech impairment who only has elementary education. After graduating from elementary school, Heri's family could not afford his education. Referring to the Law on the National Education System above, it is clear that children with special needs get special education rights. Furthermore, Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009 regulated the obligation for each district/city government to provide inclusive education for children with special needs (including disabled children) in education units in their area, at least one primary school level and one junior high school level.

Looking at the policies and cases above, it is understood that there are gaps in the implementation of these regulations. HR, who should be blessed with educational facilities, instead has to work as a clown on the streets of Medan City (red lights, gas stations, cafes, and other crowded locations

In line with the above statement, GD and NZP said, "... yes, besides us, there are also children who work differently. They are kinds of silver children in the Petisah area and hawkers in the Sukarame area. There is also someone like HR, who cannot talk, his name is Syukri." Furthermore, this statement further emphasizes that the implementation of Governor Regulation number 29 of 2016 has not been maximized in Medan City. Thus, children with disabilities or special needs do not get their rights in the form of education guarantees at the "learning age".

Based on the description above, it is understood that the implementation of special education does not run by the applicable policies. It is reflected in the crew members who work as clowns on the streets of Medan City. These children with special needs should receive unique services, special education, social security, and special treatment to meet their physical and psychological needs.

Pratiwi (2019) explained that every citizen has the right to education in Indonesia. This right includes children with special needs to receive special education (Kadir, 2015: 1-22). Assingkily & Sit. (2020) regretted the phenomenon of the rampant "clown boy" in Medan City. How come? Children who receive education rights and guarantees earn a living on sidewalks and around traffic lights. Oktadewi & Khairiyah (2018) said that education and life experiences greatly influence the child's growth and development phase. In welcoming the golden era of 1 (one) century of independence, Indonesia should promote education (Malihah, 2015; Darman, 2017; Manullang, 2013; Rokhman, F., Syaifudin, A., & Yuliati, 2014: 1161-1165). This is based on the belief that superior and competent human resources are obtained through education (Barrett, 1995: 70-71; Bastas & Altinay, 2019: 610-615), whether formal or informal. The same thing is termed by Darwin with the quote, "Survival of the Fittest," that people who survive the dynamics of life are adaptive (Twemlow, 2016: 497-509). Usman, Wicaksono, & Zainab (2020: 84-99) mentioned that someone adaptive in society and global society is educated.

As a metropolitan city, Medan ideally prepares a superior generation in the future (Lubis, Arsyad, Joni, & Irman, 2005). Ironically, the government did not respond to the advantages that were trying to achieve. This is reflected in the large number of children who work and do not go to school in Medan, ranging from "clown children" (Assingkily & Sit., 2020) and also the "silver child" (Tribun-Medan, 2020), including children with special needs.

In the discussion aspect, the cases of children with special needs who clown in Medan City are analyzed and the implementation of unique education guarantees for children with special needs by the Regulation of the Governor of North Sumatra No. 29 of 2016 concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education. The theory used to analyze this discussion refers to 2 (two) indicators of the successful implementation of Merilee S. Grindle's public policy, namely content of policy and context of implementation (Grindle, 1980).

Content of Policy

The content of the policy is divided into six parts (Grindle, 1980; Sudarto, 2016: 89-97; Ardiansyah, 2020), that is:

Target Group Interests

North Sumatra Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2016 concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education is a policy used as an essential reference in special education programs for children with special needs. This regulation is a policy that regulates the education delivery system to provide opportunities for every child of the nation, including children with special needs, to obtain the right to study and special educational facilities.

The above statement shows that the government guarantees education for children with special needs in Indonesia(Saputra, 2016; Hafiz, 2017: 9-15). Furthermore, Permendiknas no. 70 of 2009 stipulates the obligation to provide special education for children with special needs by each district/city. This policy is intended as a manifestation of the government in improving the quality of service and education for children with special needs in North Sumatra.

Benefit Type

The Governor of North Sumatra Regulation Number 29 of 2016 guarantees special education for children with special needs in North Sumatra. This commitment is a form of the government's follow-up after North Sumatra was designated as the Province of Inclusive Education. The benefits of this policy are to provide optimal special services to all children with special needs in the field of education, furthermore this is also intended as a form of government non-discrimination against every citizen in the area in the opportunity to obtain education, especially for children with physical or mental disabilities (Sakti, 2020). The issuance of the Regulation of the Governor of North Sumatra (Pergub Sumut) Number 29 of 2016 is also intended so that children with special needs do not "feel alone" and "be isolated." This is because children with special needs can also socialize with children in general at regular schools (not just special schools).

Desired Degree of Change

The policy contained in the North Sumatra Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2016 concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education is a follow-up to the North Sumatra Government from Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and Potential Intelligence and Special Talents.

The issuance of this regulation is expected to become the basic principle of the North Sumatra Provincial Education Office to follow up the equality of education in the North Sumatra region for special needs students. This rule also becomes the basic framework for further policies to provide quality education services for children with special needs (Solichin, 2015).

Before the issuance of the Pergub, the government of North Sumatra had already agreed that the region would be named one of the Provinces of Inclusive Education in Indonesia. Of course, this policy also addresses joint efforts in realizing quality education services to every child in North Sumatra, especially for children with special needs. So, children with special needs will feel more cared for and get the same opportunities as other children.

Decision-Making Location

The implementation of inclusive education can be carried out at educational institutions at every level (Laughter, 2019). Starting from early childhood education, primary education to upper secondary education, if sorted starting from early childhood education, elementary school, junior high school, to senior high school. This policy's primary duties and functions are divided into two ministries, namely (1) the Ministry of Education and Culture; and (2) the Ministry of Religion.

This policy is then followed up technically and adapted to the social culture of the district/city. The implementation of inclusive education at the provincial level is carried out by the Education and Culture Office of the Province of North Sumatra, which is then sent to the Medan City Education and Culture Office as a guide for the implementation of inclusive education at the city level.

Program Implementation

Regulation of the Governor of North Sumatra Number 29 of 2016 concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education. Article 7 explains that the regional government is responsible for providing exceptional tutors for participants with special needs, educational facilities for children with special needs, capacity building for teachers and education personnel in inclusive and special education units.

Resources Involved

The resources involved in implementing the North Sumatra Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2016 include classroom teachers, subject teachers (subject areas), special teaching teachers, education personnel, and other professional staff (such as; Psychologists, counseling teachers, therapists, and personnel. medical / paramedic). The involvement of this resource variable is intended to support the implementation of the North Sumatra Governor Regulation's program so that it runs effectively and efficiently.

Context of Implementation

North Sumatra Governor Regulation Number 29 of 2016 is a regional policy that follows up on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 regarding the implementation of inclusive education in North Sumatra Province. The main objective of this policy is to provide opportunities for all students who have physical, emotional, mental, and social disabilities or have the potential for intelligence and special talents to obtain quality education according to their needs and abilities (Handayani & Rahadian, 2013; Dewi, 2017). This policy was issued to realize North Sumatra as a "Province of Inclusive Education," respecting differences and not discriminating against all students with special needs.

This policy has been reported to every regency/city in North Sumatra by the Regional News of North Sumatra Province of 2016 Number 30. Likewise, the reality in the field shows things that to be inversely proportional to the policy. The children still found who do not receive education because of unaffordable costs, as experienced by HR (a resident of Medan), who since graduating from elementary school has to work to make ends meet, even amid the Covid-19 pandemic situation, he has to clown on the streets of Medan City.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the government did not issue a special policy intended for children with special needs in the educational aspect. This is also seen as causing many children to clown in the Covid-19 era, HR. This child with speech disorders (speech impairment) even clowns in the emergency of the Covid-19 pandemic, the reason his colleague is traveling around to make money and make ends meet.

The ironic things are that children with special needs, who should receive special treatment and special education, do not go to school and earn a living for themselves and their families. For this reason, special attention and regional policies from the Medan City government are needed in providing exceptional services to children with special needs as a follow-up form of the North Sumatra Governor Regulation No. 29 of 2016. Thus, similar cases can be minimized and resolved to welcome the golden era of the 1st century of the nation's independence with a superior, healthy and intelligent generation (Hamid, 2015).

Thus, the implementation of this policy is still quite questionable. The children with special needs who should receive special education and special services from the government were clowns with their limitations to communicate or speak.

CONCLUSION

The North Sumatra government has been very responsive to inclusive education for children with special needs in the region. This is indicated by two things, namely (1) the declaration of North Sumatra as the Province of Inclusive Education since 2015 and (2) the issuance of the Governor of North Sumatra No. 29 of 2016 concerning the Implementation of Inclusive Education as a follow-up to Permendiknas Number 70 of 2009. Likewise, the district/city government has not implemented this policy, particularly the case findings in Medan City. A child with a speech impairment named HR has to clown on the streets of Medan City since the Covid-19 pandemic, even though he has the right to get educational opportunities with peers and children his age at school.

Through this research, it is hoped to become a basic reference for other relevant and continued research with the same theme. This is because clown children who have special needs should receive extra attention from the government as a form of implementing the agreed policies. Thus, the description of this research becomes important as reading material, discussion material, and scientific literacy related to the phenomenon of implementing inclusive education for children with special needs in Indonesia.

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