

Inclusive Education in Higher Education: The Perspective of Lecturer

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Abstract: This study examined lecturers' perspectives regarding the practice of inclusive education. The quantitative study design with survey was applied. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique. A total of 30 lecturers who teach students with disabilities from one university were selected to complete the online survey. The survey questions were developed based on the concept of inclusive education's implementation that have gone through a validity and reliability testing. Data were analyzed using simple statistics by calculating the percentage. Findings on the curriculum show that the majority of lecturers support the adoption and flexibility on curriculum. Similarly, they support the regulation and management themes as well as the support system, albeit improvements are required. Meanwhile, on the collaboration theme, majority of them showed an optimistic responses. Findings from this should enforce the continuous improvement on inclusive education practice in higher education.

Keywords: disability; higher education; inclusive education; lecturer.

INTRODUCTION

The right to access quality education is indispensable for every human being which includes individuals with disabilities. Since the enactment of the Convention on Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006, a lot of efforts have been done to ensure that people with disabilities could access the quality education. This effort also expanded to provide the access for people with disabilities to higher education institutions (Becht et al., 2020; Chiang, 2020; Morña et al., 2020). Nonetheless, it was just recently that the country has a legal document to support the rights for people with disabilities on accessing higher education namely The Regulation of the Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Number 16 2017. Since then, the number of students with disabilities in universities in Indonesia is steadily rising (Afrianty, 2019; Lintang Sari et al., 2021; Sitepu et al., 2020)

Given the positive trend of students with disability's enrollment in universities, little to be known about the quality of the inclusive education practices in those institutions. Inclusive education has a lot of meanings. The simplest way to define inclusive education is that it gives the equal opportunity for every one to access quality education (Ainscow, 2020; Junaidi et al., 2022; Ediyanto et al., 2023, Amka et al., 2023; Wulan & Sanjaya, 2022; Kartini & Aprilia, 2022; Iswari et al., 2023; Ediyanto & Kawai, 2023). Previous studies have given the slight overview on this topic, and reported that some challenges are still exist, and the quality inclusive education is still far from reach (Fedulova et al., 2019; Wang, 2019). One fundamental thing needs to be unveiled in understanding this issue is to understand the perspective of the active subjects on its implementation, which one of those is the lecturer or the teacher at the higher education institutions (Azorín & Ainscow, 2020; Collins et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2019).

Perspective is deemed to be central factor to influence someone's behavior. Thus, by understanding the perspective of the lecturer it could lead to the better practice of inclusive education practices. Based on the findings from some previous studies and official

guidelines from the Indonesia's government titled the Guidelines on Providing Services for Students with Disability, there are four themes that need to be captured once discussing the quality inclusive education (Muskhanova et al., 2020; Reynaga-Peña et al., 2020). Those themes are curriculum, regulation and management, support system and collaboration. Both themes are then explained in some sub-themes. Some studies have investigated the perspective of teachers, but mostly in primary or secondary school settings. Study that focused on the perspective of teachers or lecturers in universities are scarce. Most of the studies were examined on the learning practice and learning development rather than perspective of lecturers (Grimes et al., 2019; Meskhi et al., 2019). Therefore, the general aim of this study will be describing the perspective of lecturers on the inclusive education practices in higher education institutions. The specific objectives are (1) describing the lecturer's perspective on curriculum; (2) describing the lecturer's perspective on regulation and management; (3) describing the lecturer's perspective on support system and (4) describing the lecturer's perspective on collaboration.

This study will offer a more comprehensive answer in understanding perspective of the lecturers as the survey instrument was drawn from both the result of previous studies and legal document. It will also be the first study to unveil the lecturer's perspective on inclusive education practices in universities thus it will provide the research design for the prospective researchers on this field.

METHOD

This study applied the quantitative research design with survey to obtain the lecturer's perspective on inclusive education implementation in higher education institutions. Previous studies on the same topic were also applied this design (Ediyanto et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2021). Survey study is one of the quantitative methods to collect data from a pool of respondents through giving multiple questions (Ponto, 2015). This design was selected as it was suitable to answer this study's questions effectively. This design would allow the quick yet efficient data collection among other designs. Ethical approval was granted from the Research Ethics Committee of The Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Respondents were given the Participant Information Statement (PIS) before they completed the survey. Once they agreed to join, they were allowed to complete the survey anonymously. Further, they were also aware that their responses will be published.

This study selected respondents purposively based on previously designed criteria (Namey et al., 2020). This sampling was quite common in a quantitative study. Lecturers from one public university were recruited for this study. Inclusion criteria for lecturer respondents comprised of they should have an experience in teaching students with disability for at least one semester and were able to complete online survey by themselves. As many as 30 lecturers who meet the criteria were then agreed to join in this study. The demographic of them is shown in table 1.

Table 1. The Demographic of Respondents

Characteristic	n	%
Sex		
Male	11	37
Female	19	43
Faculty		
Faculty of Education	10	33

Faculty of Arts and Languages	6	20
Faculty of Engineering	7	23
Faculty of Economic and Business	3	10
Faculty of Social Sciences and Law	4	14

Based on the table 1, most of the respondents were teaching at Faculty of Education, and less respondents were teaching at Faculty of Economic and Business and Faculty of Social Sciences and Law.

This survey study used a close-ended questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire was developed based on the concept of the inclusive education practices from the legal guidelines and previous studies. There are four main themes on the questionnaire as stated on the study objectives namely: curriculum, regulation and management, support system and collaboration. Each theme consisted of five statements. Respondents were asked to choose their perspective of each statement by choosing strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree. Validity and reliability test was held before the instrument was shared to respondents. The result of validity and reliability test showed that the instrument was valid and reliable to collect the data. Data were collected through the online questionnaire. Respondents who agreed to participate in this study were provided with the link to complete the questionnaire. They only had one chance to complete the survey. They usually needed 10 to 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After data were collected, data were analyzed using descriptive statistic to obtain the lecturer' perspectives. SPSS Version 26 was used to obtain the percentage, mean and standard deviation of each statement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Aforementioned, respondents' responses were analyzed to find the mean, standard deviation and percentage in each question. In general, results on this study were shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Means and standard deviation of respondents' perspective (N=30)

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Inclusive education course should be a compulsory subject in every department.	3.8667	.34575
2	Curriculum adaption is needed to facilitate students with disabilities	3.7000	.59596
3	Flexibility in learning is essential for students with disabilities	3.8000	.48423
4	The current curriculum is not yet accessible for students with disabilities	3.5667	.67891
5	Lecturers struggle to adapt the curriculum	3.8333	.37905
6	Each university should have a specific regulation concerning the inclusive education services	3.6667	.47946
7	Each department should have an ad hoc team to facilitate students with disabilities	3.5000	.73108

8	Support fund is essential in supporting the students with disabilities	3.9000	.73108
9	Monitoring and evaluation needs to be conducted on the implementation of inclusive education services	3.6667	.47946
10	Socialization on the national inclusive education regulation has been done by the university	2.6333	1.06620
11	Facilities need to be adjusted to the needs of students with disabilities	3.9000	.30513
12	Learning resources are accessible for students with disabilities in the university	2.2000	.71438
13	Assistive technologies which support the learning are necessary	3.8000	.40684
14	The existence of Disability Service Unit has been known	2.6667	.75810
15	Trainings for lecturers are available.	2.8000	.76112
16	Multidisciplinary team which consists of psychologist, doctors, special education counsellors should be available.	3.9333	.25371
17	Collaborations with other parties are to support the inclusive education services have been done	2.5000	.82001
18	Professional association related to the inclusive education needs to take the active role in supporting students with disabilities in universities	3.8667	.34575
19	University has taken the active role to collaborate with related parties in supporting students with disabilities in universities	2.8000	.80516
20	Collaboration should be made on the international level	3.8333	.37905

Table 2 depicts that most of the responses are on the mean of more than 3.5 (n=14), however only 6 of the responses that have mean of under than 3 (n=4). This shows that most of the respondents agree with the statements. For more comprehensive understanding, results on percentage on each theme and the comparison between the previous studies are explained as follows.

1. Curriculum

Curriculum is considered as of the most vital aspects to be adjusted in learning on an inclusive education system. Results (as seen in the table 3) report that most of the lecturers strongly agree that curriculum adaption (n=77%) and flexibility in learning are essential to support the students with disabilities (n=84%). These findings mirrors the previous studies which reported that curriculum needs to be adjusted and be flexible for students with disabilities (Carlson).

Table 3. Results on Curriculum

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Inclusive education course should be a compulsory subject in every department.	87%	13%	0%	0%
2	Curriculum adaption is needed to facilitate students with disabilities	77%	17%	7%	0%
3	Flexibility in learning is essential for	84%	13%	3%	0%

students with disabilities					
4	The current curriculum is not yet accessible for students with disabilities	67%	23%	10%	0%
5	Lecturers struggle to adapt the curriculum	83%	17%	0%	0%

It is interesting to note that 87% lecturers are strongly agree if the inclusive education was the compulsory courses. This finding insists the positive perspective and a strong motivation of lecturers to learn about inclusive education. Indeed, these perspectives are essential for educators to support the inclusive education (Büssing et al., 2019; Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018). However, many of them strongly agree that the current curriculum is not yet accessible, while at the same time they are struggling to adapt the curriculum. This finding is not surprising though, as previous studies also reported the same result (Bunbury, 2020).

2. Regulation and Management

Regulation and management are commonly considered as the fundamental factors in the inclusive education practice in higher education institution. Results on this theme showed that most of the statements are strongly agreed by the respondents (see table 4). Majority of them believed that special regulation, the existence of ad hoc team, monitoring and evaluation and support fund are needed in order to apply the inclusive learning practices for all students in higher education institution. In particular, 90% of them strongly agree that support fund is vital. These findings support some reports from the previous study which explained that regulation, funding, and a team are basic needs of the quality inclusive education practices (Sharma et al., 2019; Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 2018). Results on this theme also reveal that socialization concerning the national inclusive education regulation has not yet to be fully done in every faculty, as more than 50 % of respondents responded with disagree and strongly disagree. Given this finding, some studies already reported the importance of having the same understanding on national regulation of inclusive education to provide the same way of thinking in delivering the quality inclusive education practices.

Table 4. Results on Regulation and Management

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Each university should have a specific regulation concerning the inclusive education services	67%	33%	0%	0%
Each department should have an ad hoc team to facilitate students with disabilities	64%	23%	13%	0%
Support fund is essential in supporting the students with disabilities	90%	10%	3%	0%
Monitoring and evaluation needs to be conducted on the implementation of inclusive education services	67%	33%	0%	0%
Socialization on the national inclusive education regulation has been done by the university	33%	7%	50%	10%

3. Support System

Support system could be defined as a system that enables the learning for students with disability to be run smoothly. Compared to other themes on this study, vast majority

of respondents on this theme said disagree to some statements (see table 5). They disagree that learning resources are accessible (67%), the unknown existence of the Disability Service Unit (50%), and the unavailability of trainings for lecturers. (40%). However, they mostly agree that assistive technology for learning is needed. It is true that many studies have mentioned that support systems need to be prioritized in some higher education institutions which want to implement the quality inclusive education (Meskhi et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2018). These findings implies the urgent actions to be taken, as support system is as equally as vital as other themes.

Table 5. Results on Support System

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Facilities need to be adjusted to the needs of students with disabilities	90%	10%	0%	0%
2	Learning resources are accessible for students with disabilities in the university	7%	16%	67%	10%
3	Assistive technologies which support the learning are necessary	80%	20%	0%	0%
4	The existence of Disability Service Unit has been known	17%	33%	50%	0%
5	Trainings for lecturers are available.	20%	40%	40%	0%

4. Collaboration

Collaboration simply defines as the action to partner with others to support the aims of both parties. In terms of the inclusive education, collaboration should also be considered as an important work to do in supporting the inclusive education practices. Dominant responses from respondents as depicted by the table 6 are that they strongly agree with the urgent need to have partnerships with other parties on national or international level (87% and 83%). The multidisciplinary team is also highly demanded by respondents (93%). However, on the level of practice lecturers have the same view that collaborations have not yet to be done. Moreover, the university is considered to not take the active role in initiating partnership. These findings support the reports from previous studies which also emphasized the importance of collaboration, yet the practice is far from ideal (Adams et al., 2018; Amor et al., 2019; Schuelka et al., 2019)

Table 6. Results on Collaboration

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Multidisciplinary team which consists of psychologist, doctors, special education counsellor should be available.	93%	7%	0%	0%
2	Collaborations with other parties are to support the inclusive education services have been done	17%	20%	60%	3%
3	Professional association related to the inclusive education needs to take the active role in supporting students with disabilities in universities	87%	13%	0%	0%

4	University has taken the active role to collaborate with related parties in supporting students with disabilities in universities	20%	43%	33%	4%
5	Collaboration should be made on the international level	83%	17%	0%	0%

CONCLUSION

In conclusions, this study has unveiled the vivid perspective of lecturers on the inclusive education practices in higher education institution. Some findings are expected, as they mostly mirror the result from previous studies, however several findings are also concerning. In general, lecturers have a positive and strong willingness to support the inclusive education practices for students with disabilities in higher education institutions. This could be seen on the positive responses for curriculum adoption, the need of regulation and proper management, the procurement of facilities and the existence of support system, and the strong agreement in the importance of collaboration. Albeit, several findings reveal on the practice level more improvement and active responses are urgently need.

This study only involved the small number of respondents and only captured the lecturer's perspective on the superficial level. Nevertheless, findings from this study could contribute as the strong rational in the formulation of regulation or project concerning the inclusive education practices in higher education institution. It also opens the opportunity for further researchers to take more in- depth view of each theme on this study which has been discussed as vital elements of quality inclusive education practices in higher education institutions.

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