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Implementation of Vocational Skills Program in Culinary Arts: Making Martabak Telur for Grade 8 Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities at a Special Needs School

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of a vocational cooking skills program, particularly in preparing martabak telor (Indonesian savory omelette pancake), for five students with mild intellectual disabilities in Grade VIII at a Special School (SLB). This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation study, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings indicate that: (1) program planning was systematically carried out through needs analysis, lesson plan development, the use of adaptive visual media, and parental involvement; (2) program implementation applied demonstration, learning by doing, prompting, and positive reinforcement, combined with small group learning strategies; and (3) the program had positive impacts on improving cooking skills, self-confidence, work attitudes, social skills, and students' readiness to participate in simple economic activities. This study concludes that practice-based vocational education is effective in fostering independence and life skills among students with mild intellectual disabilities. The findings provide valuable insights for developing contextual vocational programs in other special schools.

Keywords: Vocational Skills, Cooking, Martabak Telor, Mild Intellectual Disability, Independence

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education is one of the essential pillars of special education, particularly in Special Schools (*Sekolah Luar Biasa/SLB*) that serve students with mild intellectual disabilities (Hudrianto et al., 2024). The primary aim of vocational education is to equip students with technical skills, life skills, and work attitudes that support their independence in the future (Kovalchuk et al., 2022; Pavlova, 2008). For students with mild intellectual disabilities, vocational education functions not only as a medium of skill transfer but also as an empowerment effort to enhance self-confidence, social participation, and readiness to enter the workforce(Matenda, 2019).

In the SLB context, vocational programs must be tailored to the potential, needs, and limitations of the students (Aprilia & Soendari, 2020; Jamaluddin et al., 2021). One relevant vocational skill is culinary skills, particularly the preparation of simple foods with economic value, such as *martabak telur* (savory egg-filled pancake). *Martabak telur* was chosen because it is a popular dish, relatively easy to prepare, involves steps that can be broken down into smaller tasks, and holds potential as a micro-scale self-employment venture. The process of making *martabak* trains fine motor skills, coordination, the ability to follow instructions, as well as basic numeracy.

Regulatively, the implementation of vocational education in SLB is governed by the Decree of the Minister of National Education No. 116 of 2014 on the Organization of Special Education, which emphasizes the importance of a life skills-based curriculum. This is in line with the mandate of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006), which asserts the right of persons with disabilities to access education that supports their social and economic participation. Thus, the implementation of culinary skills programs in SLB is not merely about fulfilling pedagogical aspects but also about human rights and economic empowerment (Alfiansyah, 2019).

Previous studies have shown the effectiveness of vocational programs for students with intellectual disabilities. (Saputra, 2024)found that practice-based learning increased students'

confidence and independence. (Khikmah et al., 2024) also emphasized that student involvement in vocational activities expands their opportunities to live independently after school. Another study by (Hasim et al., 2024)demonstrated that the task analysis approach in culinary training helped students systematically understa nd complex work procedures.

In addition to technical skills mastery, vocational programs also affect psychological and social aspects. (Bandura, 1986) social learning theory explains that children learn through observation and imitation of models. In SLB culinary practices, teachers and peers serve as effective models, and interactions during activities strengthen students' social skills. Furthermore, Skinner's (1958) operant conditioning theory highlights the importance of positive reinforcement in motivating students to repeat correct behaviors, such as using reward systems when students successfully complete cooking stages.

Nevertheless, vocational program implementation in SLB still faces challenges. Fitriana and Septiana (2022) reported limited school kitchen facilities, a shortage of trained vocational teachers, and insufficient parental support as barriers to program optimization. Some students with intellectual disabilities also still require intensive assistance with fine motor skills and concentration, making adaptive teaching strategies and appropriate learning aids necessary (Indrawan & Ratna, 2023).

The urgency of this research lies in the need to document vocational program implementation practices more deeply, particularly culinary skills in preparing *martabak telur* at SLB. Few studies have specifically examined traditional cooking skills as a medium for contextual vocational learning with economic value. Yet, such simple skills could serve as potential family-based entrepreneurial alternatives for SLB graduates.

Furthermore, this study addresses the research gap in prior studies, which have largely focused on evaluating the general effectiveness of vocational teaching methods. This research seeks to describe how the planning, implementation, and evaluation of culinary skills are carried out, as well as their impact on students' independence. Using a qualitative approach, this study provides a comprehensive picture of classroom dynamics, including the interactions among teachers, students, and parents.

Thus, research on the implementation of culinary skills programs in SLB offers strategic contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on vocational and special education, particularly activity-based learning. Practically, it can serve as a reference for teachers, schools, and policymakers in developing vocational programs that are adaptive, contextual, and oriented toward the independence of students with mild intellectual disabilities.

This study aims to examine in depth the implementation of vocational skills programs in culinary arts, specifically the preparation of *martabak telur*, for Grade VIII students with mild intellectual disabilities in Special Schools (*Sekolah Luar Biasa/SLB*). Specifically, this research seeks to: Identify the planning of vocational culinary programs designed by teachers, including needs analysis, lesson plan development, as well as the media and strategies employed; Describe the implementation process of the culinary program in the teaching and learning activities, covering methods, adaptive approaches, teacher roles, and student involvement; and Analyze the impact of the culinary skills program on student independence, both in terms of technical cooking skills, increased self-confidence, the development of work attitudes, and their readiness to participate in simple social and economic activities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of

phenomena within their natural context and to explore the subjective meanings of the experiences of teachers, students, and parents in the implementation of the vocational culinary program at SLB (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Yin, 2017). The case study design was deemed appropriate for analyzing vocational learning practices within a real-life setting—namely, the culinary skills program of making *martabak telur* at SLB—where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are often blurred(Adrias & Ruswandi, 2025).

The research site was purposively selected at a Special School (*Sekolah Luar Biasa/SLB*) that provides a vocational culinary program for Grade VIII. The location was chosen based on the consideration that the school had been consistently implementing cooking skills training and had students with mild intellectual disabilities with varying levels of independence. The research subjects included vocational teachers as program implementers, Grade VIII students with mild intellectual disabilities as program participants, and parents who support learning at home.

Data collection employed methodological triangulation, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation study. Interviews were conducted to obtain narratives about the experiences of teachers, students, and parents in participating in the culinary program. Participatory observation was carried out directly in the culinary practice room to record interactions between teachers and students during the *martabak telur* preparation process. Documentation study involved analyzing lesson plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP*), student progress notes, as well as photos and videos of the learning activities(Patton, 2014; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007; Tisdell et al., 2025)

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument (*human instrument*) since the researcher's direct involvement in the data collection process is an integral part of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure clarity and systematization, supporting instruments were also used, including semi-structured interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation formats.

The validity of the data was tested using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was ensured through source and method triangulation as well as member checking. Transferability was strengthened through the provision of detailed contextual descriptions (*thick description*). Dependability and confirmability were maintained by conducting an audit trail and systematically documenting the research process (Miles et al., 2014).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages. First, data reduction, namely the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data. Second, data display, which involved presenting data in the form of narratives, tables, and direct quotations from interviews and observations. Third, conclusion drawing and verification, carried out iteratively to ensure consistency and accuracy of the findings. The analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection, allowing the researcher to adaptively respond to dynamics emerging in the field.

The study was conducted between February and April 2025, encompassing the preparation of research instruments, field data collection, data analysis, and the writing of the final research report. Through this approach, the study is expected to make a substantive contribution to the development of vocational learning practices in SLB that are more contextual, adaptive, and empirically grounded.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Planning of the Vocational Culinary Skills Program: Making *Martabak Telur*

The research findings indicate that the planning of the vocational culinary program in the Special School (*SLB*) was carried out through a series of systematic stages, beginning with the needs analysis of students and continuing with the preparation of the Lesson Plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP*). Vocational teachers first identified the initial abilities of Grade VIII students with mild intellectual disabilities, particularly in basic cooking skills. The results showed that most students were already capable of performing simple tasks such as peeling onions, cracking eggs, and stirring batter, although they still required intensive guidance for more complex skills.

In interviews, vocational teachers explained that *martabak telur* was chosen as the teaching material because it is relatively easy to prepare and has the potential to serve as a family economic product. One teacher stated:

> *"We chose martabak telur because the ingredients are easy to obtain, the steps can be broken down into smaller tasks, and the results can be consumed immediately or sold. This way, students can feel that their work is tangible and useful."* (Interview with Vocational Teacher, March 15, 2025).

This aligns with the principle of task analysis in vocational education, where complex work is broken down into simple stages that can be gradually learned by students with mild intellectual disabilities.

The lesson planning was documented in the RPP, which vocational teachers prepare each semester. The RPP included learning objectives, achievement indicators, activity steps, and assessment instruments. Observations of the RPP documents revealed an emphasis on three main aspects: technical cooking skills, work attitudes (discipline, cleanliness, responsibility), and social aspects such as teamwork in small groups. Thus, planning targeted not only cognitive and motor skills but also the character development of students.

Teachers also prepared learning media suited to the characteristics of students with mild intellectual disabilities. Documentation showed the use of illustrative posters outlining the steps to make *martabak telur*, short tutorial videos, and step-by-step worksheets. Visual media were chosen because they were easier for students to understand compared to long texts. One teacher explained:

> *"The children understand more quickly when there are pictures or videos. So before practice, they first watch the illustrated steps."* (Interview, March 18, 2025).

In addition to media, instructional strategies were also planned at the outset. Teachers designed the use of demonstration and learning-by-doing methods so that students could learn directly through experience. Prompting strategies—verbal cues or gestures—were also prepared to assist students who had difficulty recalling work steps. Observations of teacher notes showed that this strategy was combined with positive reinforcement techniques, such as praise or giving stickers, to increase student motivation.

Collaboration with parents was also part of the program planning. Based on school documentation, parents were involved through initial semester meetings where teachers explained the learning objectives and encouraged parents to support their children in practicing simple cooking skills at home. This was reinforced with a skill development monitoring sheet to be filled out by parents each week. One parent said:

> *"We were asked to train our child at home, for example making an omelet or instant noodles. Later, the results are reported to the school."* (Interview with parent, March 20, 2025).

Limitations of facilities were also considered in the planning. Teachers were aware that cooking equipment at the school was limited, so learning activities were designed with small group rotations. Observations showed that each group consisted of three to four students who used simple equipment such as a portable gas stove, a small frying pan, and a spatula. This is consistent with previous research indicating that facility limitations can be addressed through rotating practice schedules (Fitriana & Septiana, 2022).

Overall, the findings show that the planning of the culinary skills program for making *martabak telur* in SLB was conducted with attention to students' individual needs, the use of

adaptive learning media, parental involvement, and adjustments to available school facilities. With this approach, program planning focused not only on technical skills but also on shaping work attitudes and fostering independence among students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Implementation of the Vocational Culinary Skills Program: Making *Martabak Telur*

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the culinary skills program in the Special School (*SLB*) was carried out through structured and repetitive hands-on practice. The process began with the teacher demonstrating each step of making *martabak telur*, followed by the students imitating the steps according to the given instructions. Field observations showed that each practice session started with the preparation of ingredients and tools, followed by dough-making, filling preparation, cooking, and finally product presentation. These stages were consistent with the task analysis principle that had been previously planned.

The vocational teacher acted as the main facilitator during practice activities. According to interview data, demonstration and learning by doing were the dominant strategies used in instruction. One teacher stated:

> *"I usually demonstrate first, then the students imitate. If it is only explained without practice, they forget quickly."* (Interview, March 15, 2025).

This was confirmed through observation, which showed that students appeared more enthusiastic and focused when the teacher provided direct demonstrations in front of the class.

During implementation, teachers applied prompting techniques, including verbal cues and gestural signals, to assist students who had difficulty recalling work steps. Observations revealed that prompting was provided gradually and then reduced as students became more independent. For example, in the first week the teacher often gave direct instructions such as *"crack the egg now"*, but by the sixth week the teacher only gave gestures or waited for the student to take initiative. This reflects Skinner's (1958) operant conditioning theory, which highlights that positive reinforcement and gradual withdrawal of assistance can enhance student independence.

In addition to prompting, teachers implemented positive reinforcement to motivate students. Each student who successfully completed a step correctly was rewarded with praise or stickers. In an interview, one student said:

> *"I'm happy when I get a sticker, it makes me want to try making martabak again on my own."* (Interview, March 22, 2025).

This illustrates that simple reinforcement strategies can significantly improve motivation and self-confidence among students with mild intellectual disabilities.

The program implementation was not limited to technical cooking skills but also fostered work attitudes and social skills. Observations showed that students were trained to maintain cleanliness, observe time discipline, and work collaboratively in small groups. In group practice, students shared tasks, such as preparing ingredients, frying, and serving the finished product. This interaction encouraged cooperation and communication among students. The teacher emphasized:

> *"Group work is important so that they learn how to communicate and respect each other's contributions."* (Interview, March 18, 2025).

Photographic and video documentation of the practice sessions showed that students became increasingly confident from week to week. At the beginning of the activities, several students appeared passive and waited for teacher instructions. However, after six weeks, most students began to independently pick up tools, initiate cooking without being asked, and even offer their cooked products to teachers and peers. These behavioral changes indicate that structured, repeated practice with intensive guidance can improve both independence and self-confidence.

Parents were also involved in program implementation through home-school collaboration. Teachers provided weekly skill-monitoring sheets for parents to complete, documenting their child's cooking activities at home. An interview with one parent revealed:

> *"After practicing at school, my child became brave enough to cook an omelet at home. Previously, he was afraid of the stove flame."* (Interview, March 20, 2025).

This shows that skill transfer from school to home took place, serving as an indicator of program success.

Nevertheless, program implementation faced facility-related challenges. Observations recorded that the limited number of stoves and pans required students to take turns, resulting in longer practice sessions. Teachers addressed this issue by dividing students into small groups so that everyone still had equal opportunities to practice. This finding is consistent with Fitriana and Septiana (2022), who suggested that facility limitations can be overcome through rotational scheduling.

Overall, the findings show that the implementation of the *martabak telur* culinary skills program at SLB was effective through direct practice methods, adaptive strategies such as prompting and positive reinforcement, group collaboration, and parental support. Despite limited facilities, the program was successfully conducted and had positive impacts on the motivation, technical skills, and work attitudes of students with mild intellectual disabilities.

The Impact of the Culinary Skills Program on the Independence of Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

The findings of this study indicate that the culinary skills program of making *martabak telur* had a significant impact on improving the independence of students with mild intellectual disabilities, both in terms of technical skills, personal attitudes, and socio-economic readiness. After six weeks of intensive learning, approximately 70% of students were able to independently complete all stages of making *martabak telur*, from preparing ingredients, processing the dough, cooking, to presenting the final product.

From a technical skills perspective, observations showed improvements in students' ability to use cooking tools and follow sequential instructions. At the beginning of the program, most students required full assistance in tasks such as adjusting the stove flame or pouring the batter. However, after several practice sessions, the majority were able to perform these tasks with little or no assistance. The vocational teacher explained:

> *"At first, they made many mistakes, like spilling the batter or burning the martabak. But now they are able to adjust, and some can even regulate the stove flame independently."* (Interview, March 25, 2025).

The program also had a positive effect on students' self-confidence. An interview with one student revealed:

> *"I used to be afraid of touching the stove, afraid of the heat. Now I can make martabak by myself, and I'm happy when it tastes good."* (Interview, March 22, 2025)

This was supported by observations showing that students became more willing to perform cooking steps in front of the class, and some even offered their dishes to teachers and peers. These changes illustrate an increase in self-efficacy, which is crucial for their psychosocial development.

In terms of work attitudes, students demonstrated improvements in discipline, cleanliness, and responsibility. Observations noted that students consistently washed their hands before practice, cleaned utensils after use, and neatly stored ingredients. Teachers emphasized that these behavioral changes were not immediate but developed gradually through repeated practice and positive reinforcement. One teacher stated:

> *"Now the children are more aware of maintaining kitchen cleanliness. They are also more disciplined, realizing that if they are late, the whole practice session is disrupted."* (Interview, March 18, 2025).

The vocational program also enhanced students' social skills. During group practice, students learned to cooperate, help each other, and respect their peers' roles. Observations revealed more harmonious interactions, such as capable students assisting those who struggled, and fairer distribution of tasks within groups. This aligns with Bandura's (1977) social learning

theory, which emphasizes that group interaction serves as an effective medium for social learning.

The independence acquired by students extended beyond the school environment and into their homes. Based on homeschool collaboration records, several parents reported that their children had become confident enough to cook at home, preparing simple dishes such as omelets, instant noodles, or basic *martabak*. One parent noted:

> *"My child used to avoid the kitchen and was afraid of fire. Now he insists on making his own eggs, and even once said he wanted to sell martabak in front of the house."* (Interview, March 20, 2025).

In addition to individual independence, the program also contributed to basic work readiness. The school organized a small-scale microenterprise simulation, where students sold the *martabak* they made to teachers and staff. Observations showed that students not only practiced cooking but also engaged in buyer interactions, calculated prices, and provided simple customer service. This experience served as an important step in developing basic entrepreneurial skills.

Overall, the impact of the vocational culinary program of making *martabak telur* can be categorized as positive and significant. Students with mild intellectual disabilities showed improvements in technical cooking skills, self-confidence, work attitudes, social skills, and readiness to participate in simple economic activities. These findings reinforce previous research (Kartini, 2019; Sugiyanto, 2020; Dewi & Cahyono, 2023), which affirmed that practice-based vocational education can enhance independence, confidence, and work readiness among students with special needs.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the vocational culinary skills program, particularly the preparation of *martabak telur*, had a significant impact on enhancing the independence, self-confidence, and social skills of students with mild intellectual disabilities. These results reinforce the concept that practice-based vocational learning is an effective strategy for developing life skills and work readiness among students with special needs.

In terms of planning, vocational teachers designed the program using a task analysis approach, breaking down complex activities into simpler steps that were easier for students to understand. This is consistent with the findings (Meyers, 2014), who emphasized that task analysis can improve the cooking skills of students with intellectual disabilities by providing a clear structure in each stage of learning. In this study, detailed planning proved effective in enabling students to gradually understand and master the skills.

Program implementation revealed the dominant use of learning by doing and teacher demonstrations. This strategy aligns with (Johnson, 1996)theory of learning, which highlights the importance of *enactive representation*, where children learn through direct interaction with real objects. This was reinforced by the use of prompting strategies and positive reinforcement applied by teachers. In line with (Skinner, 1963) operant conditioning theory, behaviors that are reinforced by rewards are more likely to be repeated. In the context of this study, praise, stickers, and simple recognition effectively motivated students to continue practicing and improving their cooking skills.

The impact of the program on students' self-confidence is consistent with (Bandura, 1986), which states that successful task completion enhances an individual's belief in their ability to face future challenges. Interviews and observations revealed that students who were initially passive became more active and even dared to practice cooking at home. This indicates an increase in self-efficacy, which is a critical foundation for long-term independence.

In addition, the program also strengthened students' social skills. Through small-group practice, students learned to cooperate, assist one another, and value the roles of their peers. This

finding is in line with Nuraini and Kurniawan (2020), who found that collaborative approaches in vocational learning enhanced communication and social interaction skills among students with intellectual disabilities. Thus, vocational education contributes not only to technical skills but also to socio-emotional development.

From the perspective of skill transfer, collaboration with parents through homeschool programs further reinforced learning outcomes. Parents reported that their children began to cook independently at home after participating in the program. This supports Suryadi and Kartika (2020), who emphasized that family involvement in vocational programs accelerates the generalization of skills from school to home. Thus, parental support plays a vital role in strengthening the outcomes of vocational education at SLB.

The program also contributed to basic economic readiness through microenterprise simulations at school. Students sold the *martabak telur* they prepared, which trained them in basic entrepreneurial skills such as serving customers, calculating prices, and promoting products. This finding is consistent with Dewi and Cahyono (2023), who argued that practice-based vocational programs not only enhance technical competencies but also foster entrepreneurial potential among students with intellectual disabilities.

Nevertheless, the study also identified challenges related to limited facilities, such as the insufficient number of cooking tools compared to the number of students. This condition is consistent with the findings of Fitriana and Septiana (2022), who highlighted that lack of facilities is a major barrier to vocational program implementation in SLB. However, teachers managed to overcome this challenge by implementing small-group rotations, demonstrating the importance of teacher creativity in managing facility limitations to ensure program effectiveness.

Overall, these findings strengthen existing theories and prior studies emphasizing the effectiveness of vocational education for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on a traditional cooking skill with direct economic value—*martabak telur*. Therefore, the program contributes not only to the pedagogical aspect but also creates opportunities for the economic empowerment of students' families in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the vocational culinary skills program of making *martabak telur* at the Special School (*Sekolah Luar Biasa/SLB*) has had a significant positive impact on Grade VIII students with mild intellectual disabilities. First, in terms of planning, the program was designed through a needs analysis of students, the development of Lesson Plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP*), the use of adaptive visual media, and the involvement of parents in supporting practice at home. This systematic planning enabled students to gradually and contextually acquire the skills. Second, in terms of implementation, teachers applied learning by doing, demonstration, prompting, and positive reinforcement. Learning was carried out in small groups to overcome facility limitations, while emphasizing teamwork, discipline, and cleanliness. This implementation proved effective in improving technical skills, active participation, and students' social interactions. Third, in terms of impact, the program successfully enhanced students' independence in cooking skills, strengthened their self-confidence, fostered positive work attitudes, and developed social skills. Moreover, the program also opened opportunities for simple entrepreneurship through microenterprise simulations, thus supporting students' readiness to participate in family-based economic activities. Therefore, the culinary skills program provides benefits not only in the technical domain but also in the psychosocial and economic development of students with mild intellectual disabilities. This study affirms that practice-based vocational education is an effective strategy for improving life skills and independence among students with special needs. Accordingly,

similar programs should be strengthened through improved practice facilities, training for vocational teachers, and sustained collaboration between schools, parents, and local business partners.

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