

## ***Analysis of Teachers' Preparedness in Facing Inclusion Program in Elementary Schools in Tarakan City***

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### **Abstract:**

*The readiness of elementary school teachers in Tarakan City to face inclusive education programs is crucial. Directives from the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasize the local government's commitment to improving educational services for children with special needs, through both Special Schools (SLB) and inclusive schools, as stipulated by National Education Ministry Regulation Number 70 of 2009. However, teachers' perspectives on children with special needs in regular classrooms remain less supportive due to insufficient understanding, basic knowledge, skills, and experience in educating them. This study aims to explore the preparedness of elementary school teachers in Tarakan City towards inclusive programs. Through this research, it is expected to provide an overview of how ready these teachers are to implement inclusive education. This study emphasizes the importance of teachers' attitudes in inclusive education, encompassing their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards inclusion. Previous research has shown a positive shift in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, which supports the success of inclusive education*

**Keywords:** *Teacher Readiness, Elementary Schools, Inclusion Programs*

### **1. Introduction**

According to UNESCO data, in 2011, approximately 35 million people worldwide were recorded as having autism. Over the past decade, children with special needs and more diverse spectrums (PDD-NOS, speech delays, learning difficulties, ADD, ADHD) have become increasingly common in Indonesia. Formal education for children with special needs in Indonesia began with the establishment of Special Schools (SLB). Currently, education for children with special needs is

provided through three types of educational institutions: Special Schools (SLB), Special Primary Schools (SDLB), and Inclusive Education.

SLB, as the oldest form of special education, accommodates children with the same type of disability, such as visual impairment (SLB Tunanetra), hearing impairment (SLB Tunarungu), intellectual disability (SLB Tunagrahita), physical disability (SLB Tunadaksa), emotional/behavioral disorder (SLB Tunalaras), and multiple disabilities (SLB Tunaganda). These institutions are managed separately from regular education under a segregated system. Meanwhile, SDLB accommodates various types of disabilities in one school.

Inclusive education, a newer paradigm, integrates children with special needs into regular schools, utilizing the same curriculum, teachers, and learning activities. However, SLBs have limited reach due to accessibility issues, remote locations, and challenges in integrating students with special needs into broader societal life. Inclusive education emerges as a solution to ensure equal educational opportunities for all, addressing discriminatory practices, especially toward children with disabilities. The core principle of inclusive education is that all children should learn together, as much as possible, regardless of their challenges or differences. This approach promotes the idea that every child has the right to quality education to optimize their potential (Permendiknas No. 70, 2009, in Kasman, 2020).

In alignment with the Ministry of Education and Culture's (Kemendikbud) directive to enhance local government commitment to inclusive education, Sanusi, the Director of Special Education Development, emphasized the importance of regional governments in expanding access to education for children with special needs through both SLBs and inclusive schools, as stipulated in the Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009. Based on this directive, this study aims to examine the readiness of elementary school teachers in Tarakan City to implement inclusive programs in local schools.

Previous research by Ni'matuzahroh (2015) revealed that most teachers feel their schools are not prepared to become inclusive schools and view inclusive classrooms as a burden without significant benefits. Challenges such as limited understanding of differentiated curricula and inadequate facilities hinder the implementation of inclusive classrooms. Many teachers also lack the knowledge to effectively manage students with special needs (ABK) in inclusive settings.

Negative attitudes among teachers toward inclusion were demonstrated by Gaad and Khan (2007) in Lisdiana, Supriyanto, and Tarsidi (2018), where the lack of teacher skills and the heavy demands of accommodating students with special needs led to frustration and negative attitudes toward inclusion in regular classrooms. However, De Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2010), as cited in Tandi Salurante & Hendriani (2021), argued that positive teacher attitudes and expectations are crucial for the success of inclusion. Teachers with positive attitudes are more willing to adapt their teaching approaches to meet the diverse needs of their students (Subban & Sharma, 2006). Attitude, defined as a preference for or against something (Bem, 1970, in Lisdiana et al., 2018), reflects how teachers think, feel, and behave toward inclusive education.

Research indicates a shift in teacher attitudes toward more positive perspectives supporting inclusion. However, elementary school teachers exhibit greater confidence than kindergarten teachers in managing and teaching students with special needs. Meanwhile, Galovic, Brojcin, and Glumbic (2014) reported that high school and kindergarten teachers demonstrate more positive attitudes toward inclusion compared to elementary and middle school teachers. Family members also note that inclusive programs foster greater tolerance toward human differences and benefit children with special needs.

Thorndike's Law of Readiness (Wangid, 2013) suggests that readiness occurs under two conditions: 1) When an individual is prepared to act, they believe they will achieve satisfaction upon reaching their goal, 2) When an individual desires to act but does not actualize it, they experience dissatisfaction, 3) When an individual is unprepared but is forced to act, dissatisfaction arises, 4) Strong readiness support results in a high level of satisfaction. Bandura (Wangid, 2014) classifies readiness into three types: 1) **Emotive Attitudinal Readiness:** Involves responsibility, enthusiasm, independence, and happiness in completing tasks. 2) **Cognitive Readiness:** Includes critical thinking, self-awareness, application of knowledge, and realization of personal potential. 3) **Behavioral Readiness:** Reflects teamwork skills, time management, and goal achievement. This study focuses on examining the readiness of elementary school teachers in Tarakan City to implement inclusive education. Unlike previous studies, this research explores a unique context, as Tarakan City does not yet have inclusive schools equivalent to elementary schools, highlighting the importance of understanding teacher preparedness in this region.

## **2. Metode**

This study was conducted in several elementary schools in Tarakan City, North Kalimantan Province, focusing on the readiness of teachers to implement inclusive education programs. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, applying various designs involving philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2014). The mixed-methods model used was the explanatory sequential design, which began with quantitative data collection followed by qualitative data collection to help explain and elaborate on the results of the quantitative findings, thereby making the study explanatory or providing a generalizable overview (Hadju et al., 2022).

The rationale for using this research model lies in the belief that the quantitative data collected in the first phase provides a general overview of the research problem. To conduct a more in-depth analysis, qualitative data is needed to explain and contextualize the general overview (Creswell, in Aini et al., 2020). The research participants comprised school principals and teachers at elementary schools, totaling 15 respondents. The research procedure began with coordination and confirmation with schools designated as inclusive schools. This was followed by coordination for initial data collection, instrument trials, and the overall implementation of the study.

Data analysis in this study utilized quantitative methods to obtain measurable data that were descriptive, comparative, and associative in nature. Meanwhile, qualitative methods were employed to deepen understanding, expand findings, and test or challenge the results obtained from quantitative data. The quantitative approach involved the use of survey instruments designed to measure various aspects of teacher readiness for inclusive programs, including attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to support students with special needs. Data collected from these surveys were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify patterns and relationships among the variables under investigation.

After the collection and analysis of quantitative data, the next phase involved qualitative data collection through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with several teachers and principals who had participated in the survey. These interviews aimed to explore their views and experiences regarding the implementation of inclusive programs in their schools, as well as to understand the factors that supported or hindered their readiness. The qualitative data were then

analyzed thematically to identify emerging themes and provide further context and explanations for the quantitative findings. The data collection process adhered to ethical research principles, including obtaining written consent from all respondents involved, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining the anonymity of the data collected. All data, both quantitative and qualitative, were securely stored and used solely for the purposes of this study.

The findings of this study are expected to provide comprehensive insights into the level of teacher readiness to implement inclusive programs in elementary schools in Tarakan City. Additionally, the results are anticipated to offer practical recommendations for policymakers and schools to enhance teachers' preparedness and capacity to effectively support inclusive programs. Thus, this study not only contributes to the academic literature on inclusive education but also has practical implications that can help improve the quality of inclusive education in the region.

### 3. Result

#### Quantitative result

**Table 1**

READINESS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less	7	46.7	46.7	46.7
	Moderate	7	46.7	46.7	93.3
	Good	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

The table above presents the percentage distribution of teacher readiness variables, which consist of three indicators. The first indicator, "Good," includes 1 respondent, indicating that the teacher is fully prepared to implement the inclusion program. The second indicator, "Moderate," includes 7 respondents, suggesting that they are moderately prepared to implement the program. The third indicator, "Less," also includes 7 respondents, signifying that they are not well-prepared for the inclusion program in elementary schools.

## **Qualitative Results**

### **1. Readiness in Emotional Attitudes**

Based on interviews with principals and teachers from 15 respondents, 9 teachers indicated moderate readiness in terms of emotional attitudes towards inclusion programs. Some teachers expressed their responsibility in managing inclusion-related tasks and enthusiasm for gaining experience teaching students with special needs. However, respondents emphasized the need for free training provided by relevant institutions. Teachers demonstrated willingness to adapt by using government-provided textbooks, seeking information from various media, following training guidelines, and teaching independently without assistance. Collaboration and group discussions with colleagues also contributed to their readiness.

### **2. Cognitive Readiness**

Interviews revealed that 6 respondents felt unprepared for implementing inclusion programs in the near future due to a lack of experience and knowledge in teaching and assisting students with special needs. Teachers anticipate challenges in adapting learning materials. Conversely, 8 respondents reported moderate readiness, particularly in schools that have previously admitted students with special needs. These teachers suggested that additional training sessions would help them better focus on assisting students effectively.

### **3. Behavioral Readiness**

Interviews showed similar results, with some respondents indicating moderate readiness to collaborate and manage time within groups. However, a few respondents felt less prepared. Mixed-method findings showed that the quantitative results aligned with qualitative insights, where most respondents were moderately ready for inclusion programs but lacked experience and training. Concerns about preparing lesson plans (RPP) for students with special needs highlighted the need for clear guidelines and continuous support.

## **Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Results**

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates consistency between the two methods. Quantitative data indicated that most teachers fell into the “Less” and “Moderate” categories of readiness, which aligns with qualitative findings highlighting deficiencies in experience, knowledge, and adequate support. In-depth interviews provided richer context to the

quantitative results, revealing that while some teachers feel emotionally and behaviorally ready, they lack cognitive readiness and require more training and support. Concerns about adapting lesson plans further underscore the need for clearer guidance and sustained support to ensure successful implementation of the inclusion program.

#### **4. Discussion**

This study employed an explanatory sequential design to analyze the readiness of teachers to implement inclusion programs in elementary schools in Tarakan City, North Kalimantan Province. Quantitative results indicate that the majority of teachers fall into the "Low" and "Moderate" categories of readiness, with only a small proportion categorized as "Good." Qualitative findings provide deeper insights into factors influencing teacher readiness across three main aspects: emotional attitude readiness, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness.

Interview results reveal that most elementary school teachers in Tarakan City demonstrate sufficient readiness for inclusion programs. They exhibit positive attitudes toward responsibilities related to inclusion, along with enthusiasm for teaching and gaining new experiences with students with special needs. However, the teachers expressed a significant need for additional training provided by relevant stakeholders, such as the education department, to enhance their readiness.

According to Bandura's theory, emotional attitudes and motivation to learn and adapt are influenced by personal experiences and the surrounding environment (Wangid, 2014). Teachers who show willingness to adapt and independence in teaching based on provided guidelines exhibit high self-efficacy, which refers to confidence in their ability to overcome challenges and achieve specific goals (Bandura, 1986). Most respondents acknowledged a lack of cognitive readiness for inclusion programs, citing insufficient experience and knowledge in teaching or assisting students with special needs. Only a small number of teachers, particularly in schools with prior experience in inclusion, felt adequately prepared.

Theories related to cognitive readiness, such as the concept of self-efficacy in educational contexts, suggest that teachers' experiences and knowledge directly influence their confidence in tackling new situations (Bandura, 1997). Teachers with prior inclusion experience are generally more confident in addressing new challenges and better prepared to adapt their teaching methods. In terms of behavior, many teachers expressed readiness to collaborate with colleagues and manage

time effectively. However, some revealed challenges in specific areas, such as working with students with special needs. Social cognitive theory highlights the role of environmental factors in shaping individual behavior (Bandura, 1989). A supportive school environment, including collegial support and effective management, can enhance teachers' readiness for inclusion.

Integrating qualitative and quantitative findings, the mixed-methods analysis shows that while the majority of respondents quantitatively reported moderate readiness, qualitative data reveal significant needs for additional training and further support to improve their preparedness for inclusion. The positive attitudes and willingness to learn observed in interviews highlight potential for further development. However, appropriate interventions are needed to enhance cognitive competence and practical preparation for teaching students with special needs.

From the perspective of Bandura's theory, these results reflect the concept of self-efficacy, wherein individuals' confidence in achieving specific goals is shaped by personal experiences, observation of others, verbal persuasion, and emotional experiences (Bandura, 1997). Teachers with positive experiences or adequate support tend to exhibit higher self-efficacy in facing the challenges of inclusion. This study provides several practical implications for improving teacher readiness to implement inclusion programs: a) Continuous Training: Organizing ongoing training focused on practical skills and knowledge related to inclusion will help teachers address the challenges they face. b) Support from Relevant Agencies: The education department should offer greater support in the form of resources, training, and guidance to help teachers prepare for working with students with special needs. c) Practical Experience in Schools: Organizing internships or practical experiences for teachers in schools already implementing inclusion can provide the necessary insights and skills for teaching students with special needs. d) Collaboration and Discussion: Encouraging collaboration and discussions among teachers can help them share experiences and effective strategies for teaching students with special needs. By implementing these recommendations, it is expected that teacher readiness for inclusion programs in elementary schools in Tarakan City will improve, allowing the program to operate more effectively and benefit students with special needs optimally.



## 5. Summary

The findings of this study indicate that the readiness of elementary school teachers in Tarakan City to implement inclusive education programs varies significantly. Most teachers fall into the "moderately prepared" and "less prepared" categories, particularly regarding cognitive readiness and knowledge of inclusive education. Although some teachers demonstrate adequate emotional and behavioral readiness, there is a pressing need for more intensive training to enhance their understanding of curriculum adaptation and teaching strategies for students with special needs.

This study underscores the importance of support from the Department of Education, including ongoing training programs and the provision of adequate resources to equip teachers in addressing the challenges of inclusive education. Additionally, collaboration among teachers and opportunities for practical experience in teaching students with special needs are crucial. The results of this research provide concrete recommendations to improve teacher readiness and ensure the success of inclusive education programs in elementary schools, particularly in Tarakan City, thereby delivering more equitable and inclusive educational services for all students.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

This study is not without its limitations. It is recommended that future research increase the sample size to gain broader insights, especially considering the diversity of respondent characteristics that may influence their readiness. Expanding the sample size could also provide a basis for developing more relevant interventions.

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