

The Effects of The Length of Teaching Experience and Previous Training on Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusive Education

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Abstract—Teachers' positive attitude towards inclusion can improve the quality of inclusive education for early childhood with special needs. Affecting factors for teachers' attitude are the length of teaching experience and the experience of training in inclusive education. This study aims to see the effect of interaction between the two variables on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. As many as 90 teachers of inclusive early childhood school in Indonesia were asked to fill out a Multidimensional Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES-VI) questionnaire that measures teachers' attitudes, both in total and in three components, namely cognitive, affective, and behavior. The result shows that the length of teaching experience and the interaction of both variables do not affect the attitude towards inclusive education. Even so, it appears that inclusive education training effects the total and the behavioral score of teachers' attitudes.

Keywords—early childhood; inclusive education; teaching experience; training experience; teachers' attitude

I. INTRODUCTION

Based on [1] there is 0.53% (of 51.865 sample) or 275 of early childhood in Indonesia are children with special needs. The early childhood period is very important because development in early age will affect the entire life cycle of the individual [2]. Therefore, early intervention is very much needed in order to develop their full potential [2]–[4]

[5] stated that intervention for children with special needs aged 3-6 years could be done in the form of education or therapy. In line with that, [6] stated that education is the key to develop children's potential to play their role and provide benefits to the social environment.

To create an early childhood education for all, including children with special needs, the schools need to implement inclusive education [7] Inclusive education is education for all which includes the participation of all students in the regular curriculum with the necessary support and a friendly social atmosphere [8] Inclusive education in early childhood ensures children with special needs get the opportunity to learn, play, participate, interact, and develop friendships, thus they could develop optimally [3]. Furthermore, the existence of inclusive education could serve as a solution for schools to remove obstacles and be able to meet the learning needs of all students

[7]. Through the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation No. 18 2018, the government has regulated that early childhood education services could provide opportunities for children with special needs to be educated in a regular educational environment [9] However, one of the challenges is creating a high-quality inclusive early childhood education with successful of inclusive education implementation [10]

One that plays an important role in the successful implementation of inclusive education is the attitude of teachers towards it [11] According to Mahat [8], the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education is a tendency to give cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses by liking or disliking the process of implementing education that encompasses physical, social, and curricular inclusion. This attitude will create positive or negative expectations and behaviors that could increase or limit the success of the inclusive education implementation for children with special needs [8]

Teachers who personally accept the concept and support the implementation of inclusive education could be better in adapting the learning environment and using various approaches and teaching strategies for the diversity of students' needs [12] Research conducted by [13] showed that positive teachers' attitudes are closely related to good and mature planning, as use as long-term readiness. Thus, the opportunity to create an inclusive environment for children with special needs is also affected [14]. So that, teachers with positive attitude tend to support students with diverse needs and have a positive influence on students with special needs [15]. On the contrary, teachers with negative attitude usually do not use teaching strategies that could increase the success rate of students in the school setting [14]. Furthermore, children with special needs taught by teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusive education usually experience difficulties in learning [14]. Thus, it could be concluded that positive teachers' attitude is needed in the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

Prior studies found that teachers with experience in teaching student with special education needs show more positive attitude than those students without experience [15]–

[19]. However, teachers with teaching experience show more negative attitudes than those with less. [11], [20]–[23]

Boyle, Topping and Jindal-Snape [20] found that teachers with teaching experience up to five years time show more positive attitude compared to teachers with more than five years of teaching experience. Furthermore, Boyle, Topping and Jindal-Snape also found that there was a significant decrease as the teachers’ experience in teaching increase. Even so, based on the literature review, it is known that the results of this study is not consistent in influencing attitudes [24].

In the study by Avramidis and Kalyva [16], it was found that teachers with fewer teaching experience in the setting of inclusive education show negative attitudes. Another study found that preservice teachers show more positive attitude towards inclusive education at the end of their study period compared to the start of the study period [25]. Contrary to these studies, several studies found that there were no significant results on the effect of teaching experience on teachers’ attitudes [26]. Futhermore, based on survey by [27] to 738 teachers in Bangladesh, it was found that there was no correlation between the length of teaching experience and the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education.

The inconsistency of previous studies, indicates that the mentioned variable alone is not enough to affect teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education. Knowledge of children with special needs and the implementation of inclusive education obtained through training are considered as important factors in shaping the attitudes of teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education policies [24]

Research on the effect of inclusive education training on teachers’ attitudes found that teachers who had been trained related to inclusive education show more positive attitude than did those who had no such training [13], [15], [16], [28]–[30]. Avramidis and Kalyva [16] also stated that teachers who take long-term training show more positive attitude than those who had never attended training. The better the teachers’ knowledge of inclusive education, the more positive his attitude will be [31]. This indicates that the more material the teacher obtained regarding inclusive education, the more positive the teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education. In line with this, the results of the study show that the positive attitude of teachers towards inclusive education is influenced by teachers’ information and knowledge about inclusive education [20] In addition, the application of the skills obtained from the training also greatly influences their attitudes towards inclusive education [16]

The purpose of this study is to see the interaction between two variables which are the length of teaching experience and previous training on inclusive education, and their affects towards teachers’ attitudes. The research question that we propose, is whether any influence of the teaching length and previous inclusive education training on the teachers’ attitude score on inclusive education. Our hypothesis is that the teachers with first five years of teaching and have received training would get higher attitude score among other interaction groups. Furthermore, the training obtained by the teacher will be further analyzed by looking at the effect of the amount of training material on teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education.

II. METHOD

A. Participants

The criteria for participants in this study are teachers in inclusive early childhood schools that accept students with physical, sensory, behavioral, and / or cognitive disabilities. In this study, the researchers managed to 90 questionnaires from 43 inclusive early childhood schools in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi and Palembang. Among 90 participants, 5participants are male and 85 are female. Although the number of male participants in this study only covered 5% of the total number of participants, this number actually corresponded to the percentage of early childhood education male teachers in Indonesia [32]. Regarding the age, participants were spread from the age of 20 - 53 years old with the highest percentage being in the 30-40 years old of age range (M = 34, SD = 8.37).

B. Instruments

The teachers’ attitude were measured by Multidimensional Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education Scale (VI MATIES) [8] which had been adapted for early childhood educators and translated into Bahasa [33]. VI MATIES is consisted of three dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and behavior. Each dimension includes explanation inclusivity in physical, social and curriculum aspects. VI MATIES uses Likert Scale with range of values 1 to 6 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). This measuring instrument produces a total value for each dimension. This measuring instrument is valid and reliable with above 0.7 cronbach alpha value in each dimension. Furthermore, every item in this instrument valid in measuring each dimension.

TABLE I. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT

Dimension	Reliability	Validity
<i>Cognitive</i>	0.827	0.488 – 0.749
<i>Affective</i>	0.803	0.361 – 0.726
<i>Behavior</i>	0.839	0.209 – 0.827

C. Procedure

Questionnaires are made online (using google form) and offline. Sampling method use is nonrandom sampling, with accidental sampling technique. The online questionnaires is distributed by asking people who know teachers in inclusive early childhood schools and distributing link of the questionnaire links to them. The questionnaire that must be filled includes intent, purpose, informed consent, and research questionnaire. Each participant would be answering on the form provided and submit it online by pressing the submit button. In the other hand, the offline questionnaires were distributed to schools that had permitted the researchers to collect data. The questionnaires were then given to the teachers to be filled in.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic of the participants

TABLE II. DEMOGRAPHIC OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean
Teaching Length				
<5 years	42	1 month	5 years	4 years
6-10 years	21	6 years	10 years	6 years
11-15 years	16	11 years	15 years	11 years
16-20 years	9	16 years	20 years	18 years
21-30 years	2	21 years	24 years	22 years
Training				
Yes	59	-	-	-
No	31	-	-	-
Amount of Training Material				
1-2 material	40	-	-	-
>2 material	19	-	-	-

The length of teaching in inclusive early childhood school is very diverse with the range of teaching for 1 month - 24 years. Most of the participants are teachers who had been teaching within a period of 1 month to 5 years and the least are teachers who had been teaching over 20 years. During teaching, 34% of participants had never received any training related to inclusive education whereas 66% of them had received training related to inclusive education. Most of the teachers received one to two training materials consisting of the theory of inclusive education, children with special needs, inclusive learning methods, making individual learning programs, and handling children with special needs at school.

B. Distribution of participants attitudes

TABLE III. MEAN SCORES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE TOTAL, AFFECTIVE, COGNITIVE, AND BEHAVIOR COMPONENT OF ATTITUDE

Attitude Components	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Total	64	108	80.05	10.45
Affective	15	36	27.44	4.54
Cognitive	18	36	28.05	4.93
Behavior	18	36	30.55	4.37

Table III shows that the mean score of total attitude of the participants indicates moderate attitude towards inclusive education. Moderate attitude is also obtained in the components of affective and cognitive. In contrast to this, in the behavioral attitude component, the participants have positive attitude towards inclusive education.

C. The interaction of teaching length and inclusive education training

To see the interaction between the teaching length and training on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, data analysis was performed using Factorial ANOVA. It is found that related training has significant main effect on the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education $F(89) = 4.85$, $p = 0.030$ (two-tailed) with differences in mean values that was very small ($\eta = 0.057$). This result also supported by the effect of training on the behavioral component of attitude which shows difference in the mean score of the teachers received the training and teachers who did not receive training $F(89)=5.14, p = 0.026$ (two-tailed).

TABLE IV. MEAN SCORE OF GROUPS WITH DIFFERENT TRAINING EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING LENGTH IN THE TOTAL, AFFECTIVE, COGNITIVE, AND BEHAVIOR COMPONENT OF ATTITUDE

Variables	N	Total	Affective	Cognitive	Behavior
Training					
Yes	59	88.9	28.0	29.0	31.8
No	31	81.6	25.3	26.8	29.4
Teaching Length					
<5 years	37	85.6	26.9	28.5	30.1
6-10 years	21	83.8	26.9	26.7	30.0
11-15 years	16	84.3	28.3	26.7	29.2
16-20 years	9	82.2	23.8	26.8	31.5
21-30 years	2	97	30.5	33	33.0

The teachers who had received training resulted in higher total attitude and behavior component score compared to teachers who had never received any training (see table III). However, the significant effect of training is not found in the other two components of attitude (affective and cognitive components).

The length of teaching is not found to have a significant main effect on teachers' attitudes, both in total and on the three components of the teachers' attitude.

The result of data analysis, it was also found that there is no significant effect of interaction between the length of teaching and the inclusive education training experience to the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education.

The data of the teachers who had participated in the training was analyzed further by examining the amount of training materials they received and its effect on their attitudes towards inclusive education.

D. The Effect of Amount of Training Materials on Attitudes

Independent sample t-test was used to see whether there significant effect of the amount of training materials on the teachers' attitude score. As the result, there are significant differences in total attitude score between teachers who received 1-2 training materials ($M = 84.3$, $SD = 10.7$) and teachers who received more than 2 training materials ($M = 91.3$, $SD = 9.2$) $t(57) = 2.67$, $p = 0.010$, with the magnitude of difference in means is moderate ($\eta = 0.707$). The amount of training material also significantly affects the teachers' attitude to the cognitive and behavioral components of attitude. In the cognitive component, the teachers who received more than 2 training materials show more positive attitude ($M = 30$, $SD =$

4.1) than teachers who received 1-2 training materials ($M = 26.8$, $SD = 4.8$) $t(57) = 2.82$, $p = 0.007$, with moderate effect size ($\eta = 0.747$). Similarly, teachers who received more than two training materials show more positive behavioral component ($M = 32.3$, $SD = 3.7$) compared to the teachers who only received 1-2 training material ($M = 29.5$, $SD = 4.8$) $t(57) = 2.55$, $p = 0.013$ and the size of difference between means was moderate ($\eta = 0.676$). Whereas in the component of affective, there is no significant difference shown.

E. Discussion

This article aims to see the interaction between the length of teaching and the inclusive education training experience on teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. This study also shows the main effect of each variable, which are the length of teaching and inclusive education training experience. As an additional analysis, the amount of training material is also explained to see its effect on the teachers in the attitudes of inclusive early childhood school teachers in Indonesia towards inclusive education, both in total and in the three components of attitudes (affective, cognitive, and behavior).

The results of this study indicate that there is no significant effect of the interaction between the teaching length and the inclusive education training experience on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in total or all components of attitude.

The absence of interaction between the length of teaching and the training variable indicates that the former variable requires other variable to be able to consistently affect the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. That other variable may be one that not only increases teacher knowledge about children with special needs and inclusive education, but also supports the implementation of inclusive teaching in schools, such as the variable of perceived school support for inclusive teaching. This variable has been shown to significantly affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education; the higher the teachers' perception of the support provided by the school, the stronger their attitudes towards inclusive education will be [27], [34].

On the result of the main effect of the teaching length on teachers' attitude, the result reveals a non significant effect. This result is similar [26] who also found that the duration of teaching has no effect on attitudes. Thus, it is further supporting another studies that the length of teaching can not stand alone in affecting the attitude of the teacher [24].

In the training variable, it can be seen that there are significantly different attitudes between the teachers who had received inclusive education training and the teachers who had never received inclusive education training. Similar results are also found in the behavioral component but not in the affective or cognitive component of attitude.

These results prove that training experience does indeed affect the attitudes of teachers on inclusive education. In accordance with these results, prior studies which examined the effect of training on teachers' attitudes on inclusive education [13], [15], [16], [28]–[30] find that the information and knowledge about inclusive education and the provision of the skills that the teachers get in training could make their attitudes towards inclusive education positive.

Result of this study shows that, training also affects the behavioral component of attitudes, however, there is no significant difference in the affective and cognitive components. This indicates that the training obtained by the teacher could create positive behavioral intentions towards the implementation of inclusive education but has not created positive feelings, emotions, and perceptions of inclusive education.

The effect of training on the behavioral component indicates that even though teachers did not yet have positive emotions and perceptions of inclusive education, they were willing to implement an inclusive education system in their schools. It also shows that teachers were willing to adjust the curriculum, learning strategies, and evaluation methods according to student needs, modify the physical environment to facilitate students with special needs, and encourage them to participate in the classroom. Such results could be affected by the majority of participants taking training material on the implementation of inclusive education techniques, such as how to deal with children with special needs and the development of learning methods. In addition to that, this result could also be a sign that the teachers feel their school is ready to implement inclusive education by considering the school readiness factor. It could be seen in the study of Oswald and Swart [35] who stated that even though teachers already had emotions and a good understanding of inclusive education, they would still need the readiness of resources and support from schools in implementing inclusive education.

Even so, this result could be a note for training implementers because affective and cognitive attitudes in teachers remain important. Positive emotions and teacher perceptions of inclusive education will strengthen teacher intentions in implementing inclusive education.

This study also analyze whether the number of material teachers obtained in inclusive education training has any effect on their attitudes. The results shows that the amount of material obtained by the teacher creates a different attitude for each teacher both attitudes in total or in the two components of attitudes, namely cognitive, and behavioral whereas it has no effect on the affective component of attitude. In line with this, Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden [24] said that the more training the teacher gets, the more positive their attitude towards inclusive education will be. Significant differences in effect on cognitive and behavioral components indicate that the more material obtained by the teacher, their perception of inclusive education would be more positive and they would be confident in implementing it in school.

IV. CONCLUSION

To create a successful implementation of inclusive education in early childhood education, the teachers need positive attitude towards inclusive education. Factors affecting teachers' attitude include teaching length and training. In this study, the effect of the teaching length and inclusive education training experience on teachers' attitudes could be seen. Furthermore, the amount of training material obtained by the teacher and it's effect on the teachers' attitude also could be seen.

This study find that there was no interaction effect between the length of teaching and training experience on teachers' attitudes, either in total or in the three components of attitude. The main effect results of the teaching length also showed that the duration of teaching does not affect the differences in teachers' attitudes scores on inclusive education. However, the main effect of training shows that there is a significant effect of training on teachers' attitudes in total and on the behavioral component of attitudes, in which teachers who had received training show more positive attitude than teachers who had never received it. Further analysis of the training material numbers shows that the more inclusive education training material the teacher gets, the more positive the teachers' attitude, in total and on the two components of attitudes, namely cognitive and behavioral.

The results of this study could be useful to provide an overview of the teachers' condition in order to support the implementation of inclusive education in inclusive early childhood education. This could also be an evaluation for practitioners and stakeholders to improve the quality of inclusive education at the level of early childhood. In addition to that, research on teachers in early childhood education level is a contribution needed for the development of knowledge about inclusive education.

This study recognizes many limitations that could affect its results. First, the participants in this study were mostly still concentrated in the Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi) area. This could cause the characteristics of participants which are influenced by culture to be less varied. It could also indirectly affect the answers given by participants. In addition, the number of participants which is not too large caused the participants' demographics to vary less. The spread of the number of participants based on the duration of teaching seemed to be less spread from one group to another.

Second, online data collection causes the control of participant criteria to be less stringent. The online data filling also made researchers unable to control criteria of the participants in the questionnaire.

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