

Inclusive Education in Higher Education: Baseline Study at Universitas Negeri Malang

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Abstract: The implementation of inclusive education in higher education aims to ensure the fulfillment of the right of education for persons with disabilities. This study examined the implementation of inclusion at the Universitas Negeri Malang to obtain an illustration of the implementation of inclusive education. The three dimensions of inclusive education, including the creation of an inclusive culture, inclusive policies, and inclusive practices, become the framework for developing evaluation instruments. Respondents of this research were management staff, lecturers, education staff, and students. The creation of an inclusive culture and inclusive practice is highly rated by all stakeholders, with an average of 60. In contrast, the policy dimension deserves the greatest consideration as only students rated highly on the inclusive policy dimension. Many elements of management staff, lecturers, and education staff stated that they needed further information related to the inclusive policies.

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

The practice of inclusive education facilitating students with disability attempts to fulfill the student's right to attain education. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD), which has been ratified by the Indonesian government through Law No. 19 the Year 2011, asserts the assurance the accessible discrimination-free higher education and accessible proper accommodation for people with disability. Also, Law No. 8 the Year 2006, concerning people with disability, articulates the right of people with disability to attain education. In the context of sustainable development, inclusive education at the university level is one element of enhancing lifelong education quality and broad accessibility for people with disability (WEF), 2016).

In Indonesia, the participation of people with disability in completing higher education is still relatively low. The exact nuance is also indicated by the recent data showing only 18.17% of people with disability aged 19 to 24 years old completed their education, while the number decreases to 4.54% at the university level (Direktorat Statistik Kesejahteraan Rakyat, 2021). This low participation of people with disability in obtaining an education is also reported in a number of countries with low and moderate economic welfare (Hayes & Bulat, 2017).

Universitas Negeri Malang is one of the Indonesian Universities that welcome students with disability. From 2016 to 2022, this university reported 35 active students who had disabilities. Those students were dispersed in 14 study programs, with the majority of them taking the special education study program. In detail, among those students, 14 of them have a visual impairment, 12 of them have a hearing impairment, 6 of them have a physical-motoric impairment, while 2 and 1 students have autism and intellectual impairment, respectively.

The presence of these students with a disability carries particular challenges in the administration of more flexible and accommodative education for those students with specific disabilities. Therefore, the university's curriculum should be adjusted to the needs of students

with disabilities while also focusing on the optimization of their potential (Bunbury, 2020). For these students, the learning strategies and methods should be modified following their characteristics, including the provision of learning material and media, along with the assessment procedure. This learning adjustment requires a change in lecturers' attitude toward disability, as well as an enhancement of lecturers' competencies in transforming the learning for students with disability (González-Castellano et al., 2021). Meanwhile, ideally, ideally, the administration and assistance for students with disability at universities include the processes of new students' admission, learning achievement standard adjustment, learning content and material adjustment, accommodation during the learning process, adjustment of learning assessment, along with the accessibility of services and infrastructure, students and education service management, as well as funding for students with disability (Supena et al., 2019).

This study is a baseline study, a preliminary study concerning the learning of and services for students with disability at the Universitas Negeri Malang. Through a literature study, we obtained references related to inclusive education practices at universities. Nieminen suggests five practical components of the inclusivity assessment at universities. Those five components consist of proper accommodation, anti-ableism measures, appreciation for diversity, cooperation among students, and a support system (Nieminen, 2022). A qualitative study carried out by the *National Center for College Students with Disabilities* in the United States of America recommends four primary components in the management of inclusive education at university, namely support from the disability service institutions, classroom and learning environment, accessibility of campus environment, and social climate at the campus (Scott, 2019).

In addition, a research team from Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta has developed an instrument named *Metric for Inclusive Higher Education* (Prakosha & Martika, 2020), which uses three standards of culture, practice, and support. These three standards combine the three dimensions of inclusive education from the *index for inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) and the standard of accreditation for universities. The framework theory of index for inclusion has been commonly adopted to measure the progress of inclusive education implementation in primary education (Carrington & Duke, 2014). Also, the adoption of the index for inclusion at the university level has also started being reported (Losada Puente et al., 2022).

This study used three dimensions of inclusive education as the theoretical framework, consisting of constructing inclusive culture, developing inclusive learning practices, and inclusive policies. This theoretical framework refers to the index of inclusion established by Booth and Ainscow. This theoretical framework was selected as it was deemed more comprehensive in viewing the inclusivity at the educational institution level. Besides, the suggested indicators could be comprehended easily and clearly, and then they were adjusted into the context of higher education institutions in Indonesia.

METHOD

In this study, we used a questionnaire with three dimensions of inclusive education and indicators adapted from the index of inclusion as our instrument (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The dimensions, sub-dimensions, and indicators used in this study are presented in Table 1. In general, the questionnaire subsisted 40 statements using the Guttman scale with three choices of responses, namely yes, no, and requiring further information. The instrument validity was tested using face validity consulted to the Centre of Instrument Development, Selection, and Educational Evaluation of the Institute of Educational Research and Development, Universitas Negeri Malang. The validity test was carried out to ensure the feasibility of our instrument. Meanwhile, the reliability test was completed using Alpha Cronbach with a 0.744 result, which was above the minimum criteria of 0.70.

Table 1. Outline of Evaluation Instrument

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	No. Item
Constructing inclusive culture	Creating community	Support for students with disability from other students	1, 2, 3, 4
		Support for students with disability from staff (lecturer and educational staff)	5, 6, 7
		Cooperation between the university and parents of students with disability	8, 9, 10
	Shaping inclusive comprehension	Attempts to generate inclusive education comprehension among the members of the university	11, 12, 13, 14
Establishing inclusive policy	Developing educational facilities for students with disability	SOP for services directed at students with disability	15, 16, 17, 18
		Policies that ensure equal rights for students with disability	19, 20, 21
		Accessible services and infrastructure for students with disability	22, 23, 24, 25
	Developing social support for students with disability	Constructing a learning curriculum that is accessible for students with disability	26, 27, 28, 29
		Organizing support group for students with disability	39, 40
Developing inclusive practice	Developing an inclusive learning program	Developing learning programs following the needs of students with disability	31, 32
		Implementation of non-discriminatory learning	33, 34
	Resources organizing	Lecturers should be able to construct learning that is accessible for students with disability	35, 36,
		The university should facilitate the academic and non-academic development of students with disability	37, 38

During the data collection process, we involved students, lecturers, the dean, and educational staff, as the respondents. The selected students as our respondents were either students with a disability or those with a minimum of one semester of experience as volunteer assistants for students with disability. This criterion of respondent selection aided us in garnering valid data as we ensured that every respondent had direct experience in the practice of inclusive education. In total, we involved 53 students as our respondents, in which 15 of them were students with disability.

Similar to students' selection, we also selected lecturers who had direct experience teaching students with disability in the last two semesters as our respondents. In the end, we selected 39 lecturers. Additionally, we also involved 22 other respondents, who were the deans, vice deans, heads of departments, and coordinators of the study program. Meanwhile, for the educational staff, we also involved 84 staff from the student affair staffs, academic staff, and financial staff. In total, we had 198 respondents.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are discussed per dimension. According to the results of the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire outcome, our results are discussed in the following.

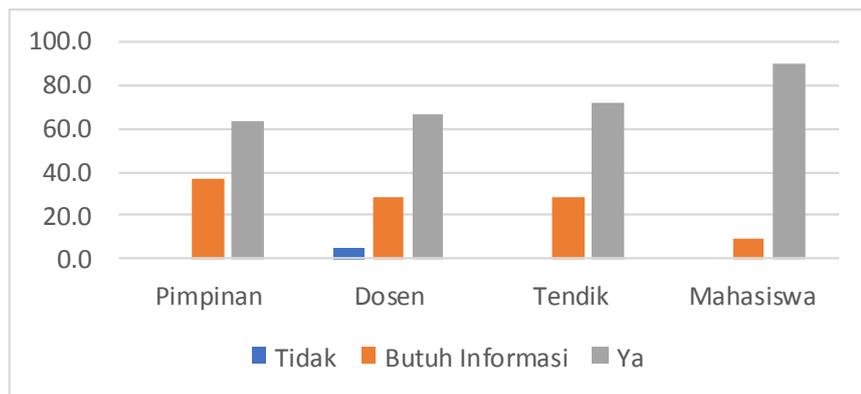


Figure 1. Stakeholders' Perception of Inclusive Culture

The construction of inclusive culture at Universitas Negeri Malang was measured through two sub-dimensions, namely building community and constructing inclusive comprehension. Our data suggested that 63% of the management staff presented a high perspective on constructing inclusive culture. The same great perception was also expressed by 66, 71, and 90% of lecturers, educational staff, and students, respectively. Consequently, inclusive culture has been well perceived by the academic members of Universitas Negeri Malang, as presented by the diagram showing the respondents' view on the construction of inclusive culture in Figure 1.

Figure 1 also illustrates that the management staff, lecturers, educational staff, and students at Universitas Negeri Malang still need further information on the construction of inclusive culture. It reveals that 37, 28, 29, and 10 % of management staff, lecturers, educational staff, and students still require advanced information on inclusive culture and its implementation. Therefore, some stakeholders at Universitas Negeri Malang are unsure of the inclusive education model and have minimal to no comprehension of the support level that should be provided for students with disability. Further, 6% of lecturers also admitted that inclusive culture had not been perceived at Universitas Negeri Malang, signifying the low number of lecturers with insufficient comprehension of inclusive education.

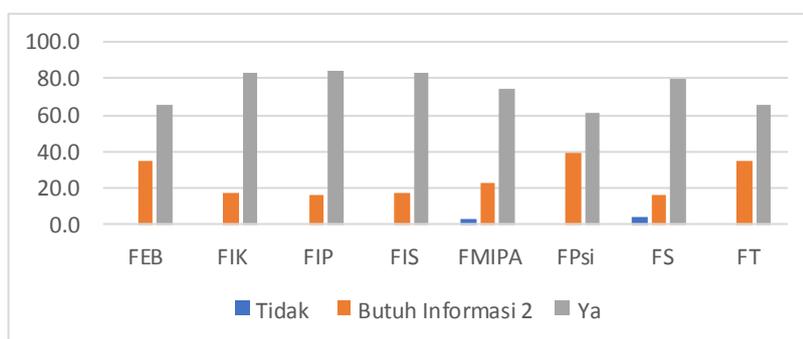


Figure 2. Perception of Inclusive Culture Construction at Faculty Level

Figure 2 illustrates the construction of inclusive culture at the faculty level. The data showed that more than 60% of stakeholders from each faculty presented a high perception of the establishment of inclusive education at Universitas Negeri Malang. Meanwhile, there were also 15 to 40 % of stakeholders who still require further information concerning the inclusive culture establishment. Besides, only 3 and 4% of stakeholders from the faculty of mathematics and natural sciences and faculty of letter mentioned no inclusive culture establishment at Universitas Negeri Malang.

The second dimension was the formation of inclusive policies. In this dimension, the students gave the highest scoring of 71%, while the management staff, lecturers, and educational staff only accorded 31, 28, and 33%. As presented in figure 3, many lecturers, management staff, and educational staff had minimum insights into inclusive policies at Universitas Negeri Malang, so they require much further relevant information. The inclusive policy indicators consisted of the SOP of services designed for students with disability, the presence of policies ensuring the equal right for students with disability, accessible services and infrastructure for students with disability, the development of a curriculum that accommodate students with disability, and the formation of support groups for students with disability.

There were 54, 48, 58, and 28% of respondents from management staff, lecturers, educational staff, and students who described their needs for a more transparent illustration of the planned inclusive policies, along with the curriculum developed to facilitate the development of and services for students with disability. Additionally, 13, 23, and 8% of management staff, lecturers, and educational staff mentioned the absence of inclusive policies at Universitas Negeri Malang, respectively.

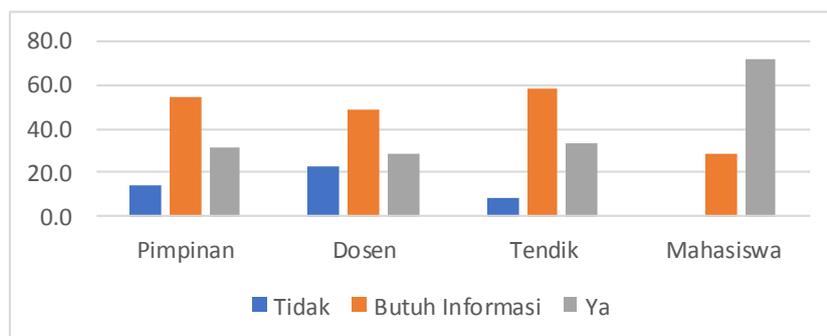


Figure 3. Stakeholders' Perception of Inclusive Policies

In Figure 3, we can observe the perception of the stakeholders from each faculty regarding the establishment of inclusive policies at Universitas Negeri Malang. The majority of respondents from each faculty agreed that they need more information on the inclusive education establishment. This finding signifies each faculty stakeholder's minimum familiarity with the SOP of services for students with disability, policies assuring equal rights for students with disability, accessible services and infrastructure for students with disability, development of an accommodative curriculum for students with disability, and establishment of student support for students with disability. There were 68% of stakeholders from the faculty of education science admitted the presence of inclusive policies. Contrastingly, the respondents from other faculty articulated the absence of inclusive regulation. Primarily, 20% of respondents from the faculty of psychology affirmed the absence of those policies.

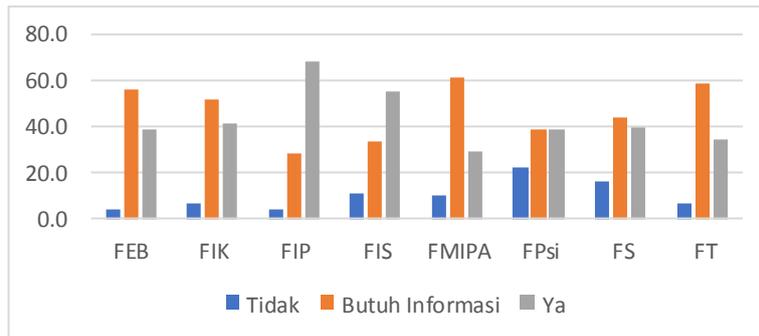


Figure 4. Inclusive Policies Perception at Faculty Level

The third dimension was the development of inclusive education practice. Some learning processes at Universitas Negeri Malang have been adjusted to the needs of students with disability. Thus, generally, we obtained excellent results in this dimension. Figure 5 showed that 68, 56, 60, and 81% of the management staff, lecturers, educational staff, and students were aware of the importance of comprehensive learning programs development that accommodates students with disability respectively. In measuring this dimension, we used four indicators of inclusive education practice, namely (1) developing learning programs based on the needs of students with disability; (2) implementation of non-discriminatory learning; (3) lecturers who are capable of developing accommodative learning for students with disability; and (4) university support for the academic and non-academic development of students with disability.

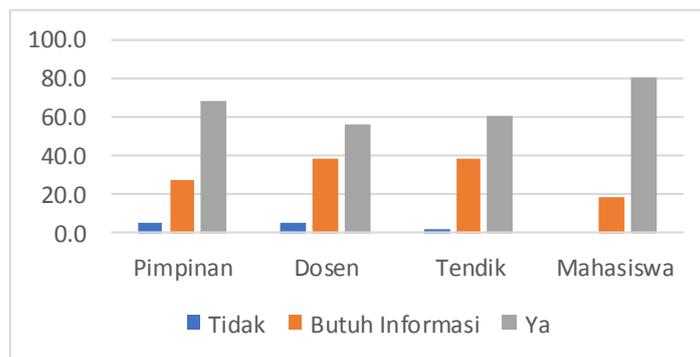


Figure 5. Perception of Stakeholders on Inclusive Education Practices

In the dimension of inclusive education practices at the faculty level, some respondents asserted their need to get further information concerning the development of an accommodative curriculum for students with disability, along with learning programs that follow their needs, as some faculties have never had enrolled students with disability. Therefore, appropriate socialization and training are highly required.

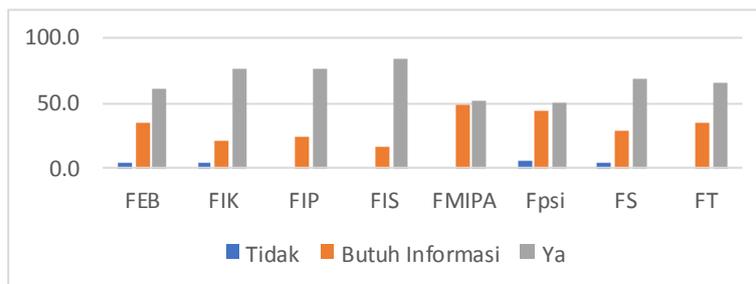


Figure 6. Perception of Inclusive Education Practices at Faculty Level

Discussions

The establishment of inclusive culture at an educational institution is highly correlated with its constructed social climate. The acceptance and appreciation for diversity are the central keys to inclusive practice, which focuses not only on the disability factor. Substantially, inclusive culture does not only focus on accepting the ones with a disability, but it appreciates every diversity (Tikhomirova & Shadrova, 2016). However, many studies on inclusivity focus on the recognition and admission of students with a disability, as disabilities are parts of vulnerable groups to discriminatory treatment.

The inclusive culture within an organization can be observed thoroughly from the organization's mission, values, and principles. For instance, in reviewing the inclusive culture of an organization, we can assess the extent to which its mission promotes sustainability, appreciation, and tribute to differences in cultures, religions, intellectual, social, economic, ethnicity, tribes, and gender. Those aspects are the central elements of a democratic society. Besides, we can also assess whether their values promote the fulfillment of rights and freedom, diversity, uniqueness, and equality. For its principles, they have to underscore humanity, the absence of violent acts, accessibility, protection, sufficient support, equal involvement, acceptance in the community, and cooperation in every organizational process (Tikhomirova & Shadrova, 2016).

The construction of inclusive education at universities has to be carried out through clear and measurable programs. In this field, participatory research is highly suggested by involving the staff, lecturers, and students in establishing inclusive culture (Wray, 2013). The same approach has been adopted in a project constructing an accommodative environment for students with disability at a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (Widyastuti et al., 2021).

In addition, the formulation of inclusive policies for students with disability at universities has two consider two levels, the institutional level and the personal level of those with disability (May & Bridger, 2010). At the institutional level, the relevant regulation or guideline should be used as a reference in the management and practice of inclusive education at the university level. However, these two elements have been the central issues in many universities. The non-vivid policies related to the enrolment of students with disability remains the most crucial problem, along with the support from management staff in providing accessible facilities for students with disability (Riswari et al., 2022).

The third dimension is the practice of inclusive education. In this aspect, we commonly encounter some primary issues, such as the proper learning curriculum and accommodation, including flexible learning services. Flexibility in every learning process is essential for students with disability, including in the learning content, learning material, material source, learning design, as well as learning development and student involvement during the learning

(Hockings et al., 2012). The curriculum should be specifically designed following the students' needs and uniqueness while still maintaining the standard of learning success (Morgan & Houghton, 2011). The success of students with special needs is the most essential part of the practice of inclusive education. By closely positioning special needs students to the work field, we can design learning and curriculum suitable for the students with special needs (Thomas, 2016).

CONCLUSION

From the three dimensions of inclusive education, the construction of inclusive culture and inclusive practice at Universitas Negeri Malang attained the highest average score of 60 from the management staff, lecturers, educational staff, and students. Notably, the inclusive policy-making dimension should attain great concern as it only attained excellent scores from the students. Meanwhile, many of the management staff, lecturers, and educational staff asserted their need for further relevant information. Our findings provide the initial illustration of inclusive education implementation for students with special needs at Universitas Negeri Malang.

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