

Contributing Factors to the Progress of Inclusive Education Implementation in Indonesia: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Indonesia has committed to achieving education for all without discrimination, yet a research-to-practice gap persists in implementing the concept of inclusive education. This scoping review investigates the nation's progress in inclusive education through a comprehensive analysis of 20 relevant articles. The review highlights increasing efforts in implementing inclusive, innovative, and integrated learning programs, enhancing teachers' competencies, fostering collaborative initiatives, promoting societal acceptance of persons with disabilities, and identifying key challenges for improvement. Factors driving this progress include heightened teacher awareness and competence in inclusive education, robust government support, effective multi-sectoral collaboration, comprehensive legal frameworks, and student-centric strategies. This review offers insights into Indonesia's evolving landscape of inclusive education and underscores avenues for further advancement.

Indonesia telah berkomitmen untuk mencapai pendidikan bagi seluruh warga negara tanpa diskriminasi, namun kesenjangan antara penelitian dan praktik masih terjadi dalam penerapan pendidikan inklusif. Penelitian ini menyelidiki kemajuan Indonesia dalam pendidikan inklusif melalui analisis komprehensif terhadap 20 artikel relevan dengan metode scoping review. Tinjauan ini menyoroti peningkatan upaya dalam menerapkan program pembelajaran yang inklusif, inovatif, dan terintegrasi, meningkatkan kompetensi guru, mendorong inisiatif kolaboratif, mendorong penerimaan masyarakat terhadap penyandang disabilitas, dan mengidentifikasi tantangan utama dalam upaya perbaikan. Faktor-faktor yang mendorong kemajuan ini mencakup meningkatnya kesadaran dan kompetensi guru dalam pendidikan inklusif, dukungan pemerintah yang kuat, kolaborasi multi-sektoral yang efektif, kerangka hukum yang komprehensif, dan strategi yang berpusat pada siswa. Tinjauan ini memberikan wawasan mengenai perkembangan pendidikan inklusif di Indonesia dan menggarisbawahi peluang untuk kemajuan lebih lanjut.

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A. Introduction

An inclusive education system has been existing for several decades, however, in recent year innovations emerged which challenged the traditional exclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Inclusive education is viewed as a major priority and an urgent need for all educational systems globally (Amor et al., 2019; Mag et al., 2017). Inclusion is a process that is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers to the participation, presence, and achievements of all students who are at risk of marginalization, exclusion, or underachievement (Ainscow, 2005). Thus, making it vital to ensure professional development for teachers in terms of evidence-informed Inclusive Education practices (Van Mieghem et al., 2020).

Research highlights the essence of defining inclusive education as well as increasing the capacity and empowering the people to understand and implement the Inclusive Education system. Through Inclusive Education, the rights of children with SEND are being recognized. Inclusive Education practices and outcomes, in socially reconstructive views, challenge and outpace the conventional belief of educational excellence (Kozleski et al., 2015; Mapuranga et al., 2015; Nunan et al., 2000). In addition, it was found that leading the implementation of Inclusive Education demands a focus on structures and processes, building relationships among students, teachers, and families which are the foundations of the structures. Moreover, community networking, planning, organizing, and contextualizing were vital aspects of capacity building (Kozleski et al., 2015).

However, in most developing countries the progress of Inclusive Education implementation remains unsatisfactory. Several factors are causing the slow progress of Inclusive Education Implementation including the absence of support services and resources, insufficient teachers/personnel training, lack of subsidy for structure, stigma and rejection of the children with special educational needs and disabilities, absence of empowering legislation and inadequate engagement with the local leaders and key stakeholders (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Sharma et al., 2019). More specifically, the schools transitioning to becoming inclusive are confronted with various challenges such as negative perceptions and attitudes of other parents and teachers towards children with special needs and disabilities, lack of educational materials and resources, large class sizes, lack of teaching skills and experience, lack of proper identification and assessment process, unpreparedness for the individualized educational plan (IEP) and eligibility criteria for admission of students with SEND. Therefore, there is a need to transform the existing climate of the schools, aiming to become cooperative and student-centered (Kim, 2013; Mitiku et al., 2014).

Research shows that parents have various concerns in the implementation of Inclusive Education which includes the learning environment offered to children with

special needs and disabilities, the availability of special services, and individualized instruction for their children. Thus, making parents' attitudes regarding social-economic status, educational level, experience with inclusion, and type of their children's disability as one of the major contributing factors that challenge the implementation of inclusive education (Magnússon, 2019; Mapuranga et al., 2015).

The Indonesian government seems to be gradually recognizing the respect, safety, and provision of the right to inclusive education, for all students with special needs and disabilities through its commitment to Education for All (EFA) (Indrasti & Jalil, 2019). However, research showed that currently, Indonesia's implementation of inclusive education remains insufficient and unsatisfactory (Amka, 2017; Rante et al., 2020). In addition, given the context of Indonesia, Inclusive Education Implementation is inseparable from key stakeholders – government, educational institutions, and the community and parent networks. There's a need for providing adequate infrastructure, bringing in professionals to provide knowledge to teachers in the handling of students with special needs and disabilities, and building an excellent inclusive learning environment (Andiyanto & Hariri, 2022; Efendi, 2018; Imaniah & Fitria, 2018).

Researchers argue that the progress of inclusive education in Indonesia indicates diminutive progress since the signing of the Salamanca Statement. Since the publication of the Salamanca Statement in 1994, there are numerous amounts of research emerged addressing the issue (Nilholm, 2021). Despite the innovative knowledge in evidence-based inclusive educational practice, a substantial gap remains between the accrued knowledge and its effectiveness in achieving the goals of inclusion (Grima-Farrell et al., 2011). The research-to-practice gap is the primary factor interfering with the progress in implementing Inclusive Education. Therefore, this scoping review investigates contributing factors from various research conducted in Indonesia, which enable the success of research to practice in education settings.

B. Methods

A scoping review is a speedy knowledge synthesis wherein the components of the systematic review process are condensed or deleted to generate information promptly (Tricco et al., 2015). It is relatively novel however, there is increasing interest and it is becoming a common approach in mapping comprehensive subject matters. It follows a systematic approach to map evidence on a specific subject matter and to identify main concepts, theories, resources, and knowledge gaps. Due to its process variability, scholars are continually seeking a methodological standardized process to ensure effectiveness and evidential value (Pham et al., 2014; Tricco et al., 2018). In this study, the researchers utilized the scoping review framework by Arksey and O'Malley to achieve clarity and transparency (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

The framework is comprised of five stages; (a) identifying the research question, (b) determining relevant studies, (c) study selection, (d) charting the data, and (e) finally collating, summarizing, and reporting the results.

1. Review Questions

This review has two review questions. (1) What is known in the literature about the current progress of Indonesia in Inclusive Education Implementation? (2) What have been reported to be facilitators and/or factors contributing to the progress of Indonesia in Inclusive Education (IE) Implementation?

2. Inclusion Criteria

- 1) Those related to the Implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) in Indonesia
- 2) Those related to the progress or improvement of the Implementation of IE
- 3) The articles should have been published in the peer-reviewed journal
- 4) Language restriction – articles are written in Indonesian and English
- 5) Five years of publication

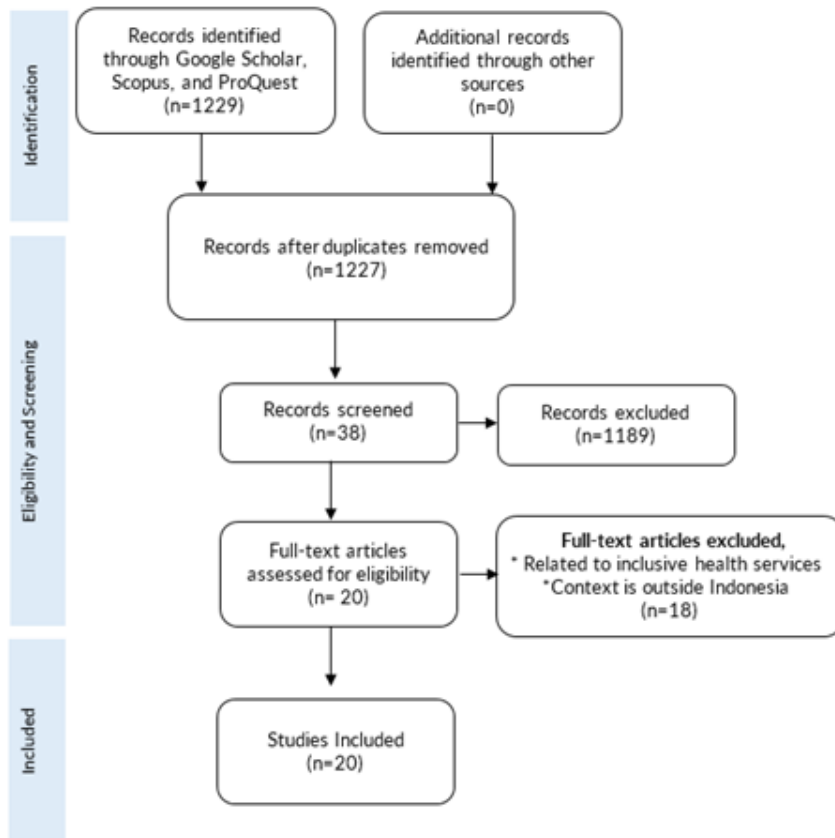
3. Exclusion Criteria

- 1) Those irrelevant to the Implementation of IE in Indonesia
- 2) Those irrelevant to the progress or improvement of the Implementation of IE
- 3) Preprints
- 4) No access to the full text

4. Search Strategy

To ensure a systematic process of wide literature search, the researchers utilized three databases; Google Scholar, Scopus, and ProQuest. The keywords used are “inclusive education”, “inclusive schools”, “Indonesia”, “progress” and “evaluation”. During the initial search, a total of 1,229 literature, falling to 1227 after applying screening for duplicates. Then, the inclusion criteria were applied, resulting to a total of 38 literatures. Through the title and abstract 38 articles were screened considering the exclusion criteria, thus, a total of 22 published articles only were included in this review. Below is the search strategy process which adopted the PRISMA flowchart.

Figure 1. Search Strategy Process adopted the PRISMA Flowchart



5. Data Analysis

This review utilized the thematic analysis to analyze the data and identified the progress of inclusive education implementation in Indonesia, and the factors contributing to its progress. Thematic Analysis involves developing an interactive process of data interpretation, using structure as the distinctive outcome (Neuendorf, 2018). It is focused on the identification of frequent patterns, ideas, and themes in a textual data set. It is a common and core process of most qualitative research. It does not encompass statistical analysis, and it seeks to develop concepts based on the acquired data (Jason & Glenwick, 2016).

C. Findings and Discussions

This scoping review sought to determine the current progress of Inclusive Education Implementation in Indonesia and investigate the contributing factors to the progress of the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia through the various literature.

1. Current Progress of Indonesia in Inclusive Education Implementation

Table 1 presented the five themes that describe the current progress of Inclusive Education Implementation in Indonesia. Particularly, five themes that were derived from 20 journal articles are (1) several inclusive, innovative, and integrated learning programs, (2) the gradual improvement of teachers' competence and attitude towards IE, (3) growing collaboration in IE implementation, (4) increasing society's respect for IE, and (5) the room for improvement.

Table 1

Themes describing the current progress of Indonesia in Inclusive Education Implementation

No.	Theme/s	No. of Journal Articles Supporting Each Theme
1	Several Inclusive, Innovative, and Integrated Learning Programs	6
2	Gradual Improvement of Teachers' competence and attitude towards IE	4
3	Growing collaboration in IE Implementation	4
4	Increasing society's Respect for IE	2
5	Room for Improvement in IE Implementation	4

Source: Data Analysis of 20 Journal Articles (Full-text) included in the Scoping Review

Out of 20 articles reviewed, six articles presented various inclusive, innovative, and integrated learning programs for children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) in inclusive education settings in Indonesia. Throughout history, Indonesia's inclusive education system has progressed from segregation to inclusive patterns (Kurniawan & Nurhasanah, 2020). Several learning programs were developed to support the countries' advocacy for inclusive education which increases the motivation, awareness, and self-confidence of the students with SEND (Asrowi et al., 2019; Mansur et al., 2023; Oktavia, 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2020). Since Indonesia signed the Salamanca declarations, the country set up some inclusive schools and innovative research addressing the learning of Students with SEND in an inclusive setting (Wibowo & Muin, 2018). Based on research, during the pandemic, hybrid learning in inclusive schools in some parts of the country was successfully implemented. The success was supported by the aspects that were believed to increase its effectiveness during the pandemic including using innovative and inclusive learning instructions and adaptive learning media (Rachmawati et al., 2022).

Secondly, the result of the scoping review showed that there is a gradual improvement in teachers' competence and attitude towards Inclusive Education in Indonesia. Currently, the government of Indonesia is implementing teaching

profession reformation through a comprehensive national policy. In addition, the government is running a sustainable system for developing teacher professionalism and competence (Estriyanto et al., 2017). In several provinces of Indonesia, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are increasing and influenced by their length of training, and experience in handling Students with SEND in an inclusive education setting (Arianti et al., 2022; Ediyanto et al., 2021; Junaidi, 2020; Junaidi et al., 2021).

Moreover, collaboration among inclusive education providers in Indonesia is flourishing. Collaboration among educators can be considered the main concern in the implementation of inclusive practices within schools and universities in Indonesia. The universities have huge responsibilities in resolving the issue regarding the competence of teachers in inclusive schools (Arlinwibowo et al., 2020; Hakimian et al., 2021; Paju et al., 2022; Rasmitadila et al., 2021). Collaboration among inclusive schools and special education schools regarding the recruitment of teachers with special education backgrounds is expected to improve the selection of teachers with better competence since universities can meet the competency standards for primary school teachers graduates who will become future inclusive primary school teachers (Poernomo, 2016; Rasmitadila et al., 2021).

Furthermore, two (2) of the journal articles reviewed support Indonesia's society's increasing respect towards inclusive education. Society is comprised of several aspects - family is the primary social unit where children grow into adults - family members interact with each other according to the predominant social and cultural mores particularly parent-child, and as groups. A means of control is the government, which is represented by the political institution (Ebrahim, 1982; Williamson, 2006). In this review Indonesian families, specifically the parent, and the Indonesian government are developing respect for IE implementation (Adiputra et al., 2019; Indrasti & Jalil, 2019).

Lastly, this review finds out that amidst the progress of the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, there is remaining room for improvement, particularly in school heads' leadership and inclusive education management, pedagogical competence of the teachers, and the community's perceptions towards students with SEND (Muhibbin & Hendriani, 2021; Rasmitadila et al., 2021; Rusmono, 2020; Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021). These challenges in the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia give the country room for improvement in terms of inclusive education management, and sustaining the current progress in terms of increasing teachers' competence (Kurniawati, 2021). Likewise, research indicates that the community is the primary determinant of inclusion, and there is a necessity to undertake actions to alleviate barriers to the implementation of inclusive education (Arnaiz-Sánchez et al., 2022).

This review has presented the most recent progress of inclusive education implementation in Indonesia since all the journal articles reviewed were published in the past five years. The progress identified can serve as the recent basis for future research in the field of inclusive education in the country. Research conducted by Grima-Farrell et al., (2011) showed that there was a huge research-to-practice gap, but in this review, it is implied that Indonesia is progressing but at a gradual rate due to persisting challenges that must be considered as room for improvement (Grima-Farrell et al., 2011).

2. Factors Contributing to the Progress of Inclusive Education Implementation

In Table 2 factors contributing to the progress of inclusive education implementation in Indonesia are presented. A total of five (5) factors transpired from the 20 journal articles reviewed namely (1) higher teacher competence and awareness, (2) good government support, (3) multisectoral collaboration and coordination, (4) profound legislative support, and (5) student-focused strategies.

Table 2

Themes identified as factors contributing to the progress of inclusive education implementation in Indonesia

No.	Themes	Total No. of Journal Articles Supporting Each Theme
1	Higher teacher competence and awareness	5
2	Good government support	2
3	Multisectoral Collaboration and Coordination	4
4	Profound legislative support	2
5	Student-focused strategies	7

Source: Data Analysis of 20 Journal Articles (Full-text) included in the Scoping

Initially, based on the data from the articles reviewed, higher teacher competence and awareness of inclusive education contribute greatly to success in reaching the goals of inclusion in education settings. Generally, teacher competence is reckoned a requisite for the effective implementation of inclusive practice and higher teacher competence is linked with outstanding student achievement outcomes for students with or without SEND (Pit-Ten Cate et al., 2018). On the other hand, teachers' awareness and knowledge of inclusive education bridge theory-to-practice in the actual delivery of principles of inclusion (Dapudong, 2014). Research supported the argument that teachers with a more in-depth understanding of inclusive education showed more positive attitudes and more confidence to implement inclusive practices (Krischler et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, the second contributing factor to the progress of inclusive education implementation that emerged is good governance support. Good government support is necessary for fulfilling the sense of inclusion. Government participation is a requirement in addressing the proper recruitment of special education aides, professional development, inclusive school management, and provision of facilities and infrastructures (Arlinwibowo et al., 2020; Kurniawan & Nurhasanah, 2020).

Moreover, multisectoral collaboration and coordination between education providers, the communities, and the government have an enormous impact on the progress of inclusive education implementation in Indonesia. A multi-relational collaboration between the implementers is one key component that must be supported and encouraged by the government to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia. Also, the success of inclusive education implementation requires collaborative interaction between teachers and parents. Collaboration per se reflects and defines inclusion (Adams et al., 2016; Bouillet, 2013; Rasmitadila et al., 2021).

In addition, it is determined that profound legislative support for inclusive education implementation portrays Indonesia's full commitment to Education for All (EFA). In Indonesia, there is a significant growth in the number of schools implementing inclusive education policies (Mulyadi, 2017). The Indonesian government is regulating compliance with the national standard for inclusive education implementation (Karya et al., 2021). Legal measures in the formation of an inclusive education system are the main factor that protects the rights of persons with special education needs and disabilities (Iryna & Olena, 2020). Likewise, inclusive education gets increasingly taken up within international policy discourse, thus, making it the aspiration for countries to pursue the goals of inclusion (Danforth & Naraian, 2015).

Lastly, among the five factors determined through this review is having student-focused efforts to implement inclusive education. This factor is supported by seven research selected in this review. In Indonesia, the previous literature presented several practices that were identified as student-focused strategies namely role-playing, innovative learning models, and educational games. Having student-focused strategies ensures the best interests of all students. Focusing on the students' participation and engagement are inclusive practices that should become norms. Applying student-focused learning strategies can create a positive learning environment in the classroom and promotes the rights of Students with SEND (Friesen et al., 2023; Grové & Laletas, 2023; Plows & Whitburn, 2017; Tahirova et al., 2021).

This review reveals that several studies report on Indonesia's progress in the implementation of inclusive education in terms of inclusive, innovative, and integrated learning programs, improvement of teachers' competence, collaboration efforts, society's respect towards persons with special needs and disabilities, and several challenges which can be considered for improvement.

In this review, both progress and factors influencing the progress were determined. According to Nilholm (2021), numerous research addresses the issue of inclusive education (Nilholm, 2021). Meanwhile, Grima-Farell (2011) concluded that there's a substantial research-to-practice gap in terms of inclusion (Grima-Farrell et al., 2011). Thus, this review present additional evidence that in Indonesia there are increasing study dealing with inclusive education. In addition, this review identified the factors that influence the progress of inclusive education specifically in Indonesia. In choosing the articles for review, several exclusion criteria were set, however, using a different cluster of exclusion criteria could influence and bring sensible variation in the result with the final sample. Also, this review has limitations due to the accessibility of several works of literature.

D. Conclusion

An increasing number of studies report on Indonesia's progress in the implementation of inclusive education in terms of inclusive, innovative, and integrated learning programs, improvement of teachers' competence, collaboration efforts, society's respect towards persons with special needs and disabilities, and several challenges serve as a room for improvement. Factors contributing to the gradual progress of the country's inclusive education implementation are (1) teacher competence and awareness about inclusive education, (2) good government support, (3) multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination, (4) profound legal support which stands as the foundation of inclusive education in the country, and (5) student-focused strategies.

Since the five identified factors are evidence-based, these factors can be considered indicators for future inclusive education program evaluation. In addition, policymakers, education providers, and local stakeholders must prioritize these five main factors in their agenda for future development to ensure the sustainability of the current progress of Indonesia's inclusive education impending goals.

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