

EVALUATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDONESIA: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Evaluation of inclusive education in Indonesia: Elementary school teachers' perspective. This quasi-qualitative study explored the concerns, barriers, and impacts of implementing Inclusive Education (IE) in elementary schools in Sumatra and Java, Indonesia. Despite the Indonesian government's mandate to implement IE through Ministry of Education Act No. 70 of 2009, various challenges hinder its effective implementation. This study aims to provide a thorough assessment of IE strategies employed in Indonesian elementary schools by analyzing key factors and offering recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of IE for both students and teachers. A survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 elementary school teachers to gain insight into their experiences and perceptions of IE. The findings suggest that teachers often lack confidence in employing inclusive strategies because of limited knowledge and large class sizes, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development. Additionally, while there is evidence of positive attitudes towards special educational needs (SEN) students among peers and parents, teachers may not fully embrace IE. These findings will inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders about the current state of IE and the necessary steps to improve it, ultimately contributing to developing a more inclusive and equitable education system in Indonesia.

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Education Equality; Elementary Schools; Teachers' Perspective; Indonesia

Abstrak: Evaluasi pendidikan inklusif di Indonesia: Perspektif guru sekolah dasar.

Studi kuasi-kualitatif ini mengeksplorasi kekhawatiran, hambatan, dan dampak dari implementasi Pendidikan Inklusif (IE) di sekolah dasar di Sumatera dan Jawa, Indonesia.

Meskipun pemerintah Indonesia telah memberikan mandat untuk mengimplementasikan

Pendidikan Inklusif melalui Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional No. 70 Tahun 2009, berbagai tantangan yang terjadi menghambat efektivitas implementasinya. Studi ini bertujuan untuk memberikan penilaian menyeluruh terhadap strategi pendidikan inklusif yang digunakan di sekolah dasar di Indonesia dengan menganalisis faktor-faktor kunci dan memberikan rekomendasi untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pendidikan inklusif bagi siswa dan guru. Survei dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dilakukan terhadap 25 guru sekolah dasar untuk mendapatkan wawasan tentang pengalaman dan persepsi mereka tentang pendidikan inklusif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa guru sering kali kurang percaya diri dalam menerapkan strategi inklusif karena keterbatasan pengetahuan dan ukuran kelas yang besar, sehingga menyoroti perlunya pengembangan profesional yang berkelanjutan. Selain itu, meskipun terdapat bukti adanya sikap positif terhadap siswa berkebutuhan pendidikan khusus (SEN) di antara teman sebaya dan orang tua, guru belum sepenuhnya dapat menerima penerapan pendidikan inklusif. Temuan ini memberikan informasi kepada pembuat kebijakan, pendidik, dan pemangku kepentingan tentang kondisi pendidikan inklusif saat ini dan langkah-langkah yang diperlukan untuk memperbaikinya, yang pada akhirnya akan berkontribusi pada pengembangan sistem pendidikan yang lebih inklusif dan adil di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Inklusi; Kesetaraan Pendidikan; Sekolah Dasar; Perspektif Guru; Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

When embraced by schools and educational institutions, inclusive education (IE) can create a supportive and welcoming environment that benefits all students, regardless of their individual circumstances. This approach is essential to fostering an inclusive environment that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. IE is recognized as a vital approach for creating equitable learning environments that benefit all students by addressing their diverse needs and fostering a sense of belonging (Ranbir, 2024; Sadiki, 2024). It is not merely a

strategy for societal equal opportunity, but a fundamental right, ensuring that every child has access to an optimal learning environment (Sadiki, 2024).

Inclusive practices, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and collaborative teaching models, are instrumental in promoting accessibility and individualized learning (Ranbir, 2024). Implementing IE requires a shift in school systems, reallocating resources, and redefinition of roles within special education (Sadiki, 2024).

Additionally, the success of IE is contingent upon educators' competencies, including their knowledge of diverse learners, creation of an inclusive classroom climate, and effective pedagogical strategies (Palei, 2024). There is also a need for ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

Several challenges in implementing IE include social and cultural barriers, lack of teacher training, and inadequate resources (Dewi, 2024; Ngui, 2019). Despite these challenges, the movement towards IE is gaining momentum globally, with various countries adopting policies and practices to support this educational paradigm (Molano et al., 2023). The Government of Indonesia has instructed the implementation of IE in Indonesia through the Ministry of Education Act No. 70 of 2009 (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nomor 70 Tahun 2009). Although the Act has been in effect for nearly 15 years, several obstacles have hindered its effective implementation.

Integrating IE into elementary schools is a crucial step towards ensuring equal access to quality education for all Indonesian students. Studies show that there are challenges in its implementation, such as the need for more effective university involvement (Rasmitadila, Humaira, Rachmadtullah, & Putri, 2021), sustainable mentoring programs (Rasmitadila, Humaira, Rachmadtullah,

Sesrita, et al., 2021), and teacher readiness (Sari & Saleh, 2020). Additionally, teachers often lack confidence in employing inclusive strategies because of their limited knowledge and large class sizes (Kurniawati, 2021), suggesting a need for ongoing professional development.

Interestingly, despite these challenges, there is evidence of positive attitudes towards special educational needs (SEN) students among peers and parents, although teachers may not fully embrace IE (Sunardi et al., 2024). Moreover, teachers' attitudes towards IE are generally moderate, with a more positive inclination observed among secondary school teachers than primary school teachers (Ediyanto et al., 2021). This finding highlights the importance of fostering positive attitudes at an elementary level. In conclusion, although the implementation of IE in Indonesian elementary schools represents notable development, it is evident that various challenges must be addressed.

This study examined the prevailing situation of IE in elementary schools across Indonesia, specifically in Sumatra and Java, with the aim of uncovering the concerns, barriers, and impacts of its implementation. Using a quasi-qualitative research design, a survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 elementary school teachers from various schools in Sumatra and Java. These interviews provided valuable insights into

teachers' IE experiences and perceptions. The primary goal of this research is to conduct a thorough assessment of IE strategies employed in Indonesian elementary schools through a meticulous analysis of these key factors. The findings will highlight areas that require improvement and offer recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of IE for both students and teachers. This study is crucial for informing policymakers, educators, and stakeholders about the current state of IE and the steps necessary to improve it.

METHODS

This study employed a quasi-qualitative research design to explore the concerns, barriers, and impact of IE in elementary schools in Indonesia. The research design was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the issues surrounding IE and capture the perspectives of teachers from various backgrounds involved in the implementation of IE policies in Indonesian elementary schools. The research design also allows for an examination of the complex interplay between the different factors that affect the success of IE initiatives, such as the availability of resources, teachers' attitudes, and the needs of students with disabilities. Using a quasi-qualitative research design, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of

implementing IE in Indonesia, which can inform future policies and practices in the field.

Bungin (2020) assertion regarding quasi-qualitative research suggests that it is influenced by positivist principles, particularly in the presentation of theories through deductive reasoning. This perspective aligns with the broader discourse on the interplay between qualitative research and positivist influences, as qualitative research often incorporates elements of positivism, especially when adopting a deductive approach to theory presentation (Hyde, 2000). While qualitative research is typically associated with inductive reasoning, the integration of deductive processes is not uncommon and can enhance the rigor of qualitative findings (Hyde, 2000). This research began with deductive reasoning by collecting information from the participants using a survey consisting of closed- and open-ended questions. Answers were coded and developed into themes. The researcher also chose participants based on their answers in the first phase. Therefore, this study cannot be considered to be qualitative. This can be observed during data collection.

The participants in this study were 25 elementary school teachers from various schools in Sumatra and Java. These teachers

were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of schools, including urban, rural, public, and private institutions. The selection criteria focused on

teachers who had experienced IE. The demographic characteristics of the participants are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

	Frequency	Percentage
Class taught		
Upper Class	12	48%
Lower Class	13	52%
Location		
Urban	15	60%
Rural	10	40%
Type of school		
Public	17	68%
Private	8	32%
Sex		
Female	24	96%
Male	1	4%
Education		
Diploma	1	4%
Bachelor	22	88%
Master	2	8%

In the first stage, the researcher involved elementary school teachers and provided a Google Form link containing questions to teachers as respondents with the criteria to complete the Google Form. After entering the data and the initial coding, the researchers chose eight people from the 25 respondents as participants for in-depth interviews to sharpen and confirm answers that were not found on Google Forms. The researchers selected interview participants by checking their answers on Google Forms with the most

detailed answer criteria related to the research questions and objectives.

In the initial phase of the study, the researcher supplied a Google Form link, which comprised inquiries addressed to teachers as respondents with specific criteria for completing the form. Initial coding was performed following data submission. The researchers subsequently selected eight individuals from a pool of 25 respondents for in-depth interviews. These interviews aimed to refine and validate answers that were not captured in Google Forms. The selection

process for the interview participants involved evaluating responses on Google Forms based on the level of detail and their relevance to the research questions and objectives.

Data collection was performed in two phases. The initial phase involved gathering information from teachers who met the criteria outlined in the participant section. This was accomplished through an online survey comprising of three main questions distributed via Google Forms. The questions were developed based on pertinent literature related to the research objectives. Data were collected from March 2024 to April 2024, and all respondents were included in the study. The initial phase of the study involved transcribing and compiling survey outcomes into a preliminary code. This code was used to formulate in-depth interview questions for the participants.

The second phase involved conducting semi-structured interviews with eight teachers from an initial pool of 25 who had completed the survey. The research team devised an interview guide based on preliminary codes. The goal of the interviews was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the data and their relevance to the research topic. The results were documented in NVivo 12 as nodes and integrated with the findings of a previous survey. The researchers were able to

discern themes aligned with their research objectives. The interviews were conducted via Google Meet and lasted approximately one hour per participant in May 2024.

The instruments used in the two stages of the study consisted of closed- and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were used to determine the demographic characteristics of each participant. The open-ended questions asked the teachers to express their understanding, concerns, and experience in teaching in elementary schools in Indonesia, whether they were inclusive or not. The following are examples of questions on Google Forms.

- (1) How do you define inclusive education?
- (2) Can students with special needs learn in regular or mainstream classes or school? Why?
- (3) What concerns do you have for students with special needs in your class?
- (4) If your school has implemented inclusive education, what obstacles do you experience as a teacher?

Meanwhile, we used the same open-ended questions for the interview instrument, focusing on deepening the questions regarding the teachers' opinions during the first stage. We directed this interview to further explore the students' concerns, experiences, and practical implementation in inclusive classrooms.

This study employed a thematic analysis method to identify, assess, and create the primary themes that emerged from the study (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In the initial phase, teachers' opinions were coded using keywords corresponding to the interpretation of a sentence or specific terms to prevent any overlap. Second, the researchers used the NVivo 12 program to aid the coding and categorization processes. Third, the researchers scrutinized all codes and categories, allowing for the combination and even division of codes to create more streamlined codes that could address primary research queries within the main themes.

The researchers carefully assessed the credibility and dependability of the data using a data collection instrument developed based on a relevant literature review. After data collection, member checking was performed, in which participants were asked to confirm that their contributions were accurately represented in the data. Triangulation was conducted to reduce bias by examining participants. All the researchers examined the data to ensure the integrity of the findings.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Result

Understanding of Inclusive Education

The current understanding of IE among elementary school educators has not yet reached the intended interpretation. Although

it is widely recognized that students with SEN are typically integrated into inclusive schools alongside their non-SEN peers, certain teachers still hold an outdated understanding of inclusion as an isolated concept, where SEN students learn in an inclusive school while following different programs with non-SEN students. Moreover, certain educators possess an inaccurate perception of inclusion, wherein inclusion is mistakenly equated with segregated education, which provides specialized schools for students with SEN and erroneously believes that inclusion schools are designated specifically for SENs and that special classes for SENs ought to be established within regular schools. The following statement was taken from the teacher to illustrate this perspective.

"Inclusive education is an education system that is open to all students, including student with SENs and typical students. SENs are placed in a special class that is different from typical students so that educators are more focused on teaching." (T19)

Teachers' Concerns about Inclusive Education

The researchers discovered two sub-themes related to teachers' concerns regarding IE implementation. The first concerns the SEN students' ability to understand the subject taught in the classroom. SEN students possess diverse abilities that differ from those of their peers. Consequently, teachers

grapple with the possibility that these students may struggle to keep pace with their learning process. Several teachers have expressed this opinion.

“Children with special needs are certainly different from other children. They will experience delays in understanding so that they lose many opportunities to learn and lag behind other children.” (T5)

“I am afraid that the child will not be able to follow the lesson because of their disabilities, such as difficulty concentrating or difficulty regulating emotions, and eventually not understand the material provided.” (T12)

The second sub-theme was related to SEN students' ability to socialize with other students. Teachers are concerned that SEN students will feel insecure, insufficiently confident, and inferior to non-SEN students. Furthermore, these students may feel that they do not fit in with their peers, leading to bullying, social isolation, and lack of support. Social isolation can significantly affect academic performance and mental health. The following statement, which exemplifies this perspective, was obtained from the teacher.

“I'm worried that they can't get along with other students and worried that they can't follow the lessons like other children.” (T8)

“I am worried that the child with special needs will face social problems such as

being physically and verbally bullied by other children.” (T16)

Third, teachers also feel that the presence of SENs in regular classes can interfere with the learning process because not all teachers have the competency to teach students different abilities. Moreover, teachers have argued that SEN students may require more individualized attention, which may not be feasible in a regular classroom setting, further compounding the challenges of educating diverse learners. The following statement, reflecting this perspective, was obtained from the teacher.

“I am concerned about disruptions in the learning process for students, due to a lack of adequate resources and training. I am also concerned about discomfort among students due to different needs and abilities.” (T20)

Impacts of Inclusive Education

The sub-themes of the impact of IE explain the positive and negative effects of IE policies on school students. Despite experiencing many obstacles to IE implementation in Indonesia, it has a positive impact on students. First, we discuss the sub-themes of improved academic results. Previously, teachers were concerned that some students would have difficulty in understanding the subject matter. However, they also claimed that some SEN students had better academic results in inclusive classrooms than in special ones. This result

shows that some students could adjust well to inclusive classrooms if they received appropriate facilities and support. Moreover, it is important to note that SEN students also benefit from inclusive classrooms, as they have access to the same facilities and support as their non-SEN peers. The following statement, which exemplifies this perspective, was obtained from the teacher.

“Inclusive education can provide many benefits for children with special needs, such as better academic achievement and social relationships, increased independence and speech development, and real-life experiences for children with special needs. Children with special needs are establishing relationships with typical children and helping children to better manage themselves.” (T3)

The second sub-theme was the improved social skills of the SEN students. According to teachers, SENs in inclusive environments are more likely to develop essential life skills, such as self-sufficiency, confidence, and social skills. For instance, children with SENs included in mainstream schools often have more opportunities to interact with their peers, which can help them improve their social skills and develop a sense of self-confidence. The following statement, which embodies this perspective, was obtained from the teacher.

“SEN students can participate in education services together with other typical children so that the social condition of the child becomes better.

SEN students have high self-confidence if they are learning in the same class as the typical children. They feel that they have the same rights to be treated equally despite their physical limitations.” (T4)

The third sub-theme was improved tolerance of typical students. Teachers stated that typical students become more tolerant and have more knowledge of the various types of disabilities. Furthermore, teachers reported that these interactions not only helped students become more understanding and empathetic towards individuals with disabilities but also expanded their knowledge about various types of disabilities and their unique challenges.

“Inclusive education is also good for typical students as it teaches them how to respect fellow friends and not discriminate against friends.” (T6)

The teachers also declared that IE increased students’ appreciation for their circumstances. It is often observed that the presence of SEN students in an inclusive classroom can engender a sense of gratitude among their peers, as it serves as a reminder that others may face greater challenges.

“All children have the same right to learn regardless of physical or other condition, IE also teaches equality between human beings, students learn tolerance and mutual respect between fellow creations and further increase the sense of gratitude to God.” (T10)

Despite the positive impact of IE, this study found several negative impacts of IE implementation in Indonesia. Some SEN students experience bullying at school, which affects their emotional state and learning achievement. In addition to its negative impact on emotional well-being and academic performance, bullying can lead to a range of long-term consequences for SEN students, such as decreased self-esteem, anxiety, and depression.

“It is not uncommon for children with disabilities to feel insecure because they see their friends who can do anything on their own. It is not uncommon for cases of bullying to occur in inclusive schools because of this.” (T1)

Furthermore, teachers have reported that SEN students often struggle with social interactions and self-regulation in inclusive classrooms, which can exacerbate existing challenges and hinder academic progress.

"Actually, it (IE) is very good for children with disabilities, but sometimes the education system in general school makes SEN students have difficulty in learning and adjusting to typical student and the learning process." (T17)

Discussion

Researchers have recognized various themes and sub-themes that illustrate teachers' perspectives and their comprehension of incorporating IE in Indonesia. Despite the Indonesian government's policy of establishing inclusive schools via the

Ministry of Education, it is apparent that teachers' understanding of IE requires improvement. Teachers have expressed concern, and it is crucial to address the implications of this policy promptly.

Elementary school teachers' concerns about IE implementation are reflected in the literature, with several studies highlighting the perceived inadequacies of the school environment in supporting such initiatives. Sydoriv (2022) emphasized the necessity of nurturing an inclusive environment and multidisciplinary support for SEN students as prerequisites for effective inclusion. Similarly, Radojlovic et al. (2022) found that a significant proportion of teachers believe that schools lack the necessary conditions for IE. These findings are corroborated by Cago (2024) who points out the challenges teachers face in creating a positive classroom environment, such as large class sizes and lack of self-discipline among students, which can impede the establishment of an inclusive setting.

In contrast, Virgina and Kurniawati (2017) presented a more optimistic view, with teachers displaying positive attitudes towards inclusion and providing emotional support to students with SEN, suggesting that, at least in some contexts, teachers feel capable in their school environments. Junaidi et al. (2021) also indicated that teachers' perceptions of IE

are not influenced by their roles but rather by the amount of training they receive, which could imply that with adequate professional development, teachers might view their school environments as more conducive to inclusion. In summary, although there is a consensus that the school environment plays a critical role in the success of IE, there is notable concern among teachers regarding the adequacy of the current conditions to support such practices (Cago, 2024; Radojlovic et al., 2022; Sydoriv, 2022). However, positive attitudes and sufficient training may mitigate these concerns, as suggested by Junaidi et al. (2021) and Virgina and Kurniawati (2017). It is essential to address these environmental challenges to foster effective IE, which requires coordinated effort in professional development and resource allocation to support both teachers and students with SEN (Junaidi et al., 2021; Sydoriv, 2022).

Furthermore, teachers' concerns regarding the socialization abilities of SEN students are substantiated by the literature, which highlights the critical role of social skills in the academic and social inclusion of these students. Studies indicate that social skills, such as cooperation, responsibility, and self-control, are highly valued by educators and are essential for classroom success (Banković et al., 2023). Furthermore, acquisition of social skills is linked to

academic progress and successful transitions to adult life, underscoring the importance of social development interventions by educators (Vlachou et al., 2016). However, there are challenges in the implementation of systematic social skills programs, with some educators feeling inadequately prepared to create and execute them (Vlachou et al., 2016).

Additionally, research suggests that while teachers recognize the importance of social skills, there may be discrepancies in the strategies used by teachers to teach children with SEN, with no significant differences based on variables such as experience or educational level, but with gender differences observed (Abed & Alrawajfh, 2017). Moreover, cooperation between teachers and parents, which can be crucial for the social development of SEN students, is often problematic, indicating the need for improved collaboration (Kaffemanienè et al., 2021). In summary, while teachers acknowledge the importance of social skills for students with SEN and their role in fostering them, there are notable challenges in the systematic development and implementation of social skills programs. These challenges include a lack of preparedness among educators, inconsistent strategies, and insufficient parent-teacher cooperation. Addressing these issues may enhance the socialization of SEN students

within the educational setting (Abed & Alrawajfh, 2017; Banković et al., 2023; Kaffemanienè et al., 2021; Vlachou et al., 2016).

Regarding the impact of IE implementation, researchers have found that IE has a positive impact on increasing SEN students' academic performance and social skills. Researchers have found that IE can positively impact SEN students, particularly in terms of academic performance and social skill development. Mugiraneza et al. (2022) discussed the accessibility of inclusive classroom practices in Rwanda, indicating that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in inclusive classrooms has made students with disabilities more innovative and competent. However, it is important to note that the success of IE in enhancing academic performance and social skills is contingent upon various factors, such as the attitudes of teachers and students, the availability of resources, and the implementation of effective teaching practices.

For instance, Lenkeit et al. (2024) showed that teachers' and students' attitudes directly affect social integration and classroom climate, which are critical for the success of IE. Moreover, effective pedagogical practices, as discussed by Khazanchi and Khazanchi (2020) involve collaboration

between general and special education teachers to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods to the needs of SEN students. In summary, while IE has been found to positively impact the academic performance and social skills of SEN students, the extent of these benefits is influenced by a range of factors including attitudes, resources, and teaching practices. Studies suggest that with the appropriate support and adaptations, IE can be a powerful tool for enhancing the educational experiences of SEN students.

Moreover, researchers have found that IE has the potential to reduce stigmatization and marginalization of SEN students. IE environments foster a sense of belonging and acceptance among students of all abilities, which can lead to improved self-esteem and a more positive outlook on life (Ranbir, 2024). Additionally, as describe by Khazanchi and Khazanchi (2020), the philosophy of IE is to provide SEN students with the same high-quality, standard-based instruction and support as their peers, which can contribute to reducing stigma by promoting equality. The effectiveness of this approach is contingent upon its proper implementation, including teacher training and support, because it can inadvertently contribute to the marginalization of students with disabilities due to inadequate support and adaptation of teaching methods (Ahmad

& May, 2018). To fully realize the benefits of IE, it is crucial to address these challenges and ensure that inclusive practices are effectively executed.

IE environments are designed to foster a sense of belonging and acceptance among students of all abilities, which can lead to improved self-esteem and a more positive outlook on life (Ranbir, 2024). These environments aim to meet student's diverse needs by promoting accessibility, individualized learning, and a culture of acceptance (Ranbir, 2024). Additionally, while a sense of belonging is linked to higher self-esteem and academic achievement, it can vary according to student demographics and school characteristics (Baek, 2023; Suan & Magallanes, 2020). Furthermore, experiences of discrimination and bias can negatively impact students' sense of belonging; however, this effect can be mitigated by validating their experiences with faculty and staff (Hurtado et al., 2015).

In summary, IE environments are intended to cultivate a sense of belonging and acceptance, that is critical for students' self-esteem and overall well-being. While research indicates positive social and academic outcomes associated with inclusion (Kart & Kart, 2021), it is important to recognize the nuanced challenges that can arise, such as the need to address ableism and discrimination (Hurtado et al., 2015;

Nieminen & Pesonen, 2022). Therefore, creating truly inclusive environments requires a multifaceted approach that considers the socio-political context and actively works to support all students' sense of belonging (Hurtado et al., 2015; Nieminen & Pesonen, 2022; Strayhorn, 2012).

Additionally, IE can benefit non-disabled students by exposing them to diverse perspectives and experiences, which can broaden their understanding of the world and promote their empathy and tolerance. Moreover, the presence of students with disabilities in inclusive settings has been associated with positive social outcomes for typically developing students, such as reduced prejudice and increased tolerance (Kart & Kart, 2021). Overall, the implementation of IE has far-reaching benefits that extend beyond the academic performance of students with special educational needs. This can contribute to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive society in which all individuals are valued and respected.

Based on these results, the teachers also declared that IE increased students' appreciation for their circumstances. This notion indicates that in Indonesia, some teachers still view disabilities in a charity model. Even though the results do not directly address Indonesian teachers' perception of disabilities within a charity

model, they do provide insights into the broader context of disability and education in Indonesia. For instance, Komardjaja (2005) discusses the stigmatization of disabled individuals in Indonesian society and suggests that institutionalization is seen as a privilege, which could imply a perception of disability that aligns with a charity model in which care is provided to those who can afford it. Ulya and Hendriani (2023) indicate a generally positive perspective from teachers towards IE, although they acknowledge the need for improved resources and capacity building. Upa and Mbato (2020) highlighted the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of teachers in special needs schools, which may suggest a commitment beyond a simplistic charity mindset. Contradictions or interesting facts emerge when comparing the Indonesian context with the U.S. model, as described by Johnson (2020), which promotes an inclusive model of classroom participation. This contrast may reflect different cultural and systemic approaches to disabilities.

Additionally, Obrusnikova (2008) identified variables contributing to physical educators' positive beliefs about teaching children with disabilities, which could be interpreted as a move away from a charity model towards a more inclusive and competence-based approach. In summary, there are indications

of a complex interplay among societal attitudes, institutional practices, and educational perspectives on disabilities. Positive attitudes towards IE and the motivation of teachers in special needs schools suggest a nuanced understanding of disabilities that may transcend a charity-based view. However, the privilege associated with institutionalization (Komardjaja, 2005) could be indicative of the underlying charity model perceptions. Further research is required to conclusively determine the prevalence of charity models among Indonesian teachers.

In addition to the positive impacts of IE implementation, researchers have also found negative impacts, namely bullying and struggling with social interactions and self-regulation. Lin (2024) highlighted that IE can lead to the development of social skills and help children with autism interact with others. However, it also acknowledges the challenges associated with social stigma and bullying that can arise in inclusive settings. Similarly, Shabalala and do Amaral (2024) emphasized the importance of enhancing communication and social skills in IE, suggesting that challenges in improving social skills present opportunities for intervention. In contrast, while IE aims to foster a supportive environment for all students, papers such as Winterman and

Burton (2023) and Mancinelli and Kneavel (2021) reveal that students with individualized education plans (IEPs) or those in communication sciences and disorders programs may face additional challenges, including bullying and harassment, which can have lasting psychological effects. These findings suggest that although IE has the potential to be beneficial, there are systemic issues that need to be addressed to mitigate its negative impacts.

In summary, while IE is designed to be beneficial for students with diverse needs, research indicates that bullying and struggles with social interaction and self-regulation are significant concerns. These issues highlight the need for comprehensive strategies to support students, particularly those with disabilities, in managing the social challenges in IE environments. Interventions should focus on enhancing communication skills, fostering empathy, and creating a school culture that actively combats bullying and harassment (Cox-Wingo & Poirier, 2019; Espelage & Hong, 2024; Lin, 2024; Mancinelli & Kneavel, 2021; Shabalala & do Amaral, 2024).

Implication for Practice

This study found that SEN students' poor academic performance may be due to a lack of teacher training programs in implementing IE and teaching students from

various backgrounds. Therefore, continuous professional development is critical. Teachers need training in inclusive pedagogies, differentiated instruction, and effective classroom management (Bacher, 2022; Garg et al., 2024). A lack of such training can result in ineffective teaching methods and inadequate support for students from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, there should be collaboration between schools and institutions that train and educate teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms to make continuous improvements and adjustments toward what students actually need (Rasmitadila et al., 2022). Successful inclusive education also requires collaboration among teachers, parents, and community members. Building a supportive network can help address the diverse needs of students (Palei, 2024).

Another way to improve academic and social skills is to adopt a flexible curriculum that accommodates the various learning styles and needs. This includes integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to make learning accessible to all students. It promotes inclusivity, enhances teaching practices, and aligns with legal requirements to provide equal educational opportunities. However, the successful adoption of UDL requires overcoming challenges related to educator training and resource availability as well as ensuring that

all teachers, not just those in special education, are aware of and skilled in applying these principles (Krishan & Sharma, 2023; Priyadharsini & Mary, 2024). Therefore, collective commitment to UDL and its principles is necessary to advance a more inclusive and equitable educational system (Priyadharsini & Mary, 2024).

Additionally, leveraging assistive technologies (AT) can enhance accessibility and support for SEN students. AT plays a crucial role in enhancing accessibility and supporting SEN students by providing tools for communication, learning, and mobility. These technologies facilitate educational inclusion and have revolutionized learning for SEN students by offering alternatives to traditional AT devices through mobile learning platforms and applications (Ismaili & Ibrahim, 2017). Nevertheless, barriers such as accessibility, affordability, and adequate training need to be addressed to optimize the use of AT in inclusive education (Jakovchevska & Jovanova, 2024).

Finally, adequate funding and supportive policies are critical for effective implementation of IE. The literature suggests that financial resources are necessary for various aspects of IE, including the training of educators, provision of support services, and the development of appropriate infrastructure (Hlatywayo & Mapolisa, 2020;

Irfan et al., 2021; Novrizal & Manaf, 2024). Moreover, the lack of guidelines for educators and absence of specialized support, such as Special Assistance Teachers, indicate systemic issues beyond financial constraints (Novrizal & Manaf, 2024; Yuliawati et al., 2023). In summary, the successful implementation of IE requires not only adequate funding but also comprehensive policies that address the multifaceted needs of inclusive education. This includes the development of infrastructure, the training of educators, and the provision of support services. The literature underscores the importance of a coordinated approach that integrates financial, organizational, and policy frameworks to overcome the challenges associated with IE. Therefore, stakeholders need to ensure that financial resources are not only available, but also appropriately allocated and managed to support the diverse components of inclusive education.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Conclusion

IE aims to provide equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. It aligns with international development goals and emphasizes the creation of accessible and equitable learning environments. Despite the efforts of the Indonesian government,

challenges such as social and cultural barriers, lack of teacher training, and inadequate resources have hindered the effective implementation of IE. Teachers express concerns about SEN students' ability to understand and socialize with their peers. They also worry about potential disruptions in the learning process due to diverse student needs. Overall, IE has positive impacts on the academic results and social skills of SEN students but also faces issues such as bullying and social interaction difficulties. While IE promotes better academic and social outcomes for students with SEN, it also faces obstacles such as inadequate teacher training, resource limitations, and social barriers. To enhance the effectiveness of IE, the continuous professional development of teachers, collaboration among stakeholders, and a flexible curriculum are essential. Addressing these challenges is crucial to creating an equitable and inclusive educational environment for all students.

Suggestion

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The current study has some limitations. Geographical Scope of this Study. The research focused on schools in Sumatra and Java, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions of Indonesia, with different cultural and educational contexts. Moreover, reliance on teachers' self-reported data obtained through surveys and interviews may introduce bias. Teachers may provide socially desirable responses or not accurately recall their experiences and perceptions. Additionally, limited resources and support for inclusive education may have affected the study's implementation and outcomes. This could include a lack of funding, training, and the materials necessary for effective inclusive practices. Lastly, the study may not have fully accounted for various contextual factors such as socioeconomic status, school infrastructure, and community attitudes towards inclusive education, which can significantly impact the implementation and success of inclusive education.

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