Inclusive Education: Survey on Teachers' Perception of Its Implementation

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Abstrak

Pendidikan inklusif masih merupakan hal yang bariu di dunia Pendidikan di Indonesia. Guru memiliki peran penting dalam proses pembelajaran dan persepsi guru terhadap kelas inklusif akan mempengaruhi kualitas pelaksanaan kelas inklusif. Untuk itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk. menganalisis persepsi guru terhadap implementasi kelas inklusif. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan metode survey dengan melibatkan 285 orang guru di Indonesia sebagai responden. Data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kuisioner yang terdiri dari beberapa pertanyaan tertutup dan beberapa pertanyaan terbuka. Data yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa guru-guru di Indonesia memiiki persepsi yang positif terhadap pelaksanaan kelas inklusif. Namun, mereka masih merasa belum memiliki pengetahuan yang cukup untuk melaksanakan kelas inklusif yang berkualitas. Selain itu, pelatihan mengenai pelaksanaan kelas inklusif masih dirasa sangat terbatas sehingga belum mampu membuat guru-guru merasa yakin dalam melaksanakan kelas inklusif dengan baik. Dari temuan tersebut dapat disimpulkan bahwa guru-guru di Indonesia memiliki persepsi yang positif terhadap pelaksanan kelas inklusif, namun masih belum yakni dapat melaksanakannya dengan maksimal. Sehingga, dukungan dari pemerintah, terutama Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi untuk memfasilitasi Pendidikan dan pelatihan implementasi kelas inklusif bagi guru-guru menjadi sebuah keharusan untuk mewujudkan kelas inklusif dan Pendidikan inklusif yang berkualitas.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Inklusif, Kelas Inklusif, Persepsi Guru

Abstract

Inclusive education is still something new in Indonesia's education system. Teachers have an essential role in the learning process, and teachers' perceptions of inclusive classes influence the quality of inclusive class implementation. For this reason, this research aims to analyse teachers' perceptions of implementing inclusive classes. This research was carried out using a survey method involving 285 teachers in Indonesia as respondents. The data in this study was collected using a questionnaire consisting of several closed and several open questions. The collected data was then analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Based on the quantitative data, this research found that teachers in Indonesia have positive perceptions of implementing inclusive classes. However, from the qualitative data, it was found that they still feel they need more knowledge to implement quality inclusive classes. Additionally, training regarding implementing inclusive classes is still very limited, so it has yet to make teachers feel confident in implementing inclusive classes. Thus, this study concludes that teachers in Indonesia positively perceive implementing inclusive classes but cannot implement them optimally. So, support from the government, especially the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, to facilitate education and training in implementing inclusive classes for teachers is necessary to realize inclusive classes and quality inclusive education.

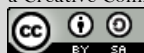**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Inclusive Classes, Teacher Perceptions

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a system that considers each student's right to a high-quality education, regardless of their differences and uniqueness (Bryant et al., 2008; Long & Guo, 2023). Inclusive education is necessary because of the enormous diversity and heterogeneity in classrooms. Indonesia is a highly diverse nation with many distinct features. Indonesia is a multi-ethnic country with hundreds of distinct ethnic and sub-ethnic groupings. According to previous study Indonesian society's plurality has two potentials: it can lead to conflict and possible disintegration and catalyze social advancement and dynamic change (Delima & Cahyawati, 2021; Supandi & Senam, 2019). It must be empowered for the positive potential to contribute to Indonesia's growth. On the other hand, the negative potentials must be considered because improper handling and treatment may result in dangerous disintegrations. Based on current observations, it is clear that there have been multiple racial riots in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of inclusive education in emphasising intercultural awareness and explicitly fostering multicultural understanding. The Minister of Education and Culture's Regulation No. 70 of 2009 on inclusive education for students who have disabilities and potential intelligence and/or special talents further prove the significance of inclusive education. According to the regulation, inclusive education delivers instruction that gives all students, including those with special needs and those with the potential for intelligence and/or special talents, the chance to engage in learning alongside other students in a classroom setting.

The purpose of inclusive education is to provide the widest possible opportunities to all students who have physical, emotional, mental, and social needs or have the potential for intelligence and/or talent to obtain quality education following their needs and capabilities and to make that happen by providing education that respects diversity and is non-discriminatory for all students (Garcia-Melgar et al., 2022; Iarskaia-Smirnova et al., 2024; Wächter et al., 2024). This shows that children with special needs also have the right to get the same opportunities as other (regular) children in education. Currently, Indonesia provides educational services for children with special needs through three types of educational institutions: special schools (SLB), special elementary schools (SDLB), and integrated education (Herdiyanto et al., 2020; Rahman, 2014). SLB, the oldest special educational institution, accommodates children with the same types of disorders, so there are SLBs for children with visual impairments (blind), SLBs for children with hearing impairments (deaf), SLBs for children with thinking and intelligence impairments (visually impaired), SLBs for children with physical and motor obstacles, SLBs for children with emotional and behavioural obstacles, and SLBs for children with multiple obstacles (Friantary et al., 2020; Ulmi, 2013).

Meanwhile, SLB serves a diverse range of children with special needs. In the meantime, integrated education uses a conventional school with the same curriculum, teachers, resources, and instructional activities to accommodate students with special needs. It has only served kids with vision impairments thus far, though, and even in those cases, the progress is not particularly encouraging, as many ordinary schools are hesitant to accept students with special needs (Wahyudi & Huda, 2019). In this sense, educational services for kids with special needs (ABK) are available in all settings, including regular/general and special schools. They are no longer limited to special schools. Given the current legislation trend, it seems inevitable that all aspiring teachers will work in public schools. Teachers must receive educational competencies, and this provision needs to be realised in inclusive education courses or education for children with special needs (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022; Mulya & Khoiri, 2023).

Comparing the meaning of an outstanding child with that of children with special needs reveals a wider definition for the former. Regarding their growth and development,

children with special needs are defined as those who, in contrast to other children in need of special education services, are considerably more conscious of their limitations (mental, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional). Students with disabilities are defined as those who are blind, deaf, speech impaired, mentally disabled, learning difficulties, slow to learn, autistic, have motor disorders, become victims of abuse of narcotics, illegal drugs, and other addictive substances; and have other disorders (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015; Witzel & Mize, 2018). Individuals with special needs vary from one another in certain ways. Integrating students with special needs, or those with hurdles or impairments, into educational programmes is called inclusive education. Understanding the significance of including children with disabilities in the curriculum, environment, and other settings is made possible by inclusive principles, which provide understanding regarding the importance of accepting children with disabilities into the curriculum, environment, and social interactions at school (Arnold & Reed, 2019; Mulya & Khoiri, 2023).

Within the global education context, inclusive education encompasses not only the inclusion of students with special needs, giftedness, and/or potential intelligence but also the inclusion of all students, irrespective of their differences in social backgrounds, cultures, religions, gender, and other characteristics (McGunagle & Zizka, 2020; Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2024). The United Nations has reinforced the significance of inclusive education with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG No. 4 pertains to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting opportunities for lifelong learning for all individuals. Given the conceptual definitions presented, it is possible to conclude that implementing inclusive education includes various potential challenges, such as dealing with pupils of varying talents, social backgrounds, and other disparities. It necessitates specialised educational skills, including essential classroom management abilities. There has been a lot of research on inclusive education for students with special needs. Several studies aimed to improve the performance of students with special needs (N N Padmadewi et al., 2022; Sari Puspita et al., 2019; Sumeningsih et al., 2017). None of the research examined teachers' perceptions and opinions about their abilities or the benefits of inclusive education, particularly in Bali. Even though none of the research focuses on teachers' viewpoints on inclusive education, there are implicit, consistent findings that suggest that educating children in an inclusive classroom involves several challenges. Incorporating children with special needs into traditional classrooms presents new challenges (N N Padmadewi & Artini, 2017; Ni Nyoman Padmadewi et al., 2023).

Teachers' perceptions about inclusive education are crucial in determining the success of implementing inclusive education itself. Teachers with a positive and deep understanding of inclusive education tend to be better prepared and able to accommodate the needs of all students, including those with special needs (Almalky & Alrabiah, 2024; Woodcock et al., 2022). This favourable perception also creates a more accepting and supportive learning environment, which is the essence of inclusive education. Without the right perception, efforts to implement inclusive education can be hampered by a lack of support and understanding on the part of teachers, which can potentially reduce the program's effectiveness.

Therefore, understanding and improving teachers' perceptions of inclusive education is important to ensuring that every student gets an equal opportunity to learn and develop in an inclusive environment. Therefore, the study's purpose is to analyze the teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and challenges for implementation. This study emphasizes an in-depth exploration of teachers' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education. Not only focusing on their acceptance or understanding, this study also includes dimensions such as professional readiness, practical experience, and barriers faced. This approach

provides more comprehensive insights than previous studies that often only measure general attitudes.

2. METHOD

The study took the form of a survey. A questionnaire was created to gather the necessary information. It includes closed-ended questions for numeric responses and qualitative elements for descriptive responses. The questionnaire was tested and examined and determined to be reliable and valid. A Google Form was used to send the questionnaire to each respondent, and it was distributed over three days to give them enough time to answer every question. There were 285 respondents in total, dispersed throughout Indonesia. Figure 1 provides an overview of the respondents' workplaces.
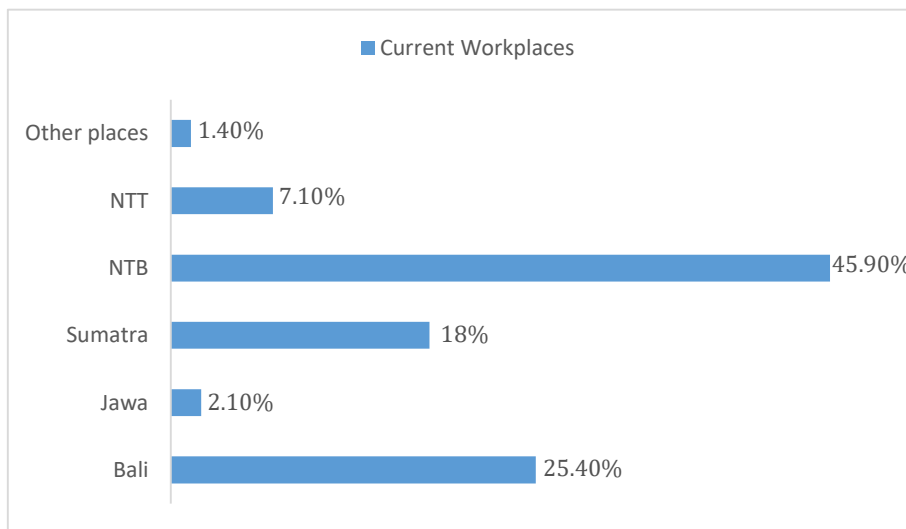
Figure 1. Respondents' Current Workplaces

The samples were selected randomly. Figure 1 shows that the respondents are teachers of senior high school, primary school, junior high school, and kindergarten. They are from all over Indonesia, representing West Indonnesia (Java and Sumatra), Central Indonesia (Bali), and West Indonesia (NTT (East Nusa Tenggara) and NTB (West Nusa Tenggara), with 1.4% from other areas of Indonesia. The samples came from a random selection. Then category of teacher respondents is show in Figure 2.
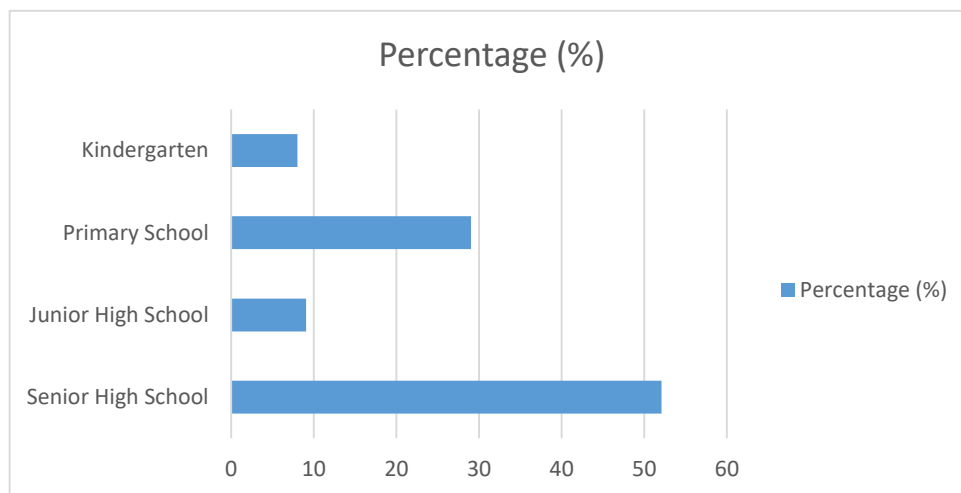

Figure 2. Category of Teacher Respondents

Figures 1 and Figure 2 demonstrate that the respondents are educators working in senior high school, primary school, junior high school, and kindergarten settings. They come from all over Indonesia, with the majority coming from NTB (West Nusa Tenggara), Central Indonesia (Bali), West Indonesia (Sumatra), NTT (East Nusa Tenggara), Java, and others. 1.4% came from other regions of the country. In addition to the questionnaire, data was gathered through interviews to explain participants' understanding of inclusive education. All of the acquired data was then examined and interpreted before being completed. The analysis was both qualitative and quantitative.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data analysis results demonstrate that the teachers' perceptions fall into multiple categories, including their perception of their knowledge and comprehension of inclusive education's fundamental concepts, their attitude and beliefs about it, their perception of their competence, how inclusive education is implemented, the challenges and difficulties they face, whether or not they have received professional development and their overall assessment of their opinion about inclusive education. Teachers' perception of whether they know and understand the basic concept of inclusive education provides the specifics for each category is show in Figure 3.
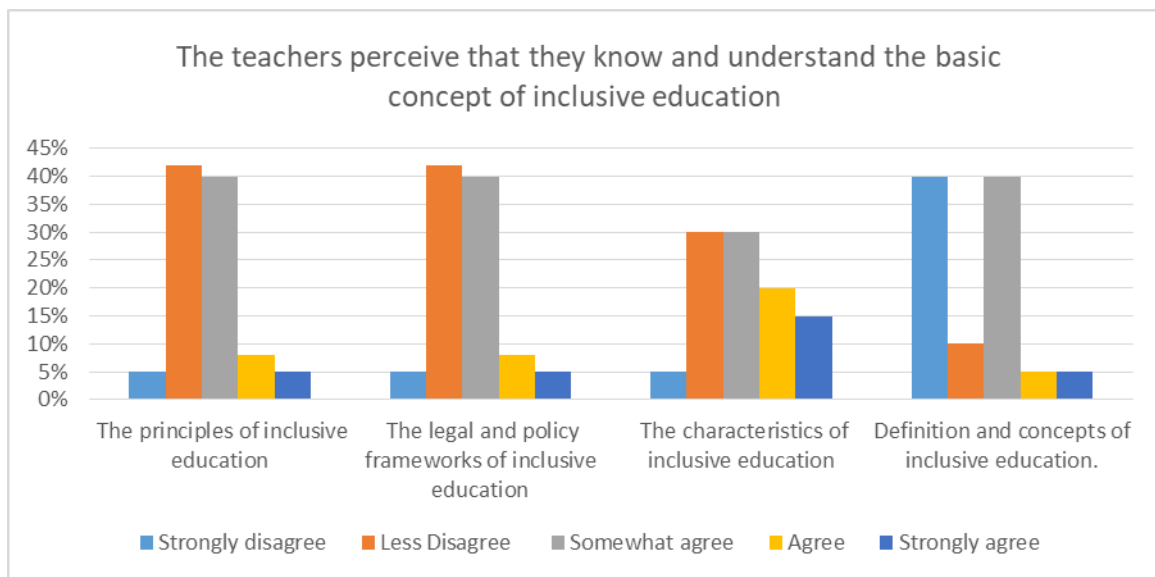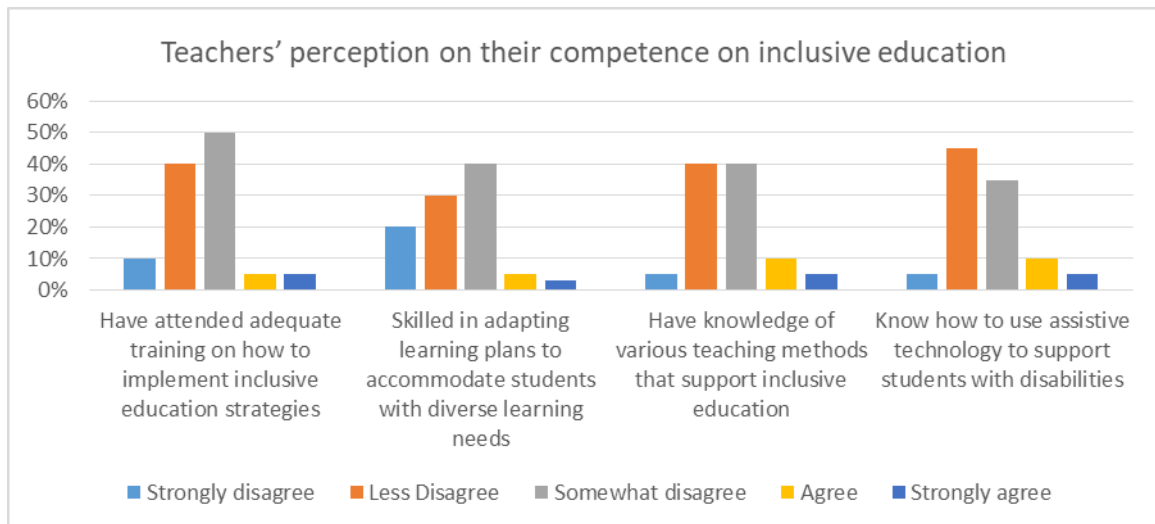

Figure 3. Teachers' Perception of their Understanding of the Basic Concept of Inclusive Education

Figure 3 reveals that the teachers perceive themselves as knowing and understanding the principles of inclusive education, the legal and policy framework of inclusive education, the characteristics of inclusive education, and the definition and concepts of inclusive education. However, the number of respondents who agree or disagree with this perception is less than 10%. Around 80% of the teachers have a negative perception, or, in other words, they do not know and understand the concept. Teachers' perception of their attitude and belief about inclusive education is show in Figure 4.
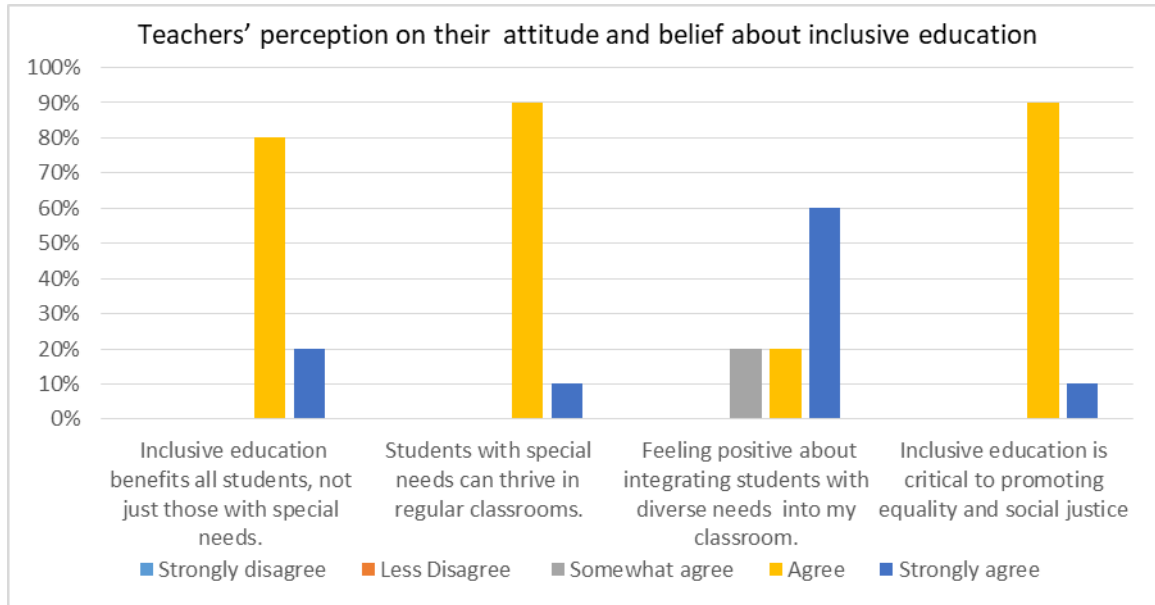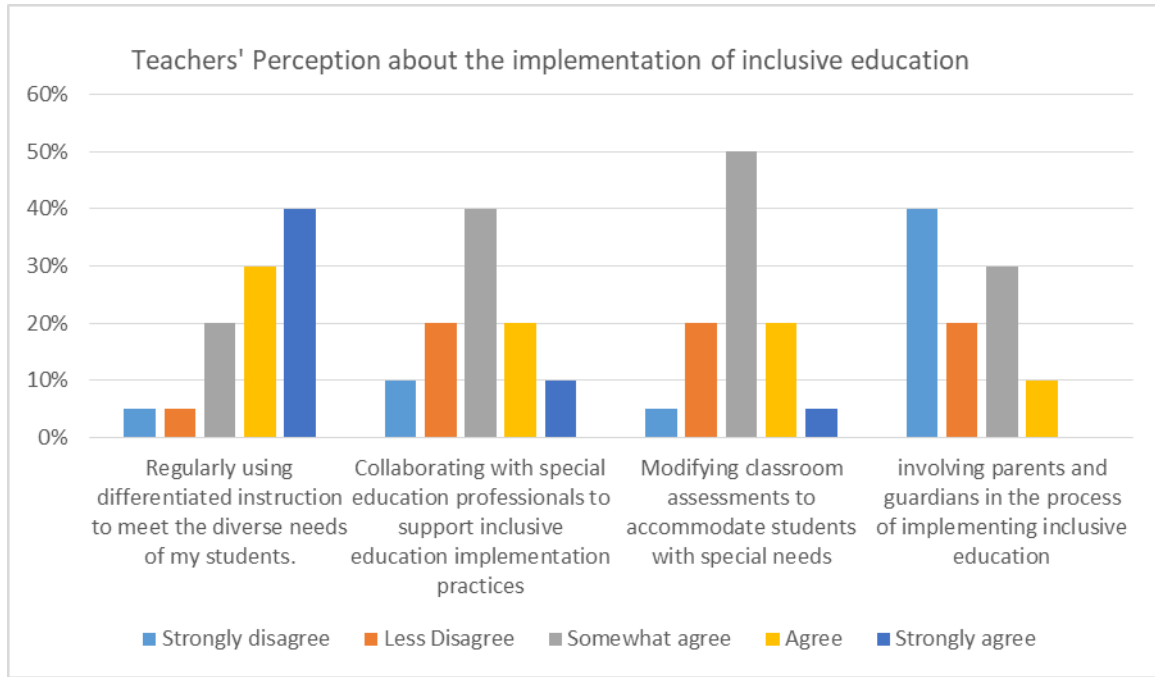
Figure 4. Teachers' Perception of Their Attitude and Belief about Inclusive Education

The data shown in Figure 4 indicate that all teachers agree or strongly agree with all of the statements, and they feel positive about integrating students with diverse needs into the classroom, even though 20% of respondents somewhat agree with this integration. Teachers also believe that inclusive education benefits all students, not just those with special needs and that students with special needs can thrive in regular classrooms. Teachers' perception of their competence in inclusive education is show in Figure 5.


Figure 5. Teachers' Perception of Their Competence in Inclusive Education

Several statements were posed to the teachers to ascertain their perceptions of their competence. The results are shown in Figure 5, where less than 10% of the teachers agree or strongly agree that they have the necessary training to implement inclusive education strategies, are adept at adapting lesson plans, are knowledgeable about teaching strategies to support inclusive education, and are aware of how to use assistive technology to support students with disabilities. The remaining teachers, or roughly 90% of the total, have a negative perception and strongly disagree or disagree that they are competent. Teachers' perception of the implementation of inclusive education is show in Figure 6.
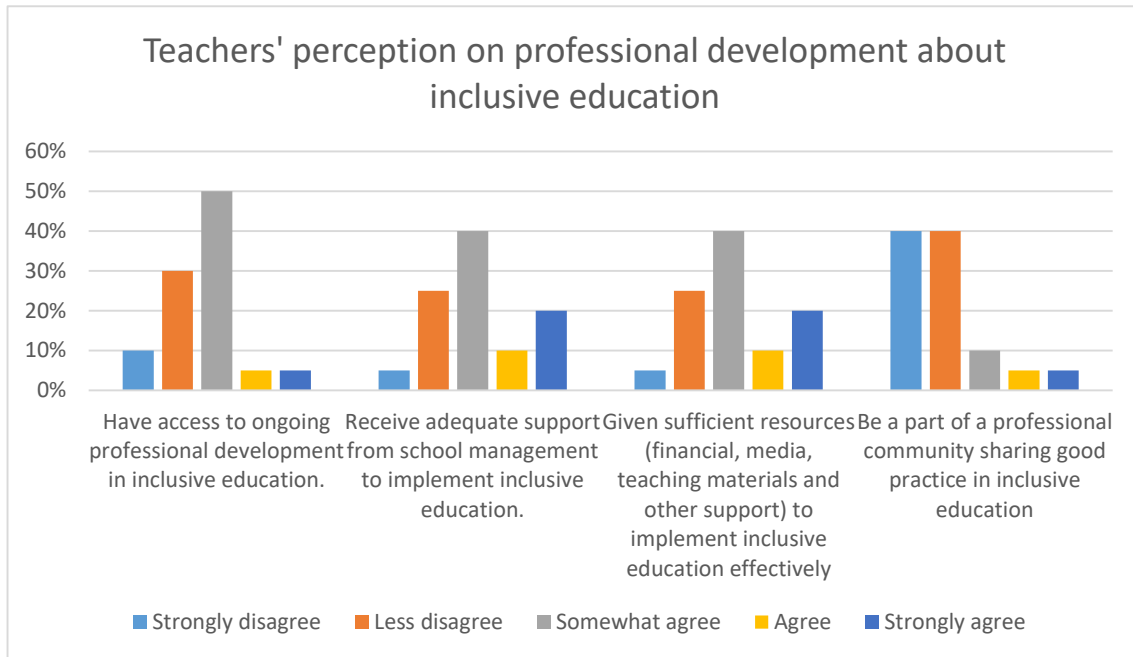
Figure 6. Teachers' Perception of the implementation of Inclusive Education

Figure 6 shows teachers' opinions on implementing inclusive education in their schools. Approximately 70% agree and strongly agree that they use differentiated instruction regularly to meet the diverse needs of their students; approximately 30% admit that they collaborate with professionals to support implementation practices; 30% admit that they modify assessments to accommodate students with special needs; and approximately 40% admit that they involve parents in the process of implementing inclusive education. However, more than half believe they slightly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the assertion about implementing differentiated instruction, collaborating, changing their evaluation, and including parents. Teachers' perception of challenges and difficulties in inclusive education is show in Figure 7.
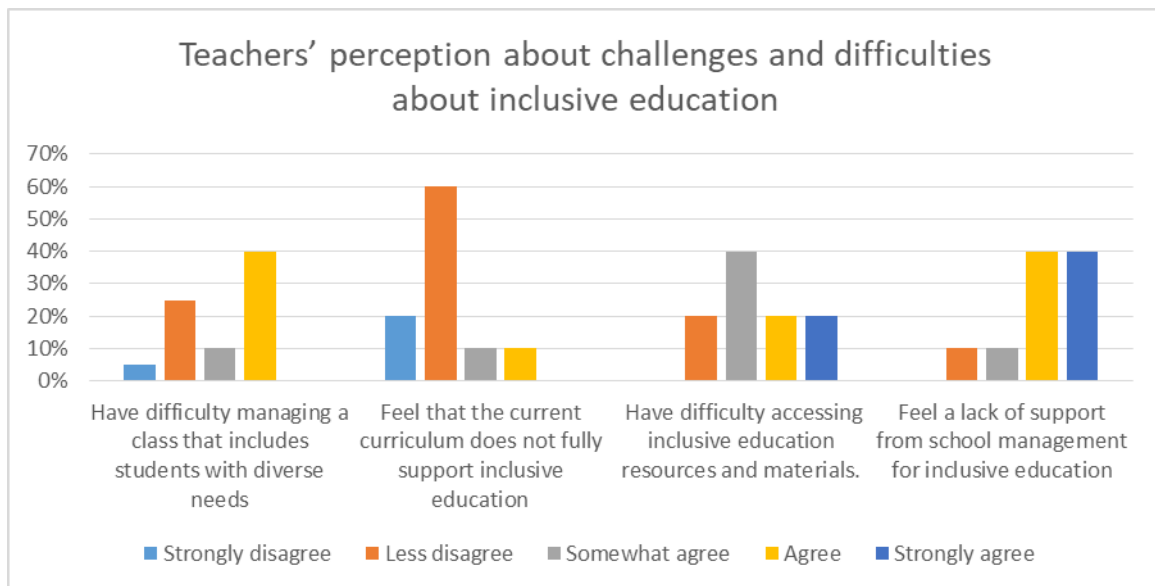
Figure 7. Teachers' Perception of Challenges and Difficulties in Inclusive Education

Data in Figure 7 show that teachers agree that they have difficulties managing a class with diverse needs, and about 80% feel a lack of support from school management for inclusive education. Around 70% have a positive perception that they disagree or strongly disagree that the current curriculum does not fully support inclusive education. Around 60% admit that they also have difficulties accessing inclusive education resources and materials. Teachers' perception of professional development about inclusive education is show in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Teachers' Perception of Professional Development about Inclusive Education

Base on Figure 8, several statements were presented to teachers in order to investigate the professional development they have received in the area of inclusive education. The data analysis results show that approximately 90% strongly disagree, disagree, or somewhat agree that they have access to professional development in inclusive education, 30% strongly disagree or disagree, and 40% somewhat agree that they receive adequate support from school management to implement inclusive education. About 30% believe they are provided adequate resources to effectively implement inclusive education, while only 10% believe they are members of a professional network that shares best practices. General perception of inclusive education is show in Figure 9.
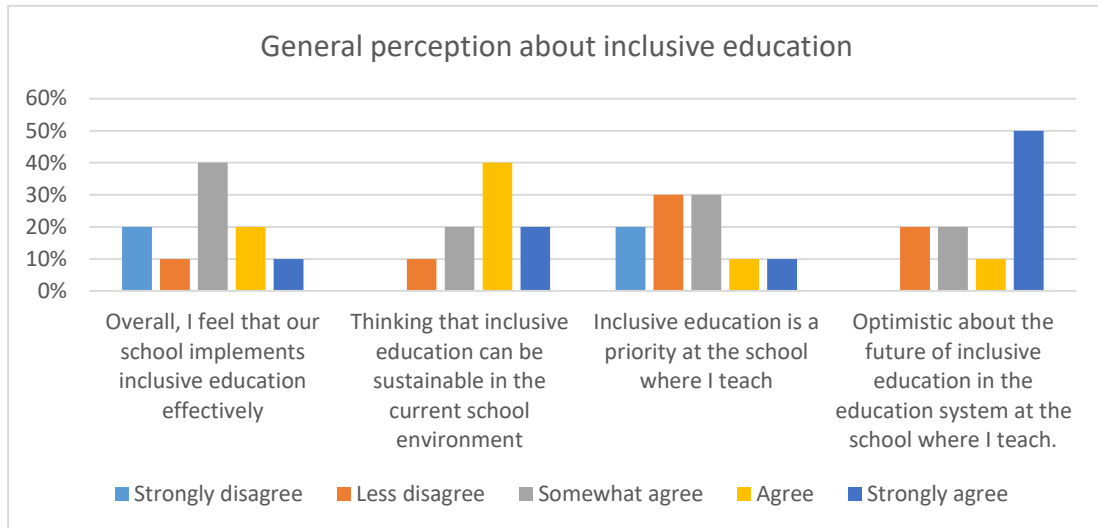
Figure 9. The General Perception of Inclusive Education

Figure 9 shows that 40% of teachers somewhat agree that inclusive education is implemented effectively in schools, 30% disagree or strongly disagree, and the remaining 30% agree or strongly agree. About 60% believe that inclusive education can be sustained in the current school environment, and 80% are optimistic about the future of inclusive education in the education system at the school where they teach, even though about 50% disagree or strongly disagree that inclusive education is a priority at their school. The perception of the need for teaching material for inclusive education is show in Figure 10.
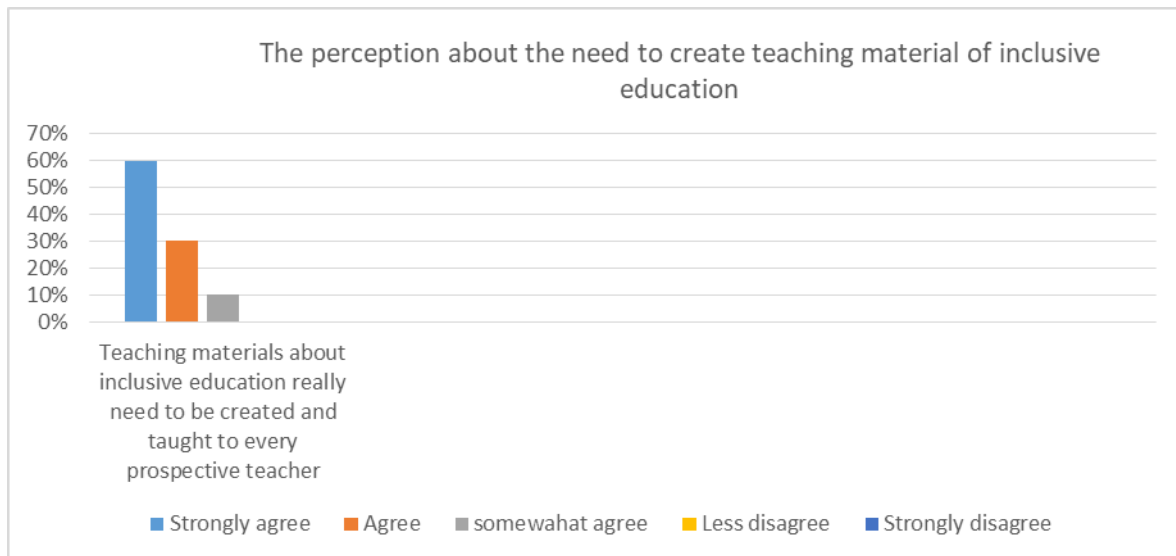
Figure 10. The Perception about the Need to Create Teaching Material for Inclusive Education

The survey's final question is whether teaching materials should be prepared and taught to every pre-service teacher. 90% agree, but 10% somewhat agree substantially. This suggests that any module or other materials for teaching inclusive education to potential teachers are urgently required. Interviews were conducted with them to explore more information about the teachers' perception of inclusive education. The interview was conducted using mobile conversations and it was conducted without any preparation at all.

The purpose is to get the authentic information. The interview was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia but presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Summary of Teachers' Perceptions as the Results of Interviews

Questions	Responses	Description
What do you understand about inclusive education? Please answer about its definition and characteristics using your own words!	In my view, inclusive education is the same as teaching children with special needs in normal schools, and I don't really understand the characteristics, ma'am. Actually, I don't really understand what the true concept of inclusive education is.	Five teachers who work at different school levels have similar answers.
How do you believe in integrating diverse students into the regular classroom?	- That's it, ma'am, I imagine it must be difficult to teach them; - If it were me, I would try to teach as best I can, even though I don't fully understand ABK; - If I teach children from various backgrounds and can communicate well, thank God, I feel confident I can do it. But I need to learn a lot if I teach ABK in my class. - I'll teach as best I can	The respondents provide various responses reflecting their beliefs about inclusive education.
How do you perceive your competence and skill in teaching an inclusive classroom? What kinds of training have you attended so far?	- That's normal, ma'am. There are rarely special workshops on inclusive education. Very, very rare! - I feel like I have a lot to learn, ma'am. It is very difficult to teach them, especially if there are ABK in the class, very active and never quiet; - I feel like I have a lot to learn, ma'am; I've never taught ABK in my class, ma'am, but it feels normal; - Classroom management is difficult, ma'am. You have to learn a lot. I have never participated in a workshop on Inclusive Education.	The respondents did not explicitly indicate whether they were competent or skilled; however, it can be implied that they are not confident about their competence and skills in teaching inclusive classrooms.

Base on Table 1, the results of the interviews are used to triangulate the information collected through the questionnaire. The questionnaire provided a blank space for each statement for clarification, but none of the respondents provided any information. The summary of teachers' perceptions of the methods used is show in Table 2.

Table 2. The Summary of Teachers' Perceptions of the Methods Used

Questions	Responses	Description
How do you usually teach students in an inclusive classroom? Maybe you need to	- I teach using the textbook, ma'am. If there are students who don't understand, I give additional examples; - if there are children with special needs in	Five teachers who work at different school levels have

Questions	Responses	Description
mention any strategies or methods.	- the class, I give them worksheets, and I help if needed; - I teach using worksheets. Sometimes, I use technology or video to teach students, but I don't know any special technological media for teaching ABK children.	similar answers.
Do you think a module about inclusive classrooms for university education is needed, and should prospective teachers be taught it?	- I feel it is very necessary, ma'am, especially for prospective teacher students; - Yes, I feel it is necessary, ma'am, in schools we must be ready to teach children who need it if they are included in regular classes; - I agree, much needed; - Very necessary ma'am	All respondents agree that prospective teachers need a course about inclusive education.

Based on Table 2, the interviews, it is fair to conclude that most lack the necessary knowledge or skills to deal with children in inclusive classroom settings. They also don't focus on the exact methods or strategies used. The teacher typically changes their worksheets or provides more examples to accommodate pupils with varying skills. They also admitted to lacking specialised abilities in the use of technology-based media for teaching in an inclusive classroom despite using a variety of technology-based media.

Discussion

Teachers' perspectives on inclusive education are critical for establishing effective education in practice. Their views and perceptions will determine how they put their values into action in the daily practices of inclusive teaching and learning (Almalky & Alwahbi, 2023; Lyra et al., 2023; Mentel et al., 2024). The study's findings show that teachers are positive about including students with special needs in the classroom. Teachers believe that inclusive education benefits all students, not just those with special needs, which children with special needs can achieve in regular classrooms, and that inclusive education is critical to achieving equity and social justice. This is essential, as the basic foundation of effective inclusive classroom practices for quality education is derived from good perceptions. This is in line with the principle of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which, founded on the principle of leaving no one behind, assures that fair and quality education, as well as inclusion, are available to everyone, encouraging opportunities for the underprivileged and vulnerable, including people with disabilities. The Indonesian government has shown a commitment to people with disabilities educational rights (Rofiah & Suhendri, 2023; Sheehy et al., 2024).

Comprehending inclusive education is crucial for successful implementation. Ensuring that all children, including those with disabilities, have access to a quality education in traditional classrooms is the aim of inclusive education. This strategy is now well-known worldwide. The ultimate goal is to increase school capacity to eliminate barriers to each student's involvement, achievement, attendance, and access (Carrington, 2023; Kusimo et al., 2019; Woodcock et al., 2022). The findings of this study, as shown through the questionnaire's results, show that several teachers acknowledged knowing and comprehending the fundamentals of inclusive education. But the investigation revealed by the interviews suggests that the teachers' grasp of inclusive education is incomplete. Even

those who acknowledged that they understood inclusive education well say it doesn't go beyond placing special needs pupils in normal classrooms. They are unaware that inclusive education can also accommodate typical students with differences in the classroom.

A systematic reform process that involves modifications to the curriculum, teaching methodologies, approaches, structures, and strategies is required for inclusion. The objective is to provide an environment that best meets the requirements and preferences of all kids within the proper age range. The goal is to equip all students within the appropriate age range with an environment that best suits their needs and preferences and an equitable and participatory learning experience. This is in line with the findings which state that there are no many trainings or professional development available on the topic of inclusive education which is demanded to improve the teachers' insight and competence on inclusive education and consequently improving students' accomplishment. Research demonstrates that inclusive education benefits students with special needs (Alsulami & Ault, 2024; Ruijs & Peetsma, 2009). The implementation of inclusive education can offer significant benefits to students from diverse backgrounds (Amka, 2019; Ni Nyoman Padmadewi et al., 2023).

Effective teaching and strong school leadership are the two most crucial elements in improving student achievement in education (Agirdag & Muijs, 2023; Bartanen et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2020). Teachers and school administrators must constantly improve their knowledge and abilities to apply the finest teaching approaches and be as effective as possible. Teachers acquire the skills necessary to support students' optimal learning. The sole strategy available to school systems to raise teachers' performance standards is professional development (Bai et al., 2020; Darmaji et al., 2022). Additionally, the only way for educators to improve their performance and boost student achievement is through professional development. Professional development is a mechanism schools use to guarantee that teachers continue to improve their practices throughout their careers.

The most effective professional development incorporates teams of teachers who focus on their students' needs. Professional development is required to learn and use new knowledge and abilities to help them perform better on the job (Gore et al., 2017; Österholm et al., 2024). Professional development encompasses various educational activities relevant to one's work (Coppe et al., 2024; Zeng, 2023). However, the survey shows that educators acknowledge they lack sufficient professional development, particularly in inclusive education. Providing training on inclusive education for students with special needs is quite rare.

Challenges and problems may arise from low competence and a lack of professional development in inclusive education. The survey's results validate that teachers perceive numerous obstacles and challenges when educating diverse students in inclusive classrooms (Alasim & Paul, 2019; Alsulami & Ault, 2024). These challenges include managing classroom behaviour, obtaining inclusive education resources and materials, and receiving insufficient support. This is in line with the previous research that shows that treating students in inclusive classrooms requires special skills in classroom management (Sproston et al., 2017).

The interview data indicates that they modified the levels of materials utilised, but no specific media were made for that purpose. The survey findings also revealed that some of them used differentiated instruction. Even though media is an essential part of education, particularly in inclusive classrooms, it needs to be presented to make it easier for students to learn and understand the lesson's goal (Aldahdouh et al., 2020; Jaya, 2018). Their ignorance of inclusive practices suggests a critical need for inclusive education. According to the interview results, people generally need more knowledge and experience with inclusive teaching methods (Aseery, 2023). For this reason, they concluded that course materials and literature on inclusive education should be created for teachers.

Research on teachers' perceptions of inclusive education provides important insights into the views and attitudes of teaching staff towards implementing inclusion policies in schools. The survey results show a variety of opinions, reflecting different levels of acceptance and readiness to face the challenges of inclusive education. However, this study has limitations because it does not consider the respondents' educational background or teaching experience. These two factors have the potential to influence teachers' perceptions substantially, given that teachers with more in-depth education and experience in inclusive education are likely to have more positive and realistic views. The absence of data regarding educational background and teaching experience makes the results of this research less comprehensive, so further research is recommended. A more in-depth analysis of these variables in the future will provide a more accurate and useful picture for developing policies and teacher training programmes in inclusive education.

4. CONCLUSION

Teachers positively perceive inclusive education and contend that including students with different backgrounds will benefit all students and advance social justice and high-quality education. Teachers also believe they lack a thorough understanding of inclusive education, making them feel less capable of managing the classroom and handling students effectively based on their needs. They hardly ever take part in training to work with special needs students and inclusive education. They acknowledged that differentiated instruction—which is necessary in inclusive classrooms—had been established. However, to improve the quality of education, multiple media types must be made available to students with a range of requirements in the classroom.

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