



## **Inclusive Education Policy for Children with Special Needs: A Review of Stakeholders' Perceptions in Southeast Sulawesi**

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### **Abstract**

Various previous studies have analyzed inclusive education policies for children with special needs. However, research that focuses on stakeholder perceptions has not been found. In Southeast Sulawesi, the implementation of inclusive education policies still faces various challenges, especially in terms of understanding and support from various stakeholders. This study aims to analyze the perceptions of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, education observers, and government officials, towards inclusive education policies for children with special needs in Southeast Sulawesi. To obtain data, a qualitative approach was used with a descriptive phenomenological study method. The research setting was at SMPN 1 Kendari, SMPN 2 Kendari, SMPN 1 Latambaga, Kolaka Regency. The selection of locations was based on pilot inclusive schools determined by the government. Data was obtained through interviews and documentation studies. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and verification (conclusion stage). The results of the study indicate that although inclusive education policies in Southeast Sulawesi have been implemented, there are still gaps in understanding, training of educators, and the availability of adequate facilities. Stakeholders have varying views on the success of this policy, with some viewing it as a positive step, but others stating that the implementation of the policy is still limited and not fully effective. This study recommends increasing training for educators, providing more inclusive facilities, and more intensive socialization to all stakeholders so that the inclusive education policy can run optimally in Southeast Sulawesi.

**Keywords:** Children with special needs, education policy, inclusive education, stakeholders

### **Abstrak**

*Beragam riset terdahulu telah menganalisis kebijakan pendidikan inklusif bagi anak berkebutuhan khusus. Akan tetapi, riset yang berfokus pada persepsi stakeholder belum ditemukan. Di Sulawesi Tenggara, implementasi kebijakan pendidikan inklusif masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan, terutama dalam hal pemahaman dan dukungan dari berbagai stakeholder terkait. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi stakeholder, termasuk guru, orang tua, pemerhati pendidikan, dan pejabat pemerintah, terhadap kebijakan pendidikan inklusif bagi ABK di Sulawesi Tenggara. Untuk memperoleh data, digunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi deskriptif fenomenologis. Latar penelitian bertempat di SMPN 1 Kendari, SMPN 2 Kendari, SMPN 1 Latambaga Kabupaten Kolaka. Pemilihan lokasi didasarkan pada sekolah inklusif percontohan yang ditetapkan pemerintah. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara, dan studi dokumentasi. Lebih lanjut, data dianalisis menggunakan reduksi data, display data, dan verifikasi (tahap menyimpulkan). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kebijakan pendidikan inklusif di Sulawesi Tenggara telah diterapkan, masih terdapat kesenjangan dalam pemahaman, pelatihan tenaga pendidik, serta ketersediaan fasilitas yang memadai. Stakeholder memiliki pandangan yang bervariasi mengenai keberhasilan kebijakan ini, dengan beberapa pihak melihatnya sebagai langkah positif, namun ada juga yang mengungkapkan bahwa penerapan kebijakan masih terbatas dan belum sepenuhnya efektif. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan peningkatan pelatihan bagi tenaga pendidik, penyediaan fasilitas yang lebih inklusif, serta sosialisasi yang lebih intensif kepada seluruh stakeholder agar kebijakan pendidikan inklusif dapat berjalan dengan optimal di Sulawesi Tenggara*

**Kata Kunci:** *Anak berkebutuhan khusus, kebijakan pendidikan, pendidikan inklusif, stakeholder*

### **Introduction**

Inclusive education is an implementation of the fulfillment of basic rights for children so that they get equality and justice. this is also an implementation of the basic law which emphasizes efforts to educate the life of the nation including children, while children are the main capital to achieve a better future for the nation.<sup>1</sup> This is intended as an embodiment of education policy in Indonesia, which refers to

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<sup>1</sup> Lani Florian, "What Counts as Evidence of Inclusive Education?" *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 29, No. 3 (2014), p. 286-294. Julie Allan, "Inclusive Education and the Arts," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 44, No. 4 (2014), p. 511-523. Syahria Anggita Sakti, "Implementasi Pendidikan Inklusif pada Lembaga Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini di Indonesia," *Jurnal Golden Age* 4, No. 02 (2020), p. 238-249. Tengku Sarina Aini bin Tengku Kasim, et.al., "Family Influence on Female's Blood Education in the Context of Islamic Practice in Malaysia," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, No. 2 (2024), p. 623-647.

the mandate of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia regarding efforts to educate the nation's life.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, inclusive education is also an approach that integrates all students, including children with special needs, into the same educational environment.<sup>3</sup> Globally, the concept of education without discrimination has been recognized by the United Nations (UN), which emphasizes the inherent dignity and value of every individual, including children with disabilities, as stated in the Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>4</sup> The Convention stipulates that children with disabilities have the right to equal education in a comprehensive school system.

The existence of children as individuals who inherit the progress of a generation, must be supported by equitable regulations.<sup>5</sup> In Indonesia, the inclusive education policy is based on several regulations, including: Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System. This regulation emphasizes the right to education for all citizens, the principle of non-discrimination, the flexibility of the curriculum to be adaptive and innovative, and the government's obligation to provide adequate resources.<sup>6</sup> This national education system regulation became the basis for the policy of Minister of National Education Regulation No. 70/2009 on Inclusive Education. This regulation acts as the main instrument in promoting equal access to education for students with special needs.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I. Nyoman Temon Astawa, "Pendidikan Inklusi dalam Memajukan Pendidikan Nasional," *Guna Widya* 8, No. 1 (2021), p. 65-76. Erva Karimatunisa & Taufik Muhtarom, "Kebijakan Pemerintah Terhadap Pendidikan Inklusif," *Journal Innovation in Education* 2, No. 3 (2024), p. 101-107.

<sup>3</sup> Muchamad Irvan, "Pengetahuan Mahasiswa PG-PAUD UNIPA Surabaya tentang Pendidikan Inklusif," *Buana Pendidikan: Jurnal Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan UNIPA Surabaya* 13, No. 24 (2017), p. 155-164.

<sup>4</sup> Victorria Yunus, et.al., "Pendidikan Inklusif pada Kurikulum Merdeka," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Perkhasa: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Dasar* 9, No. 2 (2023), p. 313-327. Kartika Puspandari and Yunita Sinaga, "Tanggung Jawab Negara dalam Pemenuhan Hak Pendidikan Inklusif di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Publik* 11, No. 1 (2023), p. 305-315.

<sup>5</sup> Anabel Morinã, "Inclusive Education in Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities," *Postsecondary Educational Opportunities for Students with Special Education Needs* (2019), p. 3-17. Geoff Lindsay, "Inclusive Education: A Critical Perspective," *British Journal of Special Education* 30, No. 1 (2003), 3-12. Linda J. Graham, "Inclusive Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Inclusive Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Routledge. (2020), p. 3-26. Kyriaki Messiou, "Research in the Field of Inclusive Education: Time for a Rethink?" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 21, No. 2 (2017), p. 146-159.

<sup>6</sup> Agus Hadi Utama, "Model Desain Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusif," *Edudikara: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran* 6, No. 3 (2021). Nasrin Nabila, "Analisis Pendidikan Inklusi di Sekolah Dasar," *Ibtida'iy: Jurnal Prodi PGMI* 5, No. 2 (2020), p. 31-39. Evi Isna Yunita, et.al., "Manajemen Pendidikan Inklusi dalam Proses Pembelajaran dan Penanganan Guru Terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus," *International Journal of Elementary Education* 3, No. 3 (2019), p. 267-274. Tsabita Khansa Kinanthi, et.al., "Meningkatkan Efektivitas Manajemen Sekolah dalam Penerapan Pendidikan Inklusif di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar* 1, No. 3 (2024), p. 9. Octiana Ristanti, et.al., "Pendidikan Islam dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Telaah Terhadap UU No. 20 Tahun 2003," *Tawazun: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 13, No. 2 (2020), p. 152-159.

<sup>7</sup> Lailatul Munawwaroh, "Analisis Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia Nomor

Likewise, there is still a gap between the reality and ideality of the above policies, namely the lack of training for educators,<sup>8</sup> limited special assistant teacher (GPK)<sup>9</sup>, constraints on curriculum adaptation and learning strategies<sup>10</sup>, as well as the lack of facilities and infrastructure that support inclusiveness.<sup>11</sup> Thus, further policy strengthening is needed, starting from efforts to improve inclusive teacher training and certification programs, allocate a special budget for inclusive schools and encourage synergy between the government and the education community to strengthen the implementation of inclusive education.

The success of inclusive education relies heavily on the role of teachers.<sup>12</sup> Teachers are required to have teaching skills that are adaptive to the diversity of learners. However, teaching students with diverse needs can cause high teacher burnout and stress.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to involve various stakeholders in

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70 Tahun 2009 tentang Pendidikan Inklusif yang Ramah Anak," *Al-Bidayah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 10, No. 2 (2018), p. 173-186. Sania, "Kebijakan Permendiknas tentang Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusi," *Produ: Prokurasi Edukasi Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, No. 1 (2019). Husnul Khotimah, "Analisis Kebijakan Permendiknas no. 70 tahun 2009 tentang Sekolah Inklusi," *Realita: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kebudayaan Islam* 17, No. 2 (2019). Rizla Saradia Agustina & Tjitjik Rahaju, "Evaluasi Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusif di Kota Surabaya," *Publika* 9, No. 3 (2021), p. 109-124.

<sup>8</sup> Ichsan Ansory, et.al., "Evaluasi Tenaga Pendidik di Sekolah Penyelenggara Pendidikan Inklusi Kota Batu," *Jurnal Pendidikan Kebutuhan Khusus* 5, No. 2 (2021), p. 150-157. Destimawati Harefa, et.al., "Tantangan Bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) Pendidikan Inklusi di Semua Tingkatan Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Humaniora* 2, No. 3 (2023).

<sup>9</sup> Nindya Rizqianti, et.al., "Implementasi Tugas Guru Pembimbing Khusus serta Kendala Sebagai Tenaga Pendidik Professional di Sekolah Inklusi Kota Surabaya," *Jurnal Pendidikan Kebutuhan Khusus* 6, No. 1 (2022), p. 67-75.

<sup>10</sup> Galuh Mulyawan, et.al., "Problematisasi Pendidikan Inklusi di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran (JRPP)* 7, No. 2 (2024), p. 6198-6204. Minsih, et.al., "Pendampingan Kurikulum Modikatif bagi Guru di Sekolah Dasar Inklusi," *Buletin KKN Pendidikan* 6, No. 1 (2024), p. 110-118. Virgine Evita Puspardani, et.al., "Adaptasi Kurikulum di Sekolah Dasar Inklusi: Studi Deskriptif," *Pendidikan Bela Negara* 83 (2020), p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> Risalul Ummah, et.al., "Tantangan atau Hambatan dalam Menerapkan Pendidikan Inklusi," *Jurnal Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 2, No. 1 (2023), p. 111-118. Rita Amaliani, et.al., "Sarana dan Prasarana Sekolah Inklusi 'Kunci Sukses' Pendidikan Inklusi," *Aksara: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Nonformal* 10, No. 1 (2024), p. 361-366. Laura Tyas Pratiwi, et.al., "Permasalahan yang Dihadapi dalam Pelaksanaan Sekolah Inklusi di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Flobamorata* 3, No. 2 (2022), p. 314-318.

<sup>12</sup> Gunnlaugur Magnusson & Kerstin Gøransson, "Perimeters of, and Challenges to, the Jurisdiction of Swedish Special Educators: An Exploration of Free Text Responses," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 34, No. 3 (2019), p. 257-271.

<sup>13</sup> Nurul Ani Khayati, et.al., "Peranan Guru dalam Pendidikan Inklusif untuk Pencapaian Program Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDG's)," *Jurnal Komunikasi Pendidikan* 4, No. 1 (2020), p. 55-61. Alfensiana Ayuti Ratna Ndasi, et.al., "Peran Guru dalam Memberikan Layanan Pendidikan Bagi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi Citra Bakti* 1, No. 2 (2023), p. 173-181. Ujang Cepi Barlian, et.al., "Peran Guru Kelas dan Guru Pendamping Khusus dalam Meningkatkan Layanan Pendidikan Inklusi di TK Ibnu Sina," *al-Afkar, Journal for Islamic Studies* 6, No. 2 (2023), p. 623-634. Gunnlaugur Magnusson, et.al., "Contextualizing Inclusive Education in Educational Policy: The Case of Sweden," *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy* 5, No. 2 (2019), p. 67-77.

collaborative learning and community creation as well as continuous communication in social interactions. In addition, the leadership of school principals plays an important role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education practices<sup>14</sup>. Principals' attitudes towards inclusive education are influenced by three main factors: practice, vision and support.<sup>15</sup> The research shows that principals' practices in implementing an inclusive education approach are driven more by their vision than by available support, although both aspects have a significant influence on their attitudes towards the practice.

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenological study method.<sup>16</sup> The research setting is located at SMPN 1 Kendari, SMPN 2 Kendari, SMPN 1 Latambaga Kolaka Regency. The selection of locations is based on pilot inclusive schools determined by the government. Data were obtained through interviews and documentation studies. Based on this background, this study aims to explore stakeholders' perceptions of inclusive education in junior secondary schools in Southeast Sulawesi using field data as the main data source. Although this issue has been researched before, this research will make a new contribution by focusing on the local context and empirical data obtained directly from the field.

In Southeast Sulawesi, there are several schools that have implemented inclusive programs, such as SMPN 1 Kendari and SMPN 2 Kendari. These two schools are piloting inclusive education in the region. In the new student intake for the 2023 academic year, these schools accepted students with diverse special needs. At SMPN 1 Kendari, the inclusive class involves collaboration between the class teacher, accompanying teacher, and counseling guidance teacher in learning activities.

### **Stakeholders' Perceptions of Inclusive Education Policy at Junior High School Level in Southeast Sulawesi**

Inclusive education aims to provide equal opportunities for all learners, including those with special needs. In Southeast Sulawesi, the implementation of the

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<sup>14</sup> Roan Ardhika and Muhammad Syaifuddin, "Analisis Kebijakan Pemerintah Mengenai Sekolah Inklusif," *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian* 3, No. 8 (2023), p. 7255-7258. Bima Sakti, et.al., "Pendidikan Inklusif: Memahami Tantangan dan Permasalahan Warga Belajar dalam Pembelajaran," *Jurnal Siliwangi: Seri Pendidikan* 10, No. 1 (2024), p. 18-27. Ikramullah and Sirojuddin Akhmad, "Optimalisasi Manajemen Sekolah dalam Menerapkan Pendidikan Inklusi di Sekolah Dasar," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, No. 2 (2020), p. 131-139.

<sup>15</sup> Slamet Riyadi, et.al., "Optimalisasi Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Manusia dalam Konteks Pendidikan Inklusif di Sekolah," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran (JRPP)* 6, No. 3 (2023), p. 130-137. Dita Sabilla Azahra & A. N. Rahma, "Kolaborasi dan Solusi Sekolah dalam Menghadapi Hambatan Pendidikan Inklusi di SD Negeri Pekayon Kota Jakarta Timur," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kajian Humaniora* 9, No. 1 (2025). Connie Chairunnisa, et.al., "Transformasi Pendidikan Inklusif: Pemberdayaan Guru dan Kepala Sekolah Meningkatkan Layanan Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus," *Bernas: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 5, No. 2 (2024), p. 1939-1945. Wahyu Candra Dewi, et.al., "Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Pendidikan Inklusif di Sekolah Dasar," *Modeling: Jurnal Program Studi PGMI* 12, No. 1 (2025), p. 29-39.

<sup>16</sup> Lexy J. Moleong, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2011.

inclusive education policy at the junior secondary level still faces various challenges and opportunities. This study explores the perceptions of stakeholders, including principals, teachers, parents and government, towards the inclusive education policy, focusing on their understanding of learners with special needs, school readiness, and challenges and support in implementing this policy.

The results show that inclusive learning strategies in schools use differentiation and collaboration-based learning approaches. Teachers apply group discussion methods, peer tutors, and adaptation of materials for students with special needs.<sup>17</sup> However, the successful implementation of strategies in inclusive learning still has gaps and challenges including, first, curriculum challenges, teachers still have difficulty adjusting the standard curriculum to the needs of students with special needs. Second, teacher readiness, most teachers have not been able to get special training in teaching in inclusive classrooms. Third, resources, limited facilities and support personnel such as special mentor teachers are still a major obstacle. Fourth, social attitudes, where some students and parents still have negative perceptions of inclusive education.

### **Stakeholders' Perceptions of Learners with Special Needs**

The interviews showed that initially, stakeholders' understanding of learners with special needs was limited to individuals with physical disabilities. However, after attending training and discussions related to inclusive education, their understanding expanded to include children with mental disabilities, behavioral disorders, learning difficulties and special talents. A stakeholder (informant 1) revealed: "I used to only understand that children with special needs are those with physical disabilities, such as not being able to walk or not being able to see. After attending the training, I learned that children with special needs also include those who are slow learners or have extraordinary talents".<sup>18</sup>

This awareness has implications for a more inclusive approach to learning, where schools begin to adapt learning methods for the different needs of learners. Furthermore, informant 2 revealed that: "My knowledge of learners with special needs is learners who experience physical and mental disabilities, some of them cannot hear, visual impairment, cannot speak, autism, hyperactivity, intelligence below average (*idiot*). These learners cannot follow learning in general at school, so there needs to be adjustments to the methods in learning".<sup>19</sup>

The results of the interviews above confirm that there is a need to adjust learning methods for children with special needs. Thus, the rights and learning needs

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<sup>17</sup> Nur Paikah, et.al., "Analysis of Policies and Strategies to Lower Childhood Stunting in South Sulawesi, Indonesia," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, No. 1 (2024). Andi Muhammad Akmal, et.al., "Legal Solutions for Domestic Violence in Unregistered Marriages in Indonesia: Integrating Maqâsid al-Shari'âh," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, No. 2 (2024).

<sup>18</sup> Interview with informant 1, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with informant 2, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.

of children in an inclusive manner can be fulfilled, as a form of implementing equitable education for all children.

### **Support for the Implementation of Inclusive Education**

Most stakeholders support inclusive education because it gives learners with special needs the opportunity to develop in a wider social environment. A school principal (informant 3) stated: "Inclusive education allows children with special needs to learn alongside their peers, which can help them develop social skills".<sup>20</sup>

However, the implementation of this policy still faces challenges, including school readiness in providing disability-friendly facilities and training for teachers in dealing with learners with different needs. On the other hand, the school principal (informant 4) emphasized that: this is fine, because the regulation on education for children with special needs clearly regulates children's rights to education, including in mainstream schools. The regulation explains that persons with disabilities have the right to participate in education organized in an inclusive manner that is tailored to their abilities and needs.<sup>21</sup> The results of the interview above further strengthen the argument that children with special needs deserve and deserve equal and equitable treatment. One of them is by providing a wide space for social interaction with other children in public schools.

### **Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education**

There are several challenges in implementing inclusive education in Southeast Sulawesi. The author summarizes them as follows: first, the lack of trained teachers. Most teachers in inclusive schools have not received special training related to inclusive education. One of the teachers (informant 5) said: "I find it difficult to teach children with special needs because I have never had any special training in this area".<sup>22</sup>

Second, limited facilities and infrastructure. Some schools have provided facilities such as wheelchairs, canes, and low vision glasses, but not all schools have supporting infrastructure, such as special access paths and books in Braille.

Third, diverse parental support. Not all parents fully support inclusive education. Some parents worry that their children will not get enough attention in inclusive classes. Here is a statement from one of the parents of a special needs student (informant 6): "I am afraid that my child will not be able to follow the lessons well if he studies in a regular class with other children," said one parent.<sup>23</sup>

Fourth, stigma and social acceptance. Although there has been increased awareness, some students with special needs still experience discriminatory treatment from their peers. A teacher (informant 4) stated: "There are still children

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with informant 3, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with informant 4, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with informant 5, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with informant 6, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.

who tease their friends who have special needs, even though we always emphasize the importance of respecting each other".<sup>24</sup>

### **The Role of Government and Supporting Institutions**

The Kendari City Government has taken steps to support inclusive education, including drafting a Regional Regulation on Inclusive Education and providing training for principals and teachers. In addition, several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have assisted in advocacy and implementation of inclusive education. However, stronger regulations and ongoing monitoring are still needed to ensure that inclusive education policies can be implemented effectively in all schools. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that although stakeholders support inclusive education policies, there are still various obstacles in its implementation. With support from all parties, it is hoped that inclusive education in Southeast Sulawesi can run more effectively and provide maximum benefits for students with special needs and other students.

### **Analysis of Inclusive Education Policy for Children with Special Needs in Southeast Sulawesi**

Inclusive education in Southeast Sulawesi shows positive progress but still faces various challenges. This finding is in line with previous research which shows that the success of inclusive education is highly dependent on the readiness of educators, resource support, and school policies that support student diversity.<sup>25</sup> Collaboration-based learning models have proven effective in helping students with special needs adjust to the school environment.<sup>26</sup>

Inclusive education is an approach that aims to accommodate the diversity of learners in the same learning environment. In Southeast Sulawesi, the policy of inclusive education at the Junior High School (SMP) level still faces challenges in its implementation. The perceptions of stakeholders, such as principals, teachers, parents, and the government, play an important role in determining the effectiveness of this policy. This study explores how various stakeholders understand and respond to inclusive education policies, by examining various supporting and inhibiting factors in their implementation.

In recent years, many studies have discussed inclusive education and the role of stakeholders in its implementation. Holmqvist and Lelinge examined the influence

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with informant 4, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Gunnlaugur Magnússon, "An Amalgam of Ideals-Images of Inclusion in the Salamanca Statement," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 23, No. 7-8 (2019), p. 677-690. Anna Cecilia Rapp and Anabel Corral-Granados, "Understanding Inclusive Education-A Theoretical Contribution from System Theory and the Constructionist Perspective," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 28, No. 4 (2024), p. 423-429.

<sup>26</sup> Marit Mjøs and Vegard Moen, "The Norwegian Educational and Psychological Counselling Service (EPS) as an 'Inclusion Agent' in Schools?" *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 39, No. 6 (2024), p. 897-912.



of Collaborative Professional Development (CPD) in improving teacher competence towards inclusive education.<sup>27</sup> They found that collaborative training improved teachers' readiness in dealing with special needs learners and increased positive attitudes towards inclusion. Persada & Efendi also emphasized that inclusive education policies in Indonesia still need to be strengthened with more concrete regulations and adequate infrastructure support.<sup>28</sup>

In Indonesia, according to Sutipyo et.al., concluded that the policy on inclusive education has been implemented in schools as formal institutions that are the right place for students to develop their potential. National education aims to provide educational space and materials for every student, including slow learner students. For example, the peer teaching and repetition models are the main learning models. This is in accordance with the character of slow learner students who have below average cognitive abilities. Slow learner students tend to receive material slowly and repeatedly. They are also more comfortable being taught by peers because psychologically they feel the same age.<sup>29</sup> Although the model is constrained, for example, slow learner students in learning are limited cognitive abilities, unstable concentration and negative views of parents towards children's abilities.

In addition, according to Muchsin et.al., inclusive education in Aceh has also been implemented for children with disabilities so that they have the same status in education as normal children. However, some domains may face certain challenges. All students are seen as the same, both regular and disabled have no problem sharing the same class, including teachers and other school facilities. Although some disabled people think that their schools should have special needs for them. Officials do not have strong power to support the development of inclusive education, while some schools can make their schools as models for inclusive education.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, existing special education teachers, socializing the needs of people with disabilities to obtain the right to education in society, and establishing special education centers at the university level, can contribute to the lack of development of inclusive education in the region.

In addition to General Education Institutions, Inclusive Education is also implemented in Educational Institutions as implemented in West Nusa Tenggara. Mareta et.al., explained that the principle of inclusive education is to provide equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their disabilities, to access education. Although inclusive education is very important to ensure justice and equal opportunities for every child, the effectiveness of providing for the unique needs and

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<sup>27</sup> Mona Holmqvist & Balli Lelinge, "Teachers' Collaborative Professional Development for Inclusive Education," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 36, No. 5 (2021), p. 819-833.

<sup>28</sup> Halim Jaya Persada and Mohammad Efendi, "Studi Kasus Implementasi Layanan Pendidikan Inklusif di Kota Madiun," *Jurnal Ortopedagogia* 4, No. 1 (2018), p. 7-11.

<sup>29</sup> Sutipyo Ru'iya, et.al., "Model of Religious Education for Slow Learner Children in Inclusive Schools in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, No. 3 (2023).

<sup>30</sup> Misri A. Muchsin, et.al., "An Overview of Inclusive Education in Eastern Aceh, Indonesia: What do the Educational Elements Say?" *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 10, No. 2 (2022).

potential of each child remains. The implementation of inclusive education in madrasahs has made significant progress, including an increase in the number of inclusive madrasahs, positive attitudes from school residents, individual education programs, the establishment of the Inclusive Madrasah Educator Forum, and collaboration between the government, non-governmental organizations, and the community.<sup>31</sup>

Research by Rahmawati, et.al. shows that the implementation of inclusive education still faces challenges in terms of teacher readiness and school policy support.<sup>32</sup> They highlighted the importance of a differentiated approach to teaching so that each learner gets a learning experience that suits their needs. The results of this study are relevant to findings in Southeast Sulawesi, where inclusive policies still face similar challenges.

Stakeholders in Southeast Sulawesi generally understand inclusive education as an effort to provide equal access to education for all children, including those with special needs. However, this understanding is still diverse. Some principals and teachers understand inclusion as full integration, while others consider it as simply providing space for children with special needs without any significant modifications in learning. This shows that stakeholder perceptions are evolving along with increased training and socialization about inclusive education.

In practice, inclusive education faces various challenges, including low teacher readiness, lack of facilities and infrastructure, low support from some parents and the community, and social acceptance and negative stigma. In the context of teacher readiness, it is understood that teacher readiness in managing inclusive classes is a key factor in the success of inclusive education. However, many teachers in Indonesia do not yet have adequate competence to teach students with special needs.

Research by Wulandari and Hendriani shows that many teachers do not yet understand the characteristics of children with special needs and appropriate learning strategies<sup>33</sup>. These limitations can hinder the teaching and learning process and student development. In addition, teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education also play an important role. Musyafira and Hendriani found that positive teacher attitudes can increase the effectiveness of inclusive learning<sup>34</sup>. However, without adequate

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<sup>31</sup> Anis Rahmawati, et.al., "Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Indeks Pembangunan Ekonomi Inklusif Jawa Timur Indikator Tingkat Kemiskinan dan Ketimpangan," *Efektor* 8, No. 1 (2021), p. 79-88.

<sup>32</sup> Mira Mareta, et.al., "Inclusive Education and Justice for Students with Special Needs in Madrasahs," *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 28, No. 2 (2024).

<sup>33</sup> Ratna Sari Wulandari & Wiwin Hendriani, "Kompetensi Pedagogik Guru Sekolah Inklusi di Indonesia (Suatu Pendekatan Systematic Review)," *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian dan Kajian Kepustakaan di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran* 7, No. 1 (2021), p. 143-157.

<sup>34</sup> Ilena Dwika Musyafira & Wiwin Hendriani, "Sikap Guru dalam Mendukung Keberhasilan Pendidikan Inklusi," *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian dan Kajian Kepustakaan di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran* 7, No. 1 (2021), p. 75-85.

training and support, teachers may feel overwhelmed or unconfident in teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Another important thing to prioritize is learning facilities. Adequate facilities and infrastructure are essential to support inclusive education. Unfortunately, many schools in Indonesia do not yet have facilities that are friendly to students with special needs. Research by Ndek, et.al. highlights those limited facilities can hinder accessibility and comfort for students in learning.<sup>35</sup> In addition to physical infrastructure, the availability of learning aids is also a problem. Yenduri, et.al., emphasized the importance of assistive technology in supporting the learning of students with learning difficulties. However, the implementation of this technology is still limited in many schools, especially in remote areas.<sup>36</sup>

Supporting physical efforts, moral support from parents and the community is needed. Support from parents and the community greatly influences the success of inclusive education. However, there are still negative views or lack of understanding of inclusive education among the community. Jesslin and Kurniawati found that some parents have negative perceptions of children with special needs in inclusive schools, which can affect social interactions and acceptance of these students.<sup>37</sup> Lack of socialization and education about the importance of inclusive education can strengthen stigma and discrimination. Therefore, collaborative efforts are needed between schools, government, and the community to increase awareness and support for inclusive education.

In addition to the three aspects above, social acceptance of students with special needs is still a significant challenge. Negative stigma and discrimination can hinder the integration and development of students in the school environment. Ainnayyah, et.al. highlighted that communication and social interaction of children with special needs are often hampered by stigma and lack of understanding from peers. To overcome this, programs are needed that encourage empathy and understanding among students.<sup>38</sup> For example, Christyastari emphasized the importance of positive social interactions for autistic students in inclusive schools to increase acceptance and reduce stigma.<sup>39</sup>

Addressing the challenges in implementing inclusive education requires a holistic approach that involves improving teacher competency, providing adequate

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<sup>35</sup> Fransiska Saveriana Ndek, et.al., "Peran Fasilitas Pendidikan dalam Meningkatkan Pembelajaran Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus," *Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi Citra Bakti* 1, No. 1 (2023), p. 39-49.

<sup>36</sup> Gokul Yenduri, et.al., "From Assistive Technologies to Metaverse: Technologies in Inclusive Higher Education for Students with Specific Learning Difficulties," *Computers and Society X*, (2023), p. 1-23.

<sup>37</sup> Jesslin & Farida Kurniawati, "Perspektif Orang Tua Terhadap Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus di Sekolah Inklusif," *JPI (Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi)* 3, No. 2 (2019), p. 72-91.

<sup>38</sup> Refiana Ainnayyah, et.al., "Identifikasi Komunikasi Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus dalam Interaksi Sosial," *JPI (Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi)* 3, No. 1 (2019), p. 48-52.

<sup>39</sup> Wishti Christyastari, "Interaksi Sosial Siswa Autis di Sekolah Inklusi," *Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi Citra Bakti* 1, No. 2 (2023), p. 127-138.

facilities and infrastructure, and active support from parents and the community. In addition, efforts to reduce stigma and increase social acceptance of students with special needs must continue to be carried out through education and inclusive programs. Thus, it is hoped that inclusive education can run effectively and provide benefits for all students. With more concrete policies and support from various parties, it is hoped that inclusive education in Southeast Sulawesi can continue to develop and provide optimal benefits for all students.

In a broader context, inclusive education is part of the implementation of government policies based on laws and legal regulations, namely that the state is obliged to educate the nation's life. So that education can be enjoyed by all groups regardless of ethnic background, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, and physical limitations.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, inclusive education is an effort to provide educational services to all people without exception, including children with special needs, people with disabilities, children who are limited in terms of five senses or physically and even mentally.

## Conclusion

This study reveals that the implementation of inclusive education in junior high schools in Southeast Sulawesi still faces challenges in terms of curriculum, teacher readiness, supporting resources (learning facilities), and social attitudes. The inclusive education policy in Southeast Sulawesi has been implemented, although there are still gaps in understanding, training of educators, and the availability of adequate facilities. Stakeholders have varying views on the success of this policy, with some viewing it as a positive step, but others stating that the implementation of the policy is still limited and not fully effective. This study recommends improving training for educators, providing more inclusive facilities, and more intensive socialization to all stakeholders so that inclusive education policies can run optimally in Southeast Sulawesi. Therefore, policies through stakeholder perception reviews for improving quality inclusive education services for children with special needs in Southeast Sulawesi are directed at efforts to strengthen teacher training, improve supporting facilities, and provide more flexible policies so that inclusive education can be implemented effectively.

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<sup>40</sup> Mohamad Yusuf and Carl Sterkens, "Analysing the State's Laws on Religious Education in Post-New Order Indonesia," *al-Jamiah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 53, No. 1 (2015).

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## Interviews

- Interview with informant 1, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.
- Interview with informant 2, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.
- Interview with informant 3, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.
- Interview with informant 4, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.
- Interview with informant 5, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.
- Interview with informant 6, Southeast Sulawesi, October, 2024.