



## Strategic Management of Inclusive Educational Leadership in Teacher Career Development

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### Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the role of strategic management in inclusive educational leadership as an effort to support teacher career development. The study focuses on how principals, as strategic leaders, are able to design, implement, and evaluate inclusive policies that impact teacher competency and professionalism. The research method used was a descriptive qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies in several inclusive schools. The results indicate that inclusive educational leadership based on strategic management can create a collaborative work culture, increase teacher motivation, and expand access to professional development programs. Effective strategies include ongoing career planning, individualized needs-based training, and support for a fair reward system. The implications of this study confirm that the application of strategic management in inclusive leadership not only strengthens teacher capacity but also builds an adaptive, participatory, and equitable education system for all parties within the school environment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Theoretically, inclusive educational leadership is understood as a leadership style that emphasizes cooperation, fairness, and empowerment of all school members, including teachers (Stavrou & Kafa, 2024; Wang, Deng, & Tian, 2022). In strategic management theory, leaders are expected to be able to create targeted plans and focus on human resource development. However, in reality, there remains a gap between theory and practice (Boselie & van der Heijden, 2024; Malik, Budhwar, Mohan, & NR, 2023). Many inclusive schools lack a clear leadership strategy to support teacher career development (DeMatthews, Serafini, & Watson, 2021; Khaleel, Alhosani, & Duyar, 2021). Principals often focus solely on administrative matters and fail to fully implement strategic management principles (Agus, Rahmatillah, & Andayani, 2025). According to a 2023 report from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, approximately 60% of teachers in inclusive schools have never received ongoing training tailored to their career needs (Arifin & Agoro, 2025; Hefniy & Diana, 2025). This indicates a lack of balance between strategic leadership theory and practice in schools (Qushwa, 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to examine how strategic management within inclusive leadership can be applied to create an environment that supports teacher professional

development (Husna & Andayani, 2024; Samsul, 2025).

In the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, teachers face high professional demands, while support from school management remains limited (Kurniawati, 2021; Triyanto et al., 2023). Many principals do not yet understand the importance of strategic planning to support teacher career development in environments with diverse student needs (Gojali, Hidayah, Aniati, & Baharun, 2024). Observations in several inclusive schools in Central and West Java show that teachers often work without planned direction or support. Training and mentoring activities for teachers are still conducted sporadically and not aligned with needs. Furthermore, the reward system for high-performing teachers is not yet optimal. This situation indicates that inclusive leadership is often understood merely as an attitude of respect for differences, rather than as a management strategy that supports teacher careers (Mundiri, Sain, & Khomairohtusshiyamah, 2025; Tohet, 2024). Therefore, inclusive leadership is needed that is not only grounded in humanitarian values but also complemented by strategic planning to ensure teacher career development is effective and equitable (Ummah, n.d.).

Previous research has shown that inclusive leadership and strategic management both play a crucial role in improving educational quality. (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022; Van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022) state that inclusive leadership can create a work environment that supports diversity and collaboration. Meanwhile, (Mahdi & Nassar, 2021; Masnawati & Darmawan, 2022) emphasizes that strategic leadership helps improve the capabilities of human resources in schools. However, research combining these two approaches in the context of teacher career development is rare. Many studies only address one aspect of inclusive leadership from a social perspective, or strategic management from an administrative perspective. Therefore, this study seeks to combine the two by examining how principals, as inclusive leaders, can use strategic management principles to design teacher career development policies and practices. In this way, the research findings are expected to enrich educational leadership theory and provide practical examples that can be applied in inclusive schools in Indonesia.

The novelty of this research lies in its perspective, which combines the concepts of strategic management and inclusive leadership to build a sustainable teacher career development system. Previously, research on inclusive leadership has focused primarily on empathy and social justice, while the strategic aspect has been rarely addressed. This study observes that inclusive leadership is not only about accepting differences, but also about how principals can create planned strategies to develop teacher potential. The success of inclusive education depends not only on good intentions but also on the leader's managerial skills in designing clear and sustainable career development programs. With this approach, the research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to building professional, inclusive, and progress-oriented school leadership.

Based on this background, this study seeks to answer the main question: How can the application of strategic management in inclusive educational leadership support teacher career development in inclusive schools? This question covers strategies, leadership roles, and their impact on improving teacher professionalism. This study is based on the belief that the success of teacher career development is largely determined by the extent to which the principal applies the principles of strategic management in an inclusive manner. With good planning, implementation involving all parties, and fair evaluation, the principal can create a work environment that supports teacher career

growth. Therefore, strategic management in inclusive leadership functions not only as an administrative tool but also as a leadership approach that fosters a culture of continuous learning, strong collaboration, and fairness for all teachers in inclusive schools.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth information on the experiences, perspectives, and strategies of inclusive leadership in schools. The case study design helps researchers understand the real-world situation and the relationship between strategic management, leadership, and teacher career development in an inclusive education environment. This method allows researchers to directly observe how the principal carries out his or her role and how this impacts teacher professional development.

The research was conducted at Jannatus Sholihin PAUD, Situbondo, East Java. This school was chosen because it implements inclusive education principles and has students with diverse backgrounds and abilities. Furthermore, the school actively develops teacher potential through internal training, despite limited resources. This location was deemed appropriate because it reflects the real-world conditions of an inclusive school striving to implement strategic management in leadership. By researching this school, researchers hope to identify good practices that can serve as examples for other educational institutions.

The sources of information for this study came from teachers, the principal, and school documents. Jannatus Sholihin PAUD teachers served as the primary respondents because they experienced the career development process firsthand. The principal, vice principal, and staff managing the training program served as key informants because they were involved in the planning and implementation of teacher development activities. Furthermore, researchers used internal school documents, such as work plans, training activity reports, and teacher evaluation data. To enrich the information, researchers also consulted other written sources, such as government regulations, online news, and journals related to inclusive leadership.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were conducted to directly observe how the principal led and how teachers worked in the classroom. Interviews were semi-structured, using flexible question guides to allow researchers to dig deeper into the context of the discussion. Researchers also distributed simple questionnaires to teachers to gather their views on the career development program. Meanwhile, documentation studies were used to complement and strengthen the interview and observation results with written data available at the school.

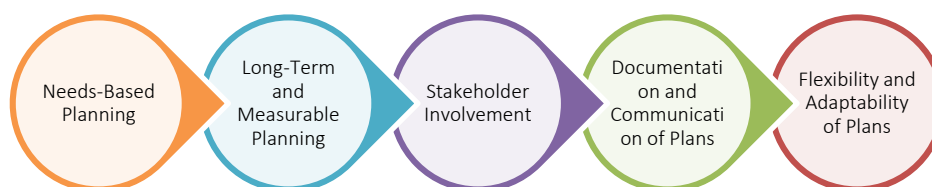
Data analysis was conducted following the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. During the data reduction stage, researchers selected and grouped important data according to themes such as leadership strategies and teacher career development. During the data presentation stage, the findings were organized into narrative form for easier reading and understanding. The final stage is verification, or drawing conclusions, by comparing various data sources and confirming with informants. Researchers used content analysis and interpretive analysis to understand the meaning behind the principal's actions and policies. Through this analysis, researchers hope to explain how strategic leadership can

support teacher career development at Jannatus Sholihin Early Childhood Education Center (PAUD) in Situbondo.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Strategic Planning for Teacher Career Development

Strategic planning for teacher career development at Jannatus Sholihin Early Childhood Education School (PAUD) in Situbondo is defined as a series of efforts by the principal to design systematic policies, programs, and steps to continuously improve teacher competency. The focus is on developing short-, medium-, and long-term plans tailored to teacher needs, including training, mentoring, and other professional development opportunities. The operationalization of this planning is evident in the annual work plan document, teacher training schedule, and competency improvement programs tailored to the characteristics of inclusive schools. In other words, strategic planning is not merely an administrative plan but also a concrete instrument for facilitating teacher career growth in a structured and inclusive manne



In an interview with the principal, the informant stated, "At the beginning of each year, we develop a teacher development plan, ranging from internal training to attending workshops outside of school. We also tailor the program to each teacher's individual needs." One teacher commented, "This plan helps me identify the steps I need to take to improve my competency, such as participating in specific training or mentoring." Researchers interpreted that the principal was aware of the importance of strategic planning, and teachers directly experienced its benefits in understanding their career development paths. This demonstrates the link between the planning created by the principal and teachers' perceptions of the direction of their professional development.

Based on field observations, researchers found a school work plan document that included a schedule for teacher training, mentoring, and performance evaluations. Furthermore, regular coordination was observed between the principal and teachers to discuss competency development needs. Researchers interpreted that this strategic planning was not merely a formality but was implemented in a participatory manner, with teachers given the opportunity to express their needs and aspirations. This observation supports interview data indicating that the strategic plan truly serves as a guideline for teacher career development.

Overall, data from interviews and observations indicate that strategic planning in inclusive educational leadership at Jannatus Sholihin Early Childhood Education (PAUD)

Situbondo focuses on developing systematic plans, based on teacher needs, and implemented in a participatory manner. The principal not only creates administrative plans but also ensures teachers understand their career development paths through training programs, mentoring, and regular evaluations. Thus, strategic planning serves as a primary tool to support teacher professional development in this inclusive school.

The pattern emerging from the data above demonstrates a clear relationship between strategic leadership and teacher career development. The principal plays an active role in designing the plan, teachers are involved in the process, and the program is implemented systematically. In other words, strategic planning at this school is participatory, sustainable, and needs-based, creating a consistent and structured pattern of teacher career support.

### Strategic Implementation and Inclusive Leadership

Strategic implementation and inclusive leadership at Jannatus Sholihin Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Situbondo are understood as the concrete implementation of teacher career development plans, while adhering to inclusive principles of equity, collaboration, and participation of all teachers. This implementation operationalizes training programs, mentoring, and teacher performance evaluations, which are systematic, ongoing, and needs-based. Inclusive leadership is implemented through teacher involvement in decision-making regarding development programs, as well as moral and professional support from the principal. In other words, strategic implementation is not merely administrative but also emphasizes leadership practices that encourage teachers to actively develop their competencies in accordance with the established strategic plan.

The following table for “Strategic Implementation and Inclusive Leadership” with columns for Observed Aspects, Observation Findings, and Sources/Documentation:

Observed Aspects	Observation Findings	Sources/Documentation
The Principal's Role in Strategy Implementation	The principal actively leads the implementation of the teacher development program, providing clear direction and supporting teacher participation.	Interview with the principal, field notes
Teacher Involvement in Decision-Making	Teachers are involved in evaluation and planning meetings, and their ideas and input are incorporated into school policies.	Staff meeting observations, teacher interviews
Team Collaboration and Internal Coordination	The teacher and staff team collaborates in designing development activities, sharing resources and experiences.	Classroom and activity observation notes, school program documents
Communication and Transparency	Information about the program, targets, and evaluations is communicated openly to all teachers.	School policy documents, teacher interviews
Flexibility in Strategy Implementation	The principal adapts teacher development strategies to individual needs and classroom conditions.	Observations of learning and mentoring activities, teacher interviews

In interviews, the principal stated, "I always invite teachers to discuss the type of training they will participate in, so that the program meets their needs." One teacher added, "In every mentoring session, the principal always listens to our aspirations and

adapts activities to each teacher's abilities and interests." The researchers interpreted this as the principal not only implementing the plan from a top-down perspective but also implementing a participatory approach that reflects inclusive principles. This demonstrates a strong relationship between strategic planning and leadership that actively engages teachers in their career development.

Observations indicate that training and mentoring activities are carried out routinely and on a schedule, with clear documentation and monitoring by the principal. Furthermore, active interaction between teachers and the principal is evident in designing follow-up actions based on mentoring outcomes. Researchers interpret this strategic implementation as consistent and supportive of an inclusive work environment, where teachers feel valued and have the space to participate in determining the direction of their professional development. These observations reinforce interview data that demonstrates the practical application of inclusive leadership.

Overall, the interview and observation data indicate that the strategic implementation and inclusive leadership at this school are systematic, participatory, and based on teacher needs. The principal not only executes the planned program but also actively engages teachers, listens to their aspirations, and adapts development activities to their abilities and interests. Thus, inclusive leadership serves as a means to ensure the effective and equitable implementation of the teacher career development strategy.

The patterns emerging from this data suggest that the success of the strategic implementation is closely linked to inclusive leadership practices. Teachers are involved in every stage of career development, activities are structured, and the principal provides consistent support. In other words, the strategic implementation at this school is participatory, sustainable, and responsive to teachers' needs, creating a work environment that supports professional growth and increases overall teacher motivation.

### **Evaluation, Monitoring, and Continuous Development**

Evaluation, monitoring, and continuous development at Jannatus Sholihin PAUD Situbondo are defined as a series of routine activities to assess the effectiveness of teacher career development programs, identify needs for improvement, and design appropriate follow-up actions. Operational activities include evaluating training outcomes, assessing teacher performance through classroom observations and portfolios, and periodically monitoring the implementation of development programs. Continuous development is carried out by adjusting the program based on evaluation results and teacher input, ensuring that the competency improvement process is dynamic and adaptive. In other words, these activities ensure that career development strategies do not stop at one stage but are continually updated to reflect teacher needs and the characteristics of inclusive schools.

In an interview, the principal stated, "At the end of each semester, we evaluate all teacher development programs, including mentoring and training, and then design improvement steps for the following semester." A teacher added, "The evaluation results are used to identify our strengths and weaknesses, so that the next development program is more tailored to our needs." The researcher interpreted this as a reflective mechanism that actively involves teachers, ensuring that each career development program can be tailored to each teacher's aspirations and abilities. This demonstrates the ongoing cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation, which is the core of inclusive strategic management.

Field observations revealed the existence of training activity evaluation records,

teacher performance monitoring sheets, and follow-up reports on development programs. The principal regularly held evaluation meetings with teachers to discuss monitoring results and formulate further development strategies. Researchers interpreted that evaluation and monitoring were carried out consistently, systematically, and participatory, supporting the creation of a culture of continuous learning in the school. This observation aligns with interview data, which showed that teachers were actively involved in the evaluation and program development process.

Overall, data from interviews and observations indicate that ongoing evaluation, monitoring, and development are core practices in inclusive leadership strategic management. The principal ensured that every development activity was evaluated, that monitoring results were used to improve the program, and that teachers were actively involved in the reflection and improvement process. Thus, these activities served not merely as administrative procedures but as strategic tools for systematic and sustainable teacher professional development.

The pattern emerging from this data suggests a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement. Evaluation and monitoring serve as the basis for continuous development. Teachers are given the space to assess and adapt, and the principal manages the process in a participatory manner. In other words, evaluation, monitoring, and continuous development at Jannatus Sholihin PAUD Situbondo are systematic, adaptive, and participatory, creating a work environment that supports effective and sustainable teacher career growth.

The results of this study on strategic planning for teacher career development indicate that the principal at Jannatus Sholihin Early Childhood Education (PAUD) Situbondo developed a systematic, needs-based plan, including training, mentoring, and regular evaluations. (Basri, Manshur, Zaini, & Suhermanto, 2024) who emphasized the importance of inclusive leadership in creating a collaborative learning environment that supports diversity. However, this study emphasizes a more specific strategic dimension, namely the link between clear planning and teacher career growth, which has not been widely discussed in previous literature. The implications of these findings suggest that strategic planning is not merely an administrative document but a concrete foundation for teacher professional development, which, when implemented consistently, can enhance teacher competence and motivation in inclusive schools.

Regarding strategic implementation and inclusive leadership, the data show that the principal actively involved teachers in decision-making and the implementation of development programs. This supports inclusive leadership theory, which emphasizes the participation and empowerment of all school members (Ataman, Sanjani, & Safitri, 2024). These findings highlight the alignment between inclusive leadership principles and strategic practice, where participatory implementation creates teacher satisfaction and engagement with development programs. The function of this implementation is to create a work environment that supports teacher professional growth. Dysfunction occurs when teacher engagement is low or the program does not meet needs, which can reduce motivation and development effectiveness.

Research related to evaluation, monitoring, and continuous development shows a consistent cycle between planning, implementation, and evaluation. This aligns with strategic management literature, which emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement (Bukhori & Zahro, 2025) in achieving organizational goals. These findings demonstrate a positive correlation between systematic monitoring and the effectiveness

of teacher career development. The underlying structure of this practice is a clear, participatory, and ongoing feedback system, allowing development programs to be continuously adjusted to meet teacher needs. Conversely, if monitoring is not carried out consistently, the structure supporting continuous development becomes weak, and teacher professional growth can be hampered (McLure & Aldridge, 2023).

Inclusive educational leadership combined with strategic management serves as a primary mechanism for supporting teacher careers (Nuraini, Jannah, & Meliana, 2025). Participatory implementation of strategies involving teachers creates intrinsic motivation, while evaluation and monitoring ensure program sustainability. Functionally, this improves teacher quality, professionalism, and school performance. Dysfunctionally, inaccurate implementation or weak evaluation can lead to a mismatch between programs and teacher needs, thus reducing the effectiveness of career development.

Overall, this study confirms that the success of teacher career development in inclusive schools depends not only on the good intentions of the leader, but also on the principal's strategic ability to plan, implement, and evaluate inclusive programs. These findings have important implications for educational practice: schools need to integrate inclusive leadership with strategic management to build an effective, sustainable, and equitable teacher development system. The emerging patterns suggest that planning structures, participatory implementation, and ongoing evaluation are key foundations for creating an inclusive work environment that supports teacher professional growth.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study on Strategic Management of Inclusive Educational Leadership in Teacher Career Development at Jannatus Sholihin Early Childhood Education School in Situbondo, the main findings indicate that the success of teacher career development is highly dependent on the application of strategic management principles integrated with inclusive leadership. Principals who are able to plan, implement, and evaluate development programs in a participatory manner create a work environment that supports teacher professionalism. The lesson from this study is that inclusive leadership not only implements the values of fairness and collaboration but must be balanced with systematic managerial strategies for teacher career growth to be sustainable, adaptive, and effective. The contribution of this study lies in combining the perspective of inclusive leadership with strategic management, as well as the development of specific indicators of findings, such as strategic planning, participatory implementation, and continuous evaluation, thereby enriching the theory and practice of inclusive education.

However, this study has limitations because it was conducted in a single location and did not analyze variables such as gender, age, teaching experience, or school characteristics in depth. The qualitative case study method also limits the generalizability of the results. Therefore, further research is recommended using survey methods or a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods with a wider variety of locations, ages, genders, and school characteristics. This approach will provide a more comprehensive picture and can form the basis for more targeted, sustainable, and inclusive teacher career development policies.

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