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Pedagogic Competence, School Climate, and Culture: Drivers of Learning Outcomes for Students with Disabilities in Indonesia

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Abstract

Background: In many Indonesian inclusive schools, students with disabilities are often taught by classroom or subject teachers who serve as special guidance teachers without formal training in special education. This structural gap suggests that pedagogical competence, coupled with the school climate and culture, may not optimally support the learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

Objective: This study aims to determine the direct and indirect effects of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on school climate, school culture, and, in turn, the learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

Methodology: Utilising a quantitative approach, the study surveyed 245 teachers from inclusive elementary schools in Tanah Laut Regency, Indonesia. A sample of 153 teachers was selected via purposive sampling. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Partial Least Squares (PLS) via the SmartPLS application.

Results: Findings indicate that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers significantly strengthens school culture through a positive school climate. Furthermore, pedagogical competence improves the learning outcomes of students with disabilities both directly and indirectly. A positive school climate was found to be essential in forming a supportive school culture that enhances student performance.

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Conclusion: The study finds that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers is a foundational element influencing school climate, culture, and student learning outcomes in inclusive educational settings.

Unique Contribution: This research provides an empirical evaluation of competence-building initiatives conducted by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. It demonstrates that pedagogical training for special guidance teachers is critical to fostering inclusive school environments and improving service delivery for students with disabilities.

Key Recommendation: Competence-based training for special education teachers should be implemented on a larger scale to increase institutional capacity. Future research should expand the respondent base to include students, principals, and parents to provide a more holistic perspective.

Keywords: pedagogical competence, special guidance teachers, school climate, school culture, learning outcomes, students with disabilities.

Introduction

Based on the 2023 basic education data, Tanah Laut Regency is known to have 669 educational units, consisting of 215 kindergartens, 96 playgroups, 7 childcare centres, 5 similar early childhood education units, 11 community learning centres, 1 learning centre, 245 elementary schools, 58 junior high schools, 19 senior high schools, 10 vocational schools, and 2 special schools.

Of the total number of educational units, 106 educational units have accepted students with disabilities, with details of 24 Kindergartens, 2 Community Learning Activity Centers, 1 Learning Activity Studio, 53 Elementary Schools, 15 Junior High Schools, 7 Senior High Schools, and 4 Vocational High Schools with the number of students with disabilities served as many as 220 students (basic education data, cut off May 2023).

Not all of the 220 students with disabilities in Tanah Laut Regency, spread across 106 schools providing inclusive education, are served by special guidance teachers. Only 53 special guidance teachers are registered in the basic education database, and some schools have more than one special guidance teacher. The data also indicates that some schools have accepted students with disabilities but have not yet registered their teachers as special guidance teachers. Based on discussions with the Head of Curriculum, Education Participation and Personnel of Early Childhood Education and Non-Formal Education and the Head of Elementary Education of the Tanah Laut Regency Education Office, it was discovered that the majority of special guidance teachers in schools that provide inclusive education do not come from teachers with a background in Special Education, but are taught by class teachers or subject teachers who are given additional duties as special guidance teachers who are equipped with training.

Special education teachers are university students who have completed a bachelor's degree in special education, thus possessing the competency to handle students with special needs. The gap between the competency of special guidance teachers currently working in schools providing inclusive education and the competency of special education teachers or the competency a special education teacher should possess raises questions about whether the

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pedagogical competency of special education teachers influences the school climate and culture, and how this impacts the learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

Research Objectives

This study aims to determine the direct and indirect influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on the school climate and culture and its impact on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

Literature Review

Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities

Learning outcomes are statements that are expected to be known, understood and/or demonstrated by a student after completing the learning process (Kennedy et al., n.d.). The learning outcomes expected of students include three aspects: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Bloom et al., 1964).

Assessment of learning outcomes for students with disabilities is basically the same as the assessment of learning outcomes for typical students, but there is a modification process starting from the objectives, content/material, process, and assessment that is adjusted to the type of obstacles and needs of students with disabilities. To be effective, teachers must familiarise themselves with their students' individual learning levels, learning styles, strengths, weaknesses, and overall abilities to plan successful daily instruction (D'Amico, 2010). There are five components of teaching that can be distinguished: the content, process, product, influences, and learning environment (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013).

Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers

The quality of education is determined, in part, by the quality of teachers. Quality teachers are essential for quality education (which in turn will promote economic competitiveness), and the key to having quality teachers is to ensure they are developed through quality teacher education (Ellis, 2023). Competence is also related to a person's performance that is proven and measured, not just talking about knowledge, skills, personal characteristics and social interactions (Medina, 2018).

School Climate

School climate is a multifaceted construct. It is influenced by the histories of individuals, groups, and organisations, yet it impacts policy, school progress, teacher practices, and, ultimately, student learning (Dewitt, 2018). Stringfield in Dewitt (2018) defines School Climate as the entire school environment, including parents and the community, in a broad definition. Johnson in Dewitt (2018) states that a broader definition of climate can include aspects ranging from the school environment to the personalities of students and educators, as well as academic performance, physical activity levels, and the processes and materials used throughout the teaching process.

School Culture

A set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that shape the 'personality' of a school is the definition of school culture (Muhammad, 2018). School culture is not something that can be created overnight. Culture is a framework that a group can use to

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solve problems, not problems to be solved; culture is how we learn to survive, one generation passing on what it has learned to the next (Schein, 2017).

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research:

Hypothesis 1: There is a direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on the school climate

Hypothesis 2: There is a direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on school culture

Hypothesis 3: There is a direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

Hypothesis 4: There is a direct influence of school climate on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities

Hypothesis 5: There is a direct influence of school culture on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities

Hypothesis 6: There is an indirect influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers and school climate on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

Hypothesis 7: There is an indirect influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers and school culture on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities

Hypothesis 8: There is an indirect influence of school climate and culture on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities

Hypothesis 9: There is an indirect influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers, school climate and culture on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities

Research Methods

Research Design

This research was conducted at an elementary school providing inclusive education in Tanah Laut Regency, South Kalimantan Province. The population of this study was 245 elementary school teachers providing inclusive education in Tanah Laut Regency. This study used a purposive sampling technique. Sampling using the Slovin formula resulted in a sample size of 153 teachers. The research data obtained were analysed using SEM (Structural Equation Modelling), Partial Least Squares (PLS), with the help of the SmartPLS application.

***Measurement Model* (*Outer Model*)**

The measurement model is known by conducting convergent validity tests, discriminant validity tests, and multicollinearity tests. Based on the results of data processing using SmartPLS, the following table 1 presents a summary of the results of data processing.

Table 1. Summary of Data Processing Results

Construct	Outer Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_A)	Composite Reliability (rho_C)	AVE
X1 Pedagogical Competence	0.857 – 0.912	0.976	0.976	0.978	0.790
X2 School Climate	0.832 – 0.875	0.970	0.970	0.973	0.733

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X3 School Culture	0.831 – 0.914	0.980	0.980	0.981	0.757
Y Learning Outcomes	0.859 – 0.899	0.981	0.981	0.982	0.774

1) Convergent Validity Test
Based on Table 1, it is known that the loading value of all variables is above 0.8, so it can be concluded that all variables have valid and reliable indicators, which meet the convergent validity criteria.

2) Discriminant Validity Test
Discriminant validity tests in PLS-SEM are divided into three main methods used to assess discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021), namely the Fornell–Larcker Criterion, Cross Loadings, and Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Fornell–Larcker Criterion
Based on data processing using SmartPLS, it is known that the √AVE value of each measured variable is greater than the √AVE value of other variables, so it can be concluded that all constructs in the research model have good discriminant validity.

Cross Loadings
Based on data processing using SmartPLS, it is known that all indicator variables have the highest loading values on the constructs they measure (≥ 0.70). The indicator loading values for other constructs are much lower, indicating that there is no overlap between latent constructs. Thus, the research model has met the criteria for discriminant validity.

Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)
Based on data processing using SmartPLS, it is known that all HTMT values are in the range of 0.748–0.835. It can be concluded that this research model has met the criteria for discriminant validity.

3) Multicollinearity Test
Based on the results of the multicollinearity analysis using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value, it is known that all indicators have VIF values between 3,020 and 6,530. According to the criteria of (Hair, Jr. et al., 2022), a VIF value below 5 indicates no multicollinearity problem, while a value up to 10 is still acceptable if the indicator is theoretically important.

4) Validity and Reliability
Based on Table 1, it was concluded that all Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values were > 0.70, indicating the constructs are reliable. All AVE values were > 0.50 (and even > 0.70), indicating the constructs met convergent validity.

***Structural Model* (*Inner Model*)**
How much the independent variables explain the dependent variable by looking at the R-square (R^2), measure the magnitude of the direct, indirect, and total influence between variables, test the significance of the influence (hypothesis testing) using bootstrapping, and assess the quality of the model's predictions by looking at the values of Q^2 and f^2.

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1) Coefficient of Determination (R Square/R²)
Based on data processing using SmartPLS, it is known that the overall structural model has very good explanatory power, because all R² values are above 0.50. The learning outcome variable (Y) has the highest R² (0.739), meaning that the model is strong enough to explain variations in learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

2) Predictive Relevance (Q Square/Q²)
The results of the predictive relevance (Q²) test using the blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS obtained a Q² value of 0.402 for the school climate construct, 0.498 for school culture, and 0.565 for the learning outcomes of students with disabilities. All Q² values were above 0.35, thus concluding that the model has strong predictive ability.

Research Results
Direct Influence (Path Coefficients)
Based on SmartPLS analysis, Figure 1 shows the path model.

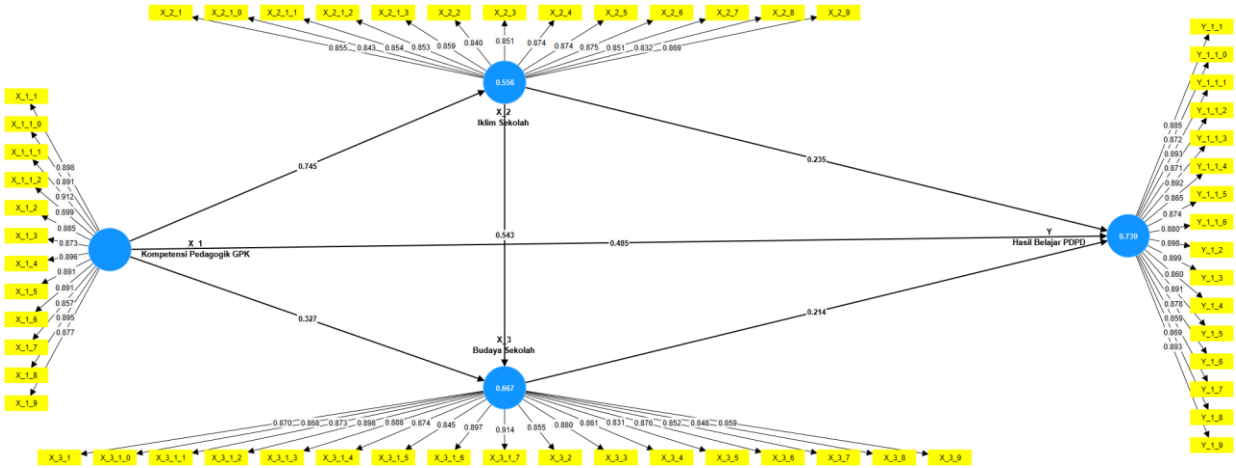

Figure 1. Path Model

Based on data analysis using Smart PLS, the path coefficient values in this study can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Path Coefficient Values

No	Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
1	Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → School Climate	0,745	0,747	0,032	22,944	0,000
2	Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → School Culture	0,327	0,326	0,071	4,636	0,000

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3	Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → Learning Outcomes	0,485	0,482	0,073	6,634	0,000
4	School Climate → School Culture	0,543	0,546	0,069	7,905	0,000
5	School Climate → Learning Outcomes	0,235	0,236	0,084	2,797	0,005
6	School Culture → Learning Outcomes	0,214	0,218	0,079	2,720	0,007

The direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on school climate ($X_1 \rightarrow X_2$)

Based on the data analysis, it is known that the path coefficient (β) in the analysis results using SmartPLS is found in the original sample column (O) has a value of 0.745, a T statistic of 22.944 and a p value of 0.000. It can be interpreted that the direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on school climate is in the strong and positive category. From the data, it is also known that the p-value is 0.000, because $p < 0.001$ means that the influence is significant.

The direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on school culture ($X_1 \rightarrow X_3$)

Based on data analysis, it is known that the path coefficient (β) has a value of 0.327, T statistic of 4.636 and p value of 0.000. It can be interpreted that the direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on school culture is in the moderate and positive category. From the data, it is also known that the p value is 0.000, because $p < 0.001$ means that the influence is significant.

The direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities ($X_1 \rightarrow Y$)

Based on data analysis, it is known that the path coefficient (β) has a value of 0.485, a T statistic of 6.634 and a p-value of 0.000. It can be interpreted that the direct influence of the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities is in the moderate and positive category. From the data, it is also known that the p-value is 0.000, because $p < 0.001$ means that the influence is significant.

The direct influence of school climate on school culture ($X_2 \rightarrow X_3$)

Based on data analysis, it is known that the path coefficient (β) has a value of 0.543, the T statistic is 7.905, and the p-value is 0.000. It can be interpreted that the direct influence of school climate on school culture is in the strong and positive category. From the data, it is also known that the p-value is 0.000, because $p < 0.001$ means that the influence is significant.

The direct influence of school climate on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities ($X_2 \rightarrow Y$)

Based on data analysis, it is known that the path coefficient (β) has a value of 0.235, a T statistic of 2.797 and a p-value of 0.005. It can be interpreted that the direct influence of school climate on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities is in the moderate and positive category.

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From the data, it is also known that the p-value is 0.005, because p < 0.001 means that the influence is significant.

The direct influence of school culture on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities (X_3 → Y)

Based on data analysis, it is known that the path coefficient (β) has a value of 0.214, a T statistic of 2.720 and a p-value of 0.007. It can be interpreted that the direct influence of school culture on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities is in the moderate and positive category. From the data, it is also known that the p-value is 0.007, because p < 0.001 means that the influence is significant.

Indirect Effects and Total Effects

Indirect effects are divided into two types in SmartPLS output: total indirect effects and specific indirect effects.

Total Indirect Effects

The results of data processing using SmartPLS regarding total indirect effects are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Total Indirect Effects

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers → School culture	0.405	0.407	0.055	7.410	0.000
Pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers → Learning outcomes of students with disabilities	0.332	0.336	0.057	5.826	0.000
School climate → Learning outcomes of students with disabilities	0.116	0.119	0.046	2.509	0.012

Pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers → School culture

Based on Table 3, it is known to have a coefficient value (O) of 0.405, meaning that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers has an indirect influence of 0.405 on school culture. This effect occurs through the school climate variable (because previously $X_1 \rightarrow X_2 \rightarrow X_3$). It is also known that the T-statistic value is 7.410 and the P value is 0.000. Because t > 1.96 and p < 0.05, the indirect effect is significant.

Pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers → Learning outcomes of students with disabilities

It is known that the coefficient value (O) has a coefficient value (O) of 0.332, meaning that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers has an indirect influence of 0.332 on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities, and this influence occurs through a combination of mediating variables of school climate and school culture. It is also known that the T-statistic

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value is 5.826 and the P-value is 0.000. Because t > 1.96 and p < 0.05, the indirect influence is significant.

School climate → Learning outcomes of students with disabilities
It is known that the coefficient value (O) has a value of 0.116. This means that school climate has an indirect influence of 0.116 on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities, through the mediation of school culture variables. It is also known that the T-statistic value is 2.509 and the P-value is 0.012. Because t > 1.96 and p < 0.05, the indirect influence is significant.

Specific Indirect Effects
Based on data processing using SmartPLS, the specific indirect effects are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Specific Indirect Effects

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → School Climate → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities	0.087	0.089	0.035	2.599	0.012
School Climate → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities	0.116	0.119	0.046	2.509	0.012
Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → School Climate → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities	0.175	0.176	0.064	2.762	0.006
Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities	0.070	0.071	0.030	2.314	0.021
School Climate → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities	0.116	0.119	0.046	2.509	0.012

Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → School Climate → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities
Based on Table 4, it is known that the first path has a coefficient value (O) of 0.087. This means that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers has an indirect influence of 0.087 on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities through two mediators at once, namely school climate and school culture. It is also known that the T-statistic value is 2.509 and the P-value is 0.012, because t > 1.96 and p < 0.05, the indirect influence is significant with the type of chain mediation.

School Climate → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities

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The second pathway is known to have a coefficient value (O) of 0.116. This means that school climate has an indirect effect of 0.116 on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities through the mediator of school culture. It is also known that the T statistic value is 2.509 and the P-values are 0.012, because $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$, then the indirect effect is significant with the type of mediation, single mediation (one mediator)

Pedagogical Competence of Special Guidance Teachers → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities
The third pathway is known to have a coefficient value (O) of 0.175. This means that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers has an indirect effect of 0.175 on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities through the mediator of school climate. It is also known that the T statistic value is 2.762 and the P-values are 0.006, because $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$, then the indirect effect is significant.

School Climate → School Culture → Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities
The fourth path is known to have a coefficient value (O) of 0.070. This means that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers has an indirect effect of 0.070 on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities through the mediator of school culture. It is also known that the T statistic value is 2.314 and P values are 0.021, because $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$, then the indirect effect is significant. Based on the research results, it was concluded that all hypotheses were accepted.

Discussion and Findings
Student learning outcomes in this study refer to Bloom's taxonomy, which measures cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills, modified to suit the characteristics and learning needs of students with disabilities. Discussing the learning outcomes of students with disabilities in inclusive schools is crucial because few studies have addressed this issue. These learning outcomes are crucial as a research variable because evaluations of the quality of inclusive education do not seem to focus on assessing the learning outcomes of students with special needs, but rather on aspects related to implementation mechanisms (Dell'Anna et al., 2021).
The discussion and findings of this study indicate that the pedagogical competence of special guidance teachers is very important to improve because by improving this competence, it will also improve the inclusive school climate and school culture, which will have an impact on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities. As classrooms become more heterogeneous, teachers require different skills and pedagogies to ensure all students can access the curriculum (Spandagou et al., 2020). Yasmeen et al. (2023) research showed a significant influence of teacher relationships on student academic outcomes and student emotional intelligence on student generic competencies. teacher confidence in conducting learning in inclusive classes so that inclusive education for all is achieved effectively because it is strengthened by professional learning, so that it supports teachers in implementing inclusive teaching strategies successfully (Woodcock et al., 2023).

School climate plays a crucial role in achieving optimal learning outcomes for students with disabilities. This is because, in addition to schools being welcoming to all students, the district education office also has a Disability Services Unit (Unit Layanan Disabilitas/ULD) as a place for teachers to discuss various issues related to students with disabilities. This study shows that a supportive school climate significantly impacts their learning outcomes. (2023), the most important new tools include the position of an inclusion coordinator in schools, strengthening

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counselling services available directly in schools, and new strategies to promote collaboration between schools, families, and social services, including specific techniques such as parenting workshops on supporting children in education.

Inclusive schools aim to diversify children's educational knowledge, experiences, and opportunities to enable their meaningful engagement in learning and the development of social relationships (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017). When preparing an inclusive classroom, teachers must remember that it is a flexible environment that is constantly changing to meet the needs of individuals and groups (D'Amico, 2010). Teacher commitment and performance are foundational elements of quality education. When teachers are dedicated to guiding students toward success, they continuously elevate their instructional standards to ensure effective teaching (Basilius, 2024).

School culture also plays an important role; research results show that if the school culture supports the existence of students with disabilities, the learning outcomes of students with disabilities will also improve. Sports activities, gratitude training, and learning in inclusive classes through singing and playing have been shown to be effective in fostering social and physical self-acceptance in increasing self-compassion (Dian Atnantomi, 2024). Students without special educational needs were more positive about co-teaching, the more lessons they received per week, while students with special educational needs were most positive when they received four to five lessons per week (Rönn-Liljenfeldt et al., 2023). Of the 17 school culture indicators strengthened by pedagogical competence through school climate, the highest indicator, first, is that teachers routinely seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, and conferences related to learning for students, including students with disabilities (professional culture). Second, the principal facilitates teachers' collaboration with other school members in serving students, including those with disabilities. Third, teachers and parents frequently communicate about student performance, including those with disabilities.

Conclusion

This study concludes that all research hypotheses are accepted, namely that there is a direct and indirect influence of the pedagogical competence variable of special guidance teachers on school climate, school culture and learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

Recommendation

The research results and conclusions of this study recommend that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education or the Education Office provide a scheduled time for teachers who handle students with disabilities to visit parents in order to establish intensive cooperation so that a good school climate and culture doesn't end at school but continues at home.

Declarations

AI Use Statement: During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT in order to assist with the language and formatting of the manuscript. After using this tool/service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Muhammad Syamsuri, upon reasonable request.

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Ethical Approval: This study involved human participants and was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participant confidentiality was maintained.

Authors' Contributions: MS, M, CSAJ conceived and designed the study; MS, TAS performed the data collection; MS, M, CSAJ analysed the data; MS, TAS wrote the paper. All authors have read and agreed to the published version.

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