



Educational service quality in Juvenile Detention Centers: inclusivity and national standards

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ABSTRACT

Education in the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) plays a strategic role in fulfilling children's fundamental rights while also serving as a means of rehabilitation and social reintegration. This study aims to analyze the quality of educational service provision across three JDCs, drawing on the National Education Standards and principles of inclusivity. The study employs a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers and educational program administrators and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that the fulfillment of educational standards, particularly in terms of curriculum, assessment, and facilities, remains partial. Major gaps were identified in responsive instructional practices, the use of learning media, and the evaluation of educational programs. Although educational access has been provided to all juveniles in care, adaptation to individual learning needs remains limited, and most educators lack specific competencies in inclusive education. These findings suggest that the implementation of inclusivity principles in LPKA remains largely formalistic, resulting in an educational provision that has not yet fully functioned as an effective rehabilitation mechanism due to systemic and institutional constraints. Therefore, more targeted policies, enhanced educator competencies, and stronger inter-agency collaboration are required.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 26 Aug 2025

Revised: 23 Dec 2025

Accepted: 28 Dec 2025

Publish online: 26 Jan 2026

Keywords:

inclusivity; JDC; Juvenile Detention Center; national education standards

Open access

Inovasi Kurikulum is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan di Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (LPKA) memiliki peran strategis sebagai pemenuhan hak dasar anak sekaligus sebagai sarana rehabilitasi dan reintegrasi sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kualitas penyelenggaraan layanan pendidikan di tiga LPKA dengan mengacu pada Standar Nasional Pendidikan dan prinsip inklusivitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan pengelola program pendidikan, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemenuhan standar pendidikan, khususnya pada aspek kurikulum, asesmen, dan sarana prasarana, masih bersifat parsial. Kesenjangan utama ditemukan pada praktik pembelajaran yang responsif terhadap kebutuhan peserta didik, pemanfaatan media pembelajaran, serta evaluasi program pendidikan. Meskipun akses pendidikan telah diberikan kepada seluruh anak binaan, penyesuaian terhadap kebutuhan individual masih terbatas dan sebagian besar pendidik belum memiliki kompetensi khusus dalam pendidikan inklusif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan prinsip inklusivitas di LPKA masih bersifat formalistik, sehingga penyediaan pendidikan belum sepenuhnya berfungsi sebagai mekanisme rehabilitasi yang efektif akibat keterbatasan sistemik dan kelembagaan. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan kebijakan yang lebih terarah, peningkatan kompetensi pendidik, serta penguatan kolaborasi antar lembaga.

Kata Kunci: *inklusivitas; Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak; LPKA; standar nasional pendidikan*

How to cite (APA 7)

Meggy, H., Santoso, Y. B., Fatimatuzzahra, A., Ningsih, K. N., Febrianti, A. Z., Fajrin, N. C., & Khairunnisa, W. A. (2026). Educational service quality in Juvenile Detention Centers: inclusivity and national standards. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 23(1), 153-166.

Peer review

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every child that must be fulfilled. This right applies not only to children living in ideal conditions, but also to children undergoing rehabilitation at Juvenile Detention Centers (JDC). Despite international and national legal frameworks guaranteeing educational access for children in conflict with the law, substantial implementation gaps persist globally, with detained youth experiencing significantly lower educational quality compared to their non-incarcerated peers (Ackerman et al., 2024; Barbot & Hein, 2021). Fulfilling the right to education for children in conflict with the law is a manifestation of the state's protection of children's human rights and an implementation of the principle of non-discrimination in education (Riyanto et al., 2021). The provision of education in JDC has a strategic function that goes beyond the academic dimension. Education in this context plays a crucial role in rehabilitation and social reintegration, as it enables children in care to reconstruct their identity, develop personal and social capacities, and reduce the risk of recidivism, with high-quality educational programming demonstrably reducing recidivism rates by 25-30% (Hughes et al., 2020; Hussein, 2024).

However, its implementation in the field still faces various structural and technical challenges. Several major obstacles, including limited facilities and infrastructure, a shortage of educators, and the lack of technical regulations to guide the operational implementation of education, exist. In a closed rehabilitation environment such as JDC, the application of an inclusive education approach is highly relevant and urgent. This approach is designed to ensure that all children, without exception, have access to equitable, quality education that is adaptive to individual needs, particularly critical given that 40-60% of detained youth present learning disabilities and special educational needs (Ochoa et al., 2021). Inclusive education aims to create a learning environment that values diversity and provides fair opportunities for all students to develop optimally (Sharma & Gill, 2024). Contemporary frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offer evidence-based strategies for creating flexible, responsive educational environments that accommodate diverse learner characteristics. Recent studies highlight the importance of teacher competence in implementing inclusive education.

Training programs such as the Needs Identification Method for Inclusive Design (NIMID) have been shown to enhance teachers' ability to identify students' individual needs and develop learning programs tailored to those needs (Gunawan et al., 2024). Integrating such training in JDC settings could strengthen the responsiveness of education to the diverse needs of children in care. Previous studies have generally focused more on general guidance aspects and psychosocial approaches to children in care. At the same time, analysis of the quality of educational services in JDC from the perspectives of inclusivity and compliance with educational regulations remains minimal, particularly research integrating compliance with the National Education Standards (NES) with substantive inclusivity evaluation (Prayitno et al., 2023). The urgency of this research is underscored by Indonesia's commitments under Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2012 tentang Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak and UU No. 35 Tahun 2014 tentang Perubahan atas UU No. 23 Tahun 2002 tentang Perlindungan Anak, which mandate quality education for detained youth. However, empirical evidence reveals substantial disparities between policy mandates and pedagogical practice (Rahma et al., 2025).

Despite growing scholarship on juvenile justice education, critical gaps persist. First, limited research integrates compliance assessment with established educational standards alongside substantive inclusivity evaluation—studies typically examine one dimension in isolation rather than holistically assessing both regulatory compliance and pedagogical responsiveness (Prayitno et al., 2023). Second, comparative institutional analysis examining how facility characteristics influence educational quality remains scarce, particularly in Southeast Asian contexts where juvenile justice systems operate under distinct legal and resource constraints (Craig et al., 2025). Third, empirical investigation of symbolic versus

substantive inclusivity in custodial settings is minimal, despite theoretical recognition of this crucial distinction. While policy frameworks increasingly mandate inclusive education, whether these mandates translate into genuinely responsive pedagogical practice remains underexplored (Gläser-Zikuda et al., 2024). In light of these research gaps, this paper aims to make an academic contribution through a comprehensive analysis of educational services in JDC.

This research examines both normative policies and empirical practices in the field to generate context-specific, actionable recommendations for improving the quality of educational services in special institutions for children. The study analyzes the extent to which educational services in three Indonesian JDCs comply with National Education Standards across eight dimensions—content, process, graduate competency, educator qualifications, infrastructure, management, financing, and assessment. Simultaneously, the research evaluates the substantive implementation of inclusivity principles beyond nominal policy compliance, examining whether detained youth receive genuinely responsive, individualized education or merely symbolic access that fails to address their diverse learning needs. The study addresses identified gaps through an integrated analysis of NES compliance and inclusivity implementation across three Indonesian JDCs of different classifications, providing comparative insights into the institutional factors shaping educational quality in constrained correctional environments.

The novelty of this research lies in three distinctive contributions. First, it pioneers the integrated application of NES compliance assessment and inclusivity evaluation in JDC contexts, a comprehensive quality framework previously absent in Southeast Asian research. Second, it provides comparative empirical data across multiple JDC classifications (Class I A, II B, II C), enabling identification of institutional factors that enable or constrain quality service delivery. Third, it empirically documents the distinction between symbolic and substantive inclusivity in custodial educational settings, revealing whether educational provision genuinely serves rehabilitative functions or remains performatively compliant but functionally inadequate. By examining disconnects between policy mandates and implementation realities, this research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical knowledge supporting juvenile justice reform in Indonesia and comparable contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework: Inclusive Education in Juvenile Detention Contexts

Inclusive education has evolved beyond disability-focused interventions to encompass comprehensive pedagogical frameworks ensuring equitable access and meaningful participation for all learners, regardless of ability, background, or circumstance (Coker, 2020; Prayitno et al., 2023). In juvenile detention settings, this principle assumes critical importance given the disproportionate prevalence of learning disabilities (40-60%), mental health challenges, and interrupted schooling among incarcerated youth (Park et al., 2022; Pasmawati et al., 2024). Contemporary scholarship identifies four essential dimensions of inclusive education applicable to custodial environments. First, accessibility requires eliminating not only physical barriers but also administrative, linguistic, and pedagogical obstacles preventing enrollment and meaningful participation (Noorman & Brancale, 2025). Second, meaningful participation demands student-centered approaches, collaborative learning structures, and youth voice in educational planning, particularly vital for populations who have experienced school exclusion and educational trauma (Putri et al., 2022).

Third, individualized adaptation involves tailoring curriculum, instruction, and assessment through frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasizes multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement (Priyadharsini & Mary, 2024). Fourth, systemic support for sustainability requires institutional commitment, adequately trained educators, appropriate resources, and inter-agency collaboration to sustain inclusive practices over the long term (Hollings, 2021). Critically,

research distinguishes between symbolic inclusivity (policy statements and universal enrollment) and substantive inclusivity (responsive pedagogy and the implementation of individualized support). Studies reveal that custodial education often exhibits the former but lacks the latter. Youth can physically access classrooms but cannot meaningfully engage in learning due to uniform instruction that ignores learner diversity (Reese, 2021). This gap between policy and practice poses a significant challenge that requires targeted intervention.

National Education Standards as Quality Benchmarks in Correctional Settings

Indonesia's National Education Standards establish eight interrelated quality dimensions: content, process, graduate competency, educator qualifications, infrastructure, management, financing, and assessment standards. These align with international quality frameworks, including quality education indicators, and reflect global consensus on essential educational provisions. However, SNP applications in non-traditional settings, such as juvenile detention centers, present unique challenges. The regulatory framework governing JDC education involves multiple, sometimes conflicting mandates: Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2012 tentang Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak, and various ministerial regulations (Najah et al., 2025). This jurisdictional complexity creates implementation ambiguity, with facilities unclear about requirements and lacking technical guidance for adapting mainstream standards to custodial contexts. International research demonstrates that regulatory fragmentation directly impacts educational quality in facilities under clear educational oversight, with significantly higher teacher qualifications, instructional quality, and student outcomes than in jurisdictions with regulatory fragmentation (Ochoa et al., 2021).

Educational Services in Juvenile Detention: Implementation Challenges

The fulfillment of educational rights for detained children, grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and operationalized through instruments such as the Beijing Rules and the Havana Rules, continues to face persistent implementation gaps worldwide. Research on Indonesian JDCs reveals substantial barriers, including insufficient facilities, educator shortages, and the absence of technical regulations that translate legal mandates into operational practice (Sitorus & Simamora, 2025). These challenges parallel international patterns documented across diverse contexts. Comparative studies demonstrate consistent obstacles: inadequate numbers of qualified educators with specialized training, limited educational resources and outdated curricula, insufficient needs assessment and individualized programming, and weak linkages between detention education and post-release opportunities. Significantly, even when educational services nominally exist, quality varies dramatically with teacher-student ratios, instructional hours, and the implementation of evidence-based practice, differing substantially across facilities (Karatoprak et al., 2021; Craig et al., 2025). Educational quality during detention directly predicts post-release outcomes. Longitudinal research shows that high-quality, individualized educational programming reduces recidivism rates by 25-30% and significantly improves post-release school enrollment and employment (Jornevald et al., 2024). Conversely, poor educational quality strongly predicts educational disengagement after release (Staikova et al., 2024). These findings underscore that education in JDCs must transcend nominal provision to become a substantive, responsive intervention addressing cognitive, emotional, and social development.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative case study design to examine educational service delivery in JDCs. This approach is well-suited to capturing institutional dynamics and educators' lived experiences within constrained correctional environments. The case study design enables in-depth exploration of how educational policies translate into practice across different JDC contexts, revealing both compliance patterns and implementation barriers (Strijker et al., 2020). The research proceeded systematically through six phases (see **Figure 1**).

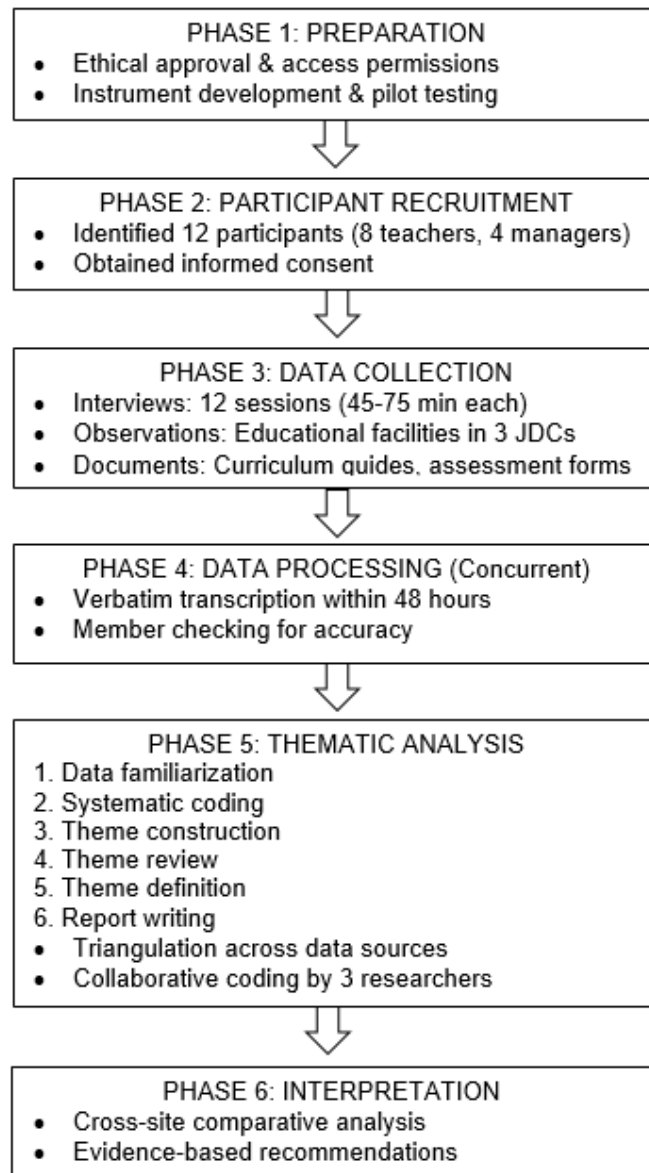


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram
Sources: Research 2025

Three JDCs were purposively selected to represent institutional diversity: JDC Class I A (a higher-classification facility with extensive partnerships and formal schooling), JDC Class II B (a mid-level facility with moderate resources that utilizes equivalency programs), and JDC Class II C (a lower-classification facility that combines equivalency and special education services). This purposive sampling enables comparative analysis of how classification level and resource availability influence educational outcomes.

Participants comprised 12 individuals across the three sites: 8 classroom teachers actively delivering instruction and 4 educational program managers coordinating services and partnerships. Inclusion criteria required at least 6 months of experience in their role, direct involvement in educational planning or delivery, and voluntary informed consent. This criterion-based approach ensures data collection from information-rich sources with substantial knowledge of both policy frameworks and implementation realities.

Data collection occurred between August and November 2025 through three methods. Primary data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews lasting 45-75 minutes, conducted in private settings to ensure confidentiality. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim within 48 hours. The interview protocol examined two dimensions: the implementation of Indonesia's eight National Education Standards (content, process, graduate competency, educator qualifications, infrastructure, management, financing, assessment), and inclusivity across four principles (accessibility, meaningful participation, individualized adaptation, systemic support, and sustainability). Supplementary data included non-participant observations of educational facilities and document analysis of curriculum guides, lesson plans, and assessment forms.

Data analysis employed thematic analysis following a reflexive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This method enables systematic pattern identification while remaining flexible to emergent insights not predetermined by theoretical frameworks. Analysis proceeded through six iterative stages: familiarization through repeated transcript reading, systematic line-by-line coding identifying meaningful segments, collation of codes into preliminary themes, review of themes against the dataset, precise definition of theme scope, and organized reporting with illustrative quotes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Analysis was conducted collaboratively by three researchers through regular meetings to resolve coding discrepancies and enhance interpretive rigor through multiple perspectives.

Trustworthiness was enhanced through multiple strategies: credibility through prolonged engagement with the data, member checking, and triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents; transferability through thick description of contexts and procedures; dependability through systematic documentation in audit trails; and confirmability through reflexive journaling that acknowledges researcher perspectives. The research adhered to rigorous ethical standards. Institutional ethical approval was obtained from the university research ethics committee, and formal permissions from the Directorate General of Corrections were obtained prior to site access. All participants provided written informed consent emphasizing voluntary participation, confidentiality protections, and the explicit right to withdraw. Participant confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms and secure data storage. Throughout the process, sensitivity to the vulnerable population of detained youth was maintained, ensuring that research-generated knowledge improved services without institutional disruption.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Findings

This section presents findings addressing two research objectives: analyzing compliance with the NES across three Indonesian JDCs and evaluating substantive inclusivity implementation. The results reveal significant disparities in educational quality across facilities, with partial compliance with certain standards and substantial gaps in pedagogical responsiveness and individualized support. While education is nominally accessible to all detained youth, genuine inclusive practice remains largely symbolic rather than substantive.

Table 1. Implementation of 8 National Education Standards (NES) in Three JDC

National Education Standard (NES)	JDC Class I A	JDC Class II B	JDC Class II C
Content Standard	Yes	Yes	Yes
Process Standard	Yes	No	Yes
Assessment Standard	Yes	Yes	Yes
Educator and Education Personnel Standard	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infrastructure and Facilities Standard	Yes	No	No
Management Standard	Yes	No	Yes
Financing Standard	Yes	No	No
Graduate Competency Standard	Yes	No	Yes

Sources: Research Data, 2025

Table 1 presents a comparative snapshot of NES implementation across the three JDCs, using binary indicators (Yes/No) to indicate whether basic structures or procedures exist for each standard. Implementation patterns vary considerably: JDC Class I A demonstrates the most comprehensive coverage (7 of 8 standards), JDC Class II C shows moderate implementation (6 of 8 standards), while JDC Class II B exhibits the weakest compliance (4 of 8 standards). Notably, content, assessment, and educator standards are addressed across all facilities, suggesting these represent baseline requirements. Conversely, infrastructure, management, and financing standards show substantial variation, reflecting differences in resource allocation and external partnerships. Critically, "Yes" indicators denote the presence of basic structures, not quality or effectiveness, a distinction subsequent qualitative analysis reveals as highly significant. The findings demonstrate that facility classification and partnership models substantially influence educational service quality, with diversified funding sources (as seen in JDC Class I A) enabling more consistent programming.

Detailed Findings on NES Implementation

Educators and administrators across all three facilities demonstrated general awareness of NES's existence, but understanding of specific implementation requirements for correctional contexts was limited. Most educators reported never receiving training on NES applications in JDCs, relying instead on external education partners for guidance. As one teacher participant (B) noted,

"We know there are standards we should follow, but we have never had specific training on how to apply them here,"

This training deficit directly compromises capacity to translate standards into effective practice, consistent with research documenting that professional development gaps are among the most pervasive barriers to quality correctional education (Leone & Wruble, 2015).

1. **Content Standards: Curriculum and Planning.** All three JDCs implemented a curriculum, yet significant variation existed in the types and levels of adaptation. JDC Class I A utilized a national curriculum through open school partnerships without modification for correctional contexts. JDC Class II B employed equivalency programs (Packages A, B, C) with minimal institutional capacity for adaptation. JDC Class II C demonstrated a more flexible approach combining equivalency with special education guidelines. However, across all sites, learning planning documents rarely reflected contextual adaptation or individualized needs. Curriculum replication without adaptation contradicts evidence that detained youth characterized by learning disabilities, interrupted schooling, and educational trauma

require specialized, responsive programming (Alnaji, 2022). Moreover, the determination of appropriate instructional methods and media suited to student characteristics was frequently omitted, with minimal use of interactive or adaptive materials. This finding aligns with international research documenting that correctional education often replicates mainstream approaches without addressing learners' distinctive needs (Azamfirei et al., 2025).

- 2. Process Standards: Instructional Delivery.** Learning activities were conducted face-to-face with stated emphasis on practical skills and character development. However, instructional frequency varied dramatically: JDC Class I A operated Monday-Friday following mainstream schedules. JDC Class II C offered limited programming (Monday-Wednesday for non-formal; Friday-Saturday for formal). JDC Class II B provided only approximately 2 meetings monthly, wholly inadequate for meaningful educational progress. Pedagogical approaches remained predominantly lecture-based despite widespread recognition of their limitations for engaging diverse learners (Dixit et al., 2024). Teachers acknowledged the dominance of traditional methods in their classrooms. When describing typical instructional practices, another teacher participant (A) noted that lessons primarily involve explaining content verbally while students record information, stating,

"We mostly just explain things and have them take notes,"

This pedagogical conservatism contradicts both NES process standards emphasizing interactive learning and inclusive education principles requiring differentiation (Woods & Copur-Gencturk, 2024).

- 3. Graduate Competency Standards.** All JDCs maintained documented graduate competency standards developed collaboratively with guidance departments. However, programs to develop these competencies remained generic rather than individualized, lacking a systematic structure. Without individualized learning pathways and progress monitoring, even well-defined standards remain aspirational for many detained youth.
- 4. Educator and Personnel Standards.** Most educators had relevant educational backgrounds and met basic credentialing requirements. However, critical gaps existed in specialized preparation for correctional contexts and inclusive pedagogy. The vast majority lacked training in special education, trauma-informed instruction, or teaching students with learning disabilities, competencies essential given the high prevalence of special educational needs among incarcerated youth (Ødegård & Solberg, 2024). One teacher participant (C) acknowledged,

"I am qualified to teach my subject, but I have never had training on working with kids who have learning problems,"

Opportunities for ongoing professional development remained severely limited, with training rarely addressing specialized competencies for correctional education.

- 5. Infrastructure and Facilities Standards.** All JDCs provided basic facilities, including clean classrooms, adequate furniture, textbooks, and unobstructed circulation routes. However, significant deficits existed: several classrooms lacked adequate lighting and ventilation; teaching aids beyond basic materials were absent; and digital devices or interactive technology were entirely prohibited based on security concerns. Most critically, facilities lacked assistive technologies or adaptive equipment to support learners with disabilities, as well as screen readers, adjustable furniture, and sensory-friendly spaces. This absence renders inclusivity rhetorical, as physical and pedagogical accessibility remain fundamentally compromised.
- 6. Management Standards.** All facilities-maintained work plan documents, but implementation, monitoring, and evaluation were inconsistent and rarely data-driven. Decision-making involved educational partners and administrators, but coordination remained largely informal. One participant (Manager) explained that coordination meetings are conducted on an ad hoc basis, without a regular

schedule or a formally established structure. Absence of robust management systems prevents evidence-based program refinement and creates vulnerability when personnel change.

7. **Financing Standards.** Funding emerged as a critical differentiator. Most JDCs rely primarily on Ministry of Education funding, subject to government-wide budget efficiency measures. Multiple participants identified funding constraints as major barriers. However, JDC Class I A, operating through multiple collaborative partnerships that extend beyond ministry funding, experienced fewer severe constraints and maintained more consistent programming. This finding suggests that partnership diversification is a pragmatic strategy for improving resources within current fiscal realities, though it requires institutional capacity for relationship management.
8. **Assessment Standards.** All facilities conducted periodic assessments of learning outcomes, with the results formally incorporated into the rehabilitation monitoring team's decisions regarding advancement to less restrictive programming and sentence reductions. This structured assessment-to-decision pipeline creates meaningful consequences for educational engagement, potentially motivating participation (Someki & Allen, 2021). However, the assessment primarily focused on summative rather than formative evaluation, thereby limiting instructional adjustment and representing a missed opportunity to support diverse learners through responsive pedagogy (Fahim et al., 2021).

Implementation of Inclusivity Principles

Beyond NES compliance, findings reveal concerning patterns in inclusivity implementation across four dimensions.

1. **Accessibility.** All JDCs provided educational access without explicit discrimination based on offense type, age, or social status, and both formal and equivalency programs enrolled students without categorical exclusions. However, accessibility extended only to physical presence, not meaningful pedagogical access. Administrative barriers, including the lack of educational records, credit transfer complications, and inflexible scheduling, prevented appropriate placement. More fundamentally, the absence of adaptive materials, assistive technologies, and differentiated instruction meant students with learning disabilities could physically attend but could not meaningfully access the content. Genuine inclusion requires "extending what is ordinarily available" through pedagogical responsiveness, not merely removing explicit discriminatory barriers.
2. **Meaningful Participation.** Evidence of student voice, collaborative learning, or participatory educational planning was minimal. Instructional delivery remained uniformly teacher-centered and lecture-based. One Participant (B) recounted a student comment:

"We just sit and listen. Nobody asks what we think,"

Educational planning occurred entirely among administrators and teachers, without documented student involvement, despite the literature demonstrating the benefits of participatory planning for youth who experienced educational marginalization (Alnaji, 2022).

3. **Individualized Adaptation.** This represents the most significant deficit in inclusivity. Despite the high prevalence of learning disabilities among detained youth, instruction remained uniformly structured with minimal differentiation. Teachers primarily came from partner organizations and mainstream schools, with the vast majority lacking special education backgrounds. When asked about adapting instruction, one teacher (C) replied,

"I try to explain things more than once, but I do not really know how to do more than that,"

Classrooms lacked adaptive media, assistive technologies, or individualized education plans. While informal accommodations were provided (extra time, simplified materials), they remained ad hoc rather than systematic. This contradicts Indonesian law mandating individualized education plans for students with special needs and international evidence that diverse learners benefit substantially from differentiated instruction (Andriana et al., 2025).

4. **Systemic Support Sustainability.** Substantial deficits existed in institutional commitment, trained educators, resources, and inter-agency collaboration necessary for maintaining inclusive practices. Educator training in inclusive pedagogy remained minimal, resources for adaptive supports were largely absent, and monitoring systems for inclusivity were underdeveloped. Collaboration between JDCs, educational partners, and community services remained weak and informal. One participant (Manager) acknowledged,

"A lot depends on personal relationships,"

Without systematic partnerships, educational programming remains fragile and vulnerable to disruption, consistent with international research identifying weak post-release linkages as a pervasive challenge.

Discussion

Integrating findings across NES compliance and inclusivity evaluation reveals a consistent pattern: educational services demonstrate partial compliance with formal standards, but substantial gaps exist between stated commitments and implemented practices. Inclusivity remains largely symbolic in policy statements and reflected in universal enrollment, but absent from pedagogical approaches, curricular adaptations, and individualized support systems that would render inclusion substantive and meaningful. This symbolic substantive gap reflects several interrelated factors. First, inadequate educator preparation in special education and inclusive pedagogy limits teachers' capacity to implement responsive instruction. Second, resource constraints create structural barriers to individualized programming. Third, weak management systems prevent the systematic identification of inclusivity gaps and the evidence-based refinement of policies. Fourth, regulatory ambiguity surrounding educational standards in correctional contexts creates implementation uncertainty.

Contribution and Significance. This research advances knowledge in three ways. First, it pioneers integrated assessment of NES compliance and inclusivity in JDC contexts, a comprehensive framework previously absent in Southeast Asian research. While previous studies examined either rights fulfillment or program effectiveness in isolation, this research provides a holistic quality assessment combining regulatory compliance with pedagogical evaluation. Second, comparative institutional analysis reveals that facility characteristics, particularly resource availability and partnership diversification, substantially influence educational quality, often more than formal policy frameworks (Juariyah et al., 2025). Third, empirical documentation of symbolic versus substantive inclusivity challenges assumptions that rights fulfillment equals quality education, revealing that detained youth's educational needs remain fundamentally unmet despite legal mandates. The findings align with international research documenting persistent gaps between juvenile correctional education policy and practice across diverse contexts (Zdoupas & Laubenstein, 2024).

However, this study reveals Indonesia-specific dimensions: regulatory complexity arising from multiple legal frameworks requires policy clarification, and partnership diversification models (particularly at JDC Class I A) suggest pragmatic strategies for improving services within resource constraints, relevant to lower-middle-income countries where rapid increases in correctional education funding may be unlikely.

Findings generate evidence-based recommendations: 1) regulatory clarification through technical guidelines specifying NES application to JDCs; 2) comprehensive educator professional development in trauma-informed instruction and inclusive pedagogy; 3) targeted investment in adaptive learning resources and assistive technologies; 4) robust evaluation systems using systematic data collection and evidence-based program refinement; and 5) formalized inter-agency partnerships strengthening educational continuity upon release. These interventions require coordinated action across policy, practice, and resource-allocation levels, grounded in the recognition that quality, inclusive education represents both a human rights imperative and a strategic investment in rehabilitation and recidivism reduction.

CONCLUSION

This study examined educational service quality in three Indonesian Juvenile Detention Centers through an integrated analysis of compliance with the NES and the implementation of inclusivity. The findings reveal a critical gap between policy and practice: while educational services demonstrate partial regulatory compliance, they fail to provide genuinely inclusive, responsive education. NES implementation varies substantially across facilities, with significant deficits in pedagogical processes, infrastructure adaptation, and systematic management despite nominal compliance in curriculum and assessment. More critically, inclusivity remains symbolic rather than substantive. Detained youth—disproportionately characterized by learning disabilities and educational trauma—can physically access classrooms but cannot meaningfully access learning. Teachers lack special education training, instruction remains uniformly lecture-based, and adaptive technologies are absent. This disconnect between policy rhetoric and pedagogical reality means educational services meet minimum legal requirements while failing to address actual learning needs. The research demonstrates that institutional factors, particularly resource availability and diversification of partnerships, can influence educational quality more than formal policies. This challenges the assumption that legal mandates ensure quality education, revealing that rights fulfillment does not necessarily translate into effective implementation. Moving forward requires coordinated action across five areas: regulatory clarification through technical guidelines specifying NES application in correctional contexts, mandatory professional development in trauma-informed and inclusive pedagogy, targeted investment in adaptive learning resources, robust data-driven evaluation systems, and formalized inter-agency partnerships to support educational continuity upon release. Only through substantive transformation beyond symbolic compliance can Indonesian JDCs fulfill their constitutional commitment to provide genuinely rehabilitative education. This represents both a human rights imperative and a strategic investment in youth rehabilitation, recidivism reduction, and social justice.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The research team would like to express our deepest gratitude to all parties who have contributed to the implementation of this research, especially to the teachers, educators, and education administrators at JDC Class I A, JDC Class II B, and JDC Class II C who have been willing to spare their time, provide information, and share their experiences openly during the data collection process. Without the support, openness, and cooperation from various parties at the three LPKAs, this research would not have been successfully carried out. We hope that the results of this research will contribute positively to the development of more inclusive, adaptive, and meaningful educational services for children in care at all JDCs across Indonesia.

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