

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN EAST JAVA, INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

Teachers' perception of inclusive education becomes an important indicator in evaluating the success of inclusive education. Teachers who have a positive perception of inclusive education will have a more controlled learning environment. This study used a survey method that investigates the current views of elementary school teachers toward inclusive education by exploring their perceptions. The respondents of this study are 70 elementary school teachers in East Java Province. This study found that: (1) There was no difference perception of teachers in primary schools concerning the concept of inclusive education, placement of students with disabilities, and processing of learning in inclusive classrooms; (2) Teachers' perceptions in primary schools towards inclusive education was not influenced by their duties as regular and special education teachers; (3) There are differences in perceptions of inclusive education based on the amount of training they followed; (4) There are differences in teachers' perceptions of inclusive education based on the length of teachers' experience teaching students with disabilities. Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education can be measured from three dimensions: the inclusion concept, disability student placement, and learning management.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education in East Java Province has developed since the 2000s. So far, the data for 2017 showed that 319 primary schools reported having students with disabilities. The amount was spread in uneven proportions in 38 regency/city areas. Several cities/regencies in Surabaya, Malang City, Bojonegoro Regency, Sidoarjo Regency, Gresik Regency, and Banyuwangi Regency had quite some elementary schools providing inclusive education compared to other regencies/cities (Junaidi, 2019).

Teachers are an essential factor in the delivery of inclusive education. Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education also determine the success of implementing inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Bunch, Lupart, & Brown, 1997). The learning environment will be more controllable by teachers who have positive perceptions of inclusive education (Monsen & Frederickson, 2004). Most teachers believe that inclusion is helpful, but

they lack the time and skills to include students with disabilities in their classrooms (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009).

Research on teacher attitudes in primary schools in Jakarta showed positive attitudes toward inclusive education, even though most participants felt they lacked knowledge and experience in the practice of inclusive education (Kurniawati et al., 2012). Qualitative research with in-depth interviews by Poernomo (2016) in five provinces in Indonesia concluded that in the learning process, there were still many teachers who did not fully understand how to manage learning in inclusive classes.

This research focuses on the placement of disabled students in inclusive schools and classroom management in inclusive classrooms. In this study, teachers' perceptions of inclusive education are formulated in the following four questions. (1) Are there differences in the perception of elementary school teachers about the concepts of inclusion, the placement of students with disabilities, and the learning management in inclusive classes? (2) Are there differences in elementary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education based on their assignments as class teachers or subject teachers and special education teachers? (3) Are there differences in elementary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education based on the number of training hours they have attended? (4) Are there differences in elementary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education based on their experiences of teaching students with disabilities?

## 2. METHODS

The method used in this research is a survey (Grönlund, 2004). Grönlund promotes online-based survey research. The current research was conducted online through Google Form starting on August 16th to 23rd, 2019. The respondents who met the criteria were 70 people, 21 men and 49 women. They came from 13 districts/cities in East Java Province. The ages distribution of respondents were as follows, less than 30 years old with 18 people, ages between 31 to 40 years old, 25 people, ages 41 to 50 years were 13 people, and over 50 were 14 people.

The educational backgrounds of most respondents were undergraduate education for elementary schools totaling 41 people or 58.6%. There were 13 scholars in the subjects of study, 4 in the master of education degree, 4 in the particular education degree, and 6 in the outside field of education. As many as 31 people or 44.3% of the total respondents, even though they were not exceptional education graduates, they claimed to be assigned as special education teachers.

The research instrument consisted of two parts, the first part is about demographics, and the second part is on inclusive education. The second part, about inclusive education, is divided into three sections: the concept of inclusive education, the placement of students with disabilities in inclusive schools, and the management of learning in inclusive classes. Each section consists of five statement items with a Likert model. Instrument reliability is tested

through the split-half technique, and the correlation coefficient value of 0.6 was known. It means that the instrument used has high reliability. Data processing of this research was carried out with the ANOVA technique.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Results

Descriptive data in each section about elementary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education is presented as follows. In the teacher's perception section on the concept of inclusive education, there are five statement items with details of two favorable statement items and three unfavorable statement items. The average teacher's perception of the inclusive education concept is 21 at intervals of 21-24, with a frequency of 27 or 38.5%. It means that 38.5% of respondents agreed with the concept of inclusive education. There are four favorable statement items and an unfavorable statement item in the teacher perception section on students with disabilities in regular schools.

The average of teachers' perceptions about the placement of students with disabilities in regular schools is 21.5. The respondents agreed to the placement of students in regular classes and students without disabilities found in intervals of 21-24, with a frequency of 30 or 42.8%. There are two favorable statement items and three unfavorable statement items in the learning management section in inclusive classroom settings. In another result, the average teacher's perception of learning management in inclusive classes is 21. It is in the interval 21 - 24, with a frequency of 22 or 31.4%. It means that 31.4% of respondents said they agree about the management of inclusive classes.

The primary school teacher's perception of the inclusion concept, the placement of students with disabilities, and learning management is done through the two-way ANOVA test. This test was also conducted to evaluate teachers' perceptions based on their duties as class teachers, subject teachers, and special education teachers.

Based on table 2, we can explain that the two-ways ANOVA test results include differences between columns, between rows, and interaction tests. For the column test (perception of the inclusion concept, the placement of students with disabilities, and the learning management), the F table value is sought with df between columns as a numerator = 2, and df in as a denominator = 204 (F<sub>2: 204</sub>). Based on df (2: 204), the F table value = 3.04 for an error rate of 5% and 4.71 for an error rate of 1%. Thus, the calculated F value of 0.29 turns out to be smaller than the value of the F table. Because the calculated F value is smaller than the F table, H<sub>0</sub> is accepted, and H<sub>a</sub> is rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference among teachers' perceptions of the inclusion concept, the placement of students with disabilities, and the learning management in inclusive classes.

Inter-line tests to determine differences in perceptions of inclusive education based on the work of teachers as class teachers or subject teachers and assignments as special

education teachers. F table values are sought based on df numerator = 1 and denominator = 204. F table price = 3.89 for error rates of 5% and 6.76 for error rates of 1%. The calculated F value (0.17) turns out to be smaller than the F table (3.89) for 5%. Based on these tests,  $H_a$  is rejected, and  $H_o$  is accepted. It can be concluded that the task as a special education teacher and as a class teacher/ subject teacher does not affect their different perceptions about inclusive education.

**Table 1.** Percentage of Teachers' Perceptions towards Inclusion Concept, Disability Student Placement, and Learning Management

Focus Study	Statement	Percentage
Teachers' Perceptions towards Inclusion Concept	All students with disabilities have the same right to get an education in regular schools	52.9% strongly agree; 34.3% agree
	Education services for students with the most appropriate disabilities are in special schools	21.4% strongly agree; 25.7% slightly disagree
	Disability students who are accepted at the regular school are those who can follow the curriculum standards in regular schools	34.3% strongly agree; 25.7% agree
	Regular schools should provide flexible education services, including for students who experience intellectual disabilities	64.3% strongly agree; 20% agree
	The existence of students with disabilities in regular schools can have an impact (dropped) on school ranking	42.9% strongly disagree; 25.6% disagree
Teachers' Perceptions of Disability Student Placement	Disability students are placed in regular schools based on chronological age and not based on the only academic ability	32,5% strongly agree; 40% agree
	Disability Students who cannot follow the curriculum in regular classes receive separate educational services in special classes	35,7% strongly agree; 21,4% agree; 22,9% slightly agree.
	Disability students in regular classes should receive adequate support from regular teachers and special education teachers	52,9% strongly agree; 24,3% agree
	Placement of students with disabilities in special classes can impact children's social development and independence.	32,9% strongly agree; 22,9% agree; 27,1% slightly agree
	The academic development of students with disabilities will be better if they are in regular classes	28,6% strongly agree; 28,6% agree; 18,6% slightly agree
Teacher's Perceptions of Learning Management	The composing of learning plans in inclusive classes, carried out collaboratively between regular teachers and special education teachers	45,7% strongly agree; 31,4% agree
	It is easier for teachers to manage to learn when there are no students with disabilities in the classroom	18,5% strongly agree; 20% agree; 14,3% slightly agree
	Students with disabilities in regular classes can reduce the teacher's attention to other students and disrupt the learning process	28,6% strongly disagree; 22,9% disagree; 18,6% slightly agree
	Determination of learning completeness criteria for students with disabilities does not have to be the same as students without disabilities.	48,6% strongly agree; 25,7% agree
	The existence of students with disabilities in regular classes can hamper the achievement of curriculum targets	17,1 % strongly disagree; 22,9% disagree; 18% slightly disagree

**Table 2.** Summary of Perception towards Inclusive Education

Variation Source	Df	Number of Squares	Mean of Square	Fh	Ft	Decision
<i>Perception of Regular Teachers and Special Education Teachers</i>						
Inter column	2	11.27	5.63	0.88	3.04	
Interline	1	3.3	3.3	0.17		
Interaction	2	8.9	4.5	0.23		
In Group	204	3996.47	19.6			
Total	219	4020.02				
<i>Teachers' Perception of Inclusive Education Based on the Number of Training Hours about Inclusive</i>						
Total	69	7950.34	-			
Inter Group	2	1038.07	519.03	15.54	3.13	Ha is accepted
In Group	67	6912.28	33.39			
<i>Teachers' Perception of Inclusive Education Based on the Teaching Experience of Children with Special Needs</i>						
Total	69	8094.07	-			
Inter Group	2	1052.37	526.18	5.16	3.13	Ha is accepted
In Group	67	7041.7	102.05			

Interaction test among teachers' perceptions toward differences in inclusive education based on the task differences of the teacher as a class/subject teacher and special education teacher. Table F values are evaluated by df numerator = 2 and df denominator = 204 (df interaction and df in). Based on this df, the F table value = 3.04 for an error rate of 5%. The calculated F value (0.23) is smaller than the F table (0.23 < 3.04). Thus  $H_a$  is rejected, and  $H_o$  is accepted. There is no significant interaction between the teacher's task as a class/subject teacher and special education teacher with the teacher's perceptions of inclusive education.

Based on the ANOVA test in table 2, it can be seen that the numerator df ( $m-1$ ) = two and the denominator df ( $N-1$ ) = 69 obtained an  $F_t$  value of 3.13 for an error rate of 5%. The calculated F value of 15.54 is more significant than  $F_t$ . Thus, it can be concluded that there are differences in perceptions of elementary school teachers on inclusive education based on the number of training hours they take on inclusive education.

Further analysis was carried out through the Scheffe test, as described in table 3. Determining the critical F value with 95% confidence ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), then the critical F value with degrees of freedom  $k-1 = 2$ , as a numerator, and  $N_k (70-3) = 67$  denominators 3.14. Based on that, the critical value of  $t_S$  can be calculated as 2.51.

Based on the value of  $t_S$  2.51, it can be concluded as follows. (1) There are differences in teachers' perceptions about inclusive education based on the number of training hours they have attended, between 30 hours of training and 31 to 60 hours of training ( $X_1: X_2$ ); (2) There are differences in teachers' perceptions of inclusive education based on the number of training hours they take on, between 31 to 60 hours of training and more than 60 hours of training ( $X_2: X_3$ ); (3) There are differences in teachers' perceptions about inclusive education based on the number of training hours they have attended, between 30 hours of training and more than 60 hours of training ( $X_1: X_3$ ).

**Table 3.** Scheffer Test Number of Training Hours about Inclusive Education and Teaching Experience for Students with Disabilities

Training Hours about Inclusive Education			Teaching Experience for Students with Disabilities		
Average	FS	tS	Average	FS	tS
X1=64.41	X1:X2=15.06	2.51	X1=59.39	X1:X2=3.88	2.51
X2=58.04	X2:X3=29.23		X2=64.22	X2:X3=2.18	
X3= 67.6	X1:X3=3.51		X3=68.48	X1:X3=12.54	

Based on the ANOVA test in table 2, about the differences in teacher perceptions of inclusive education based on the length of teachers' experience in teaching students with disabilities, it is known that the numerator df ( $m-1$ ) = two and the denominator df ( $N-1$ ) = 69, obtained Ft value of 3.13 for an error rate of 5%. Therefore, the calculated F value of 5.16 is greater than the value of Ft. Thus, it can be concluded that there are differences in the perception of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education based on the amount of experience they teach students with disabilities.

Further analysis through Shceffe was carried out, with the results summary presented in Table 3. The critical F value with a degree of confidence is 95% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), then the critical F value with the degree of freedom  $k-1 = 2$ , as a numerator, and  $Nk (70-3) = 67$ , as the denominator, of 3.14. Based on that, the critical value of tS can be calculated as 2.51.

Based on the value of tS 2.51, it can be concluded as follows. (1) There is a difference in teachers' perceptions about inclusive education based on the experience of teachers teaching students with disabilities, between 1 to 3 years and 4 to 6 years (X1: X2); (2) There is no difference in teachers' perceptions about inclusive education based on the experience of teachers teaching students with disabilities, between 4 to 6 years and more than seven years (X2: X3); (3) There are differences in teachers' perceptions about inclusive education based on the experience of teachers teaching students with disabilities, between 1 to 3 years and more than seven years (X1: X3).

### 3.2 Discussion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded as follows. (1) The perception of elementary school teachers about inclusive education, including perceptions about the concept of inclusion, the placement of students with disabilities, and the management of learning, did not differ significantly. (2) There is no difference in primary school teachers' perception of inclusive education based on their assignments as class teachers, subject teachers, and special education teachers. (3) There is a difference in the perception of elementary school teachers about inclusive education based on the number of training hours they have attended. (4) There is a difference in the perception of elementary school teachers about inclusive education based on their experience of teaching students with disabilities

Overall, respondents positively perceive inclusive education, with an average perception score of 21.1 at the agreed interval. It means that the principles of inclusive education are perceived as being agreed upon by elementary school teachers. The

difference in perceptions about inclusive education between special education teachers and class teachers/subject teachers or regular teachers is because their educational qualifications are relatively the same. Most respondents numbered 41 people, or 58.6% have a fundamental educational qualification, and only six have undergraduate special education qualifications. As a special education teacher in a regular school, teachers with non-special education qualifications run is a solution to the lack of exceptional education graduates in East Java Province (Junaidi, 2019). Ismail et al. (2015) concluded that teachers in special schools and teachers in special schools did not have significant attitudes towards the benefits of integration and class management in the integrated school (integrated classroom management).

The difference in teachers' perceptions about inclusive education is due to teacher participation in training on inclusive education. In line with research by Pancofar and Petroff (2013); Avramidis et al. (2000); Avramidis & Kalyva (2007), teachers who more often attend in-service training, are more confident with their ability to teach, are more interested, and have a more positive attitude towards students with disabilities and towards inclusive education. one of the best steps to improve teachers attitude is to implement an excellent sustainable training program (Ediyanto, Restuti, Atika & Kawai, 2020). Programs that can be used are tiered, namely: general training subjects, basic training subjects, and supporting training subjects.

The experience of teachers teaching students with disabilities affects the perception of teachers about inclusive education. Other studies that are consistent with this finding are Avramidis and Kalyva (2007); Parasuram (2006); Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005); Avramidis et al. (2000). Teachers who have experience contacting or teaching several years of disability students in inclusive classes activity have a more positive attitude.

The teacher's teaching experience of students with disabilities, the longer the perception is not always more positive towards inclusive education if the teacher's competence is not sufficient. Research by Boyle et al. (2013) showed that teachers who teach in the first year show a more positive attitude than teachers who have taught for several years. The Boyle et al. (2013) study was carried out in Scotland, where 68% of respondents had never received full training on inclusive education before. Horne and Timmons (2009) also found that teachers suggested the training they needed was related to an effective strategy of integrating students with special needs in regular classes. Through interviews, teachers at least need knowledge about children with disabilities, how to teach them. The teachers feel frustrated and guilty when they cannot do their best for all their students in class.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The primary school teachers in East Java have a positive perception of inclusive education. The perception of inclusive education does not differ between the teacher who gets the assignment as a special education teacher and the teacher who gets the assignment

as a classroom teacher/subject teacher. The difference in perceptions about inclusive education among elementary school teachers in East Java is due to training in inclusive education and their experiences in teaching students with disabilities. The more often they participate in training and the longer they have experience teaching students with disabilities, the more positive their perception of inclusive education. Teachers' perceptions of inclusive education can be measured from three dimensions: the inclusion concept, disability student placement, and learning management.

Suggestions for further research in inclusive education include: (1) Research in more detail looks at teacher attitudes towards students with disabilities, and (2) Research on teachers' competencies in regular schools in dealing with students with disabilities.

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