

Inclusive Preschool Teachers: Their Attitude and Engagement toward Inclusive Education

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Abstract—It has been established that teachers are the most critical element of successful inclusion practices. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between attitudes and engagement of preschool teachers regarding inclusive practices. Two instruments were used for data collection: Multidimensional Attitudes towards Inclusive Educational Scale – Indonesian Version (MATIES-IV) adapted by [1] and Teachers' Engagement Scale (TES) adapted by [2]. 201 teachers who worked at inclusive preschool around JaBoDeTaBek Indonesia participated in the study. Data were analyzed with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Furthermore, descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA and regression analysis were conducted using a step-by-step method. The results found that there was a significant impact between conative aspects of teachers' attitude on each aspect of their engagement. All findings were discussed teachers need to be provided with functional teacher training programs that foster positive attitudes and provide them with meaningful experiences.

Keywords—*inclusive education; teacher's attitudes; teacher's engagement; preschool; special education needs*

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the fundamental human rights that is protected and secured by many international and national legal instruments. The 1945 State Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (the basis for all laws of Indonesia) clearly and expressly guarantees that every Indonesian citizen has the right to obtain education; which is affirmed in [3] concerning the National Education System; as well as in [4] concerning Inclusive Education for students who have disabilities and potential intelligence and/or special abilities. Inclusive education is an innovative and strategic educational approach to develop access to education for all children with special needs that emphasizes anti-discrimination attitudes; fights for equal rights and opportunities; justice; and expanding access to education for all children [5]

Inclusive education developed from 2000 in Indonesia. This program is a sequence regarding an integrated education program that started in 1980 [6]. Conceptually; integrated education isn't entirely the same as inclusive education though it has the same desire; in terms of the implementation of education for students with special needs with regular students in the related school. Nowadays; Indonesia still faced a variety of issues or challenges on inclusive practices; such as stories

from parents who feel hard and encounter a refusal to enrol their children with disabilities to regular schools.

Inclusive education should have been started earlier; yet at the level of preschool or kindergarten. In enrichment to rules and laws that promote the implementation of education for early childhood; conceptually and scientific studies on child development; have shown the existence of positive values in the practices of early childhood education. [7] describes the most important influence that can mark a deep feeling made at the right time; clearly in critical years (early childhood stage). Hence; the demand for stimulation provided at an early age could improve all aspects of development. Leaping to provide stimulations at the precise period will affect a negative impact on children's development.

The quality of inclusive practices varies according to program philosophy; administrative support; teacher training; and attitudes of teachers [8]. However; the most fundamental element needed for successful inclusion is general education classroom teachers [9]–[11]. Teacher training; experience; attitude; and knowledge are key indicators of the quality of inclusive education. Teachers need to be knowledgeable and qualified approaching inclusion practices as they work with special needs children and attempt to provide the diverse needs of all the children in classrooms [12]. In this reason; successful inclusion is closely related to the ability to adapt the instructional environment and methods to the needs of students; use effective instructional methods and strategies to teach children appropriate behaviours; and provide equal learning opportunities for all children [13].

Some other studies have shown that inclusive education can work well if supported by several factors: (1) positive attitudes; commitments; and beliefs from all teachers; school staff and parents; (2) availability of specialized program or assistance; modification on the physical environment; tools and materials; availability of specialist teachers; relevant policies and procedures to monitor the improvement of special needs students; (3) the existence of cooperative collaboration between specialist teachers and classroom teachers in designing and implementing teaching programs; (4) flexible curricula and suitable learning methods [14]. It has shown that teachers have a critical role in inclusive education. It revealed within a positive attitude and engagement in teaching activities; including designing suitable learning methods regarding the needs of students and providing instructional

support in the classroom. Teacher's capacity to bring out various things in learning activities in the classroom could recognize as a teacher's performance. Teacher's performance prompted by the boundary to which he/she will do for his/her responsibility to the profession they belong. It is known as the teacher's engagement.

[15] stated that teachers' engagement could be observed through the degree of attention and absorption; dedication and the courage to face challenges in teaching activities. According to [16]; teachers with a high level of engagement will be very concerned about the quality of the teaching they provide. We could recognize the attentiveness from their teaching practices in the classroom. [17] developed the teachers' engagement theory that led to the school context and characteristics of the teacher. Klassen argued that the teaching field has unique characteristics that are not found in other professions; especially the need to build relationships with students and social relations with other educator colleagues or partners. Adjusting the model suggested by [15] as well as considering the characteristics of the teaching field; Klassen developed a tool to measure the level of teachers' engagement that reflects the particular characteristics of teachers' work in classrooms and schools. It is called the Teacher Engagement Scale (TES). TES consists of four aspects: cognitive engagement; emotional engagement; social engagement; and colleagues/partners engagement.

Cognitive engagement is the teacher's cognitive ability in teaching; the extent to which the teacher wants to maximize his teaching performance and gives his time and energy to give his best performance. Emotional engagement is an emotional state; especially the positive emotions felt by the teacher in association with his profession as a teacher. Social engagement is the energy spent to build social relations in the teacher's work environment. In this case; specifically the relationship between the teacher and students. Partner engagement is the energy spent on building social relationships in the teacher's work environment. In this case; specifically the teacher's relationship with his/her coworkers/colleagues.

The level of teachers' engagement can lead teachers to provide excellent performance in his/her work. It explained through motivational job-demand resources theory (JD-R) [15]. According to this theory; the teacher acts as a personal resource; which is; the aspect of self that is related to high confidence in oneself so that positive attitudes are developed such as endurance and the capability to regulate and present excellent results in work [18]. Attitude is a nature within the self that presents a response to agree or disagree with an object [19]. Attitudes evolve of the basis of evaluative responses. It indicates or reflects an individual opinion/knowledge; feeling and behaviour toward an object [20]. Attitudes are classified into three components: cognitive; affective; and conative. The cognitive component consists of beliefs or knowledge towards an object.

Feelings of an object belong to the affective component. Conative component reflects the intention of an individual to act or react towards an object in a certain way [20].

The object of attitude in this study is inclusive education which covers students with special needs. Some studies found that teacher attitudes towards inclusive education influenced by various variables which are also known as demographic factors; such as training; duration of teaching; class level and field of study; teaching experience of students with special needs; types and severity of student difficulties [21]; [22]. Assessing from the training experiences; teachers who receive training in teaching students with special needs show a more positive attitude towards inclusive education [21] Teachers' attitudes toward inclusive also are influenced by the types of student difficulties. Teachers tend to have a more positive attitude towards students with physical and sensory disabilities than students with learning difficulties and behavioural or emotional disorders [23]. According to that description; the teacher's attitude couldn't be determined by only one variable. Therefore; various findings related to variables belonging to demographic factors were controlled in this study.

Teaching effectiveness in the inclusive classroom begins with the positive attitude and concern of the teacher to find out what is best for all students. Great teachers surely desire all students to learn and reach optimal accomplishment. Besides; teachers with positive attitudes also have a more positive approach to be inclusive and will be able to designs and execute instructions for special needs children pretty well [24]. In this case; the positive attitude of the teacher will determine the engagement of the teacher regarded in attempting teaching and learning activities for all students in the class; especially children with special needs. However; some studies found that teachers who taught at inclusive preschools were inadequate to fulfil the teaching scheme described in [4]; [25]. Teachers couldn't provide any different treatments for special needs children and sometimes. They also feel overwhelmed in teaching special needs children; so that they are not optimally engaged or connected to their students.

Based on the explanations above; in this study; we will see how the impacts of each component/elements that formed the teachers' attitudes (both positive or negative) on inclusive education towards each aspect of their engagement in teaching activities in preschool. Understanding the impact on teachers' attitudes toward their engagement helps us to indicates the success of inclusive education. We're expecting the results of this study could insert as materials in the process of creating and evaluating the policies related to inclusive education by school management and regional/central government. Also; the results could be used by teachers as the closest individual to special needs children; who happened to be the primary target in the implementation of inclusive education.

II. METHODS

Respondents; Procedure; Instruments

A total of 201 teachers participated in this study. All of the teachers were from both private and state inclusive preschool in Jakarta; Bogor; Depok; Tangerang and Bekasi. These cities were chosen in term of the feasibility of access to gain the participants in this study. It took two months (February – April 2019) to collect the data; both online and offline; through purposive sampling technique. To distribute the questionnaire

offline; the researcher first contacted the school through the office telephone number or contacted the principal/head of the study program to ask about the willingness to get involved and find information regarding the licensing procedure. Meanwhile; online questionnaires are distributed using various social media platforms such as WhatsApp; Instagram; Twitter; and Facebook.

The attitudes of preschool teachers toward inclusive education conducted using a Multidimensional Attitudes questionnaire toward Inclusive Education Scale - Indonesian Version (MATIES-IV) adapted by Sihombing (2014) from similar scale which developed by Mahat (2008). The MATIES-IV questionnaire has good validity coefficient; between 0.26 - 0.80 and the reliability of the three components are also good; cognitive ($\alpha = 0.77$); affective ($\alpha = 0.80$); behavior ($\alpha = 0.81$). The scale measured the attitude towards IE; which consisted of three aspects; cognitive; affective; and behaviour. This MATIES-IV questionnaire consists of 18 items representing the cognitive aspects (6 items); affective (6 items); and conative (6 items). Three items of cognitive aspects are unfavorable; all affective items are unfavorable; and conative items are all positive. The scale used a six-point Likert scale; ranged from 1 to 6 (1=strong disagreement and 6=strong agreement).

Meanwhile; teachers' engagement measured using the Teachers Engagement Scale (TES) adapted by Erlinda (2016) from a similar scale developed by Klassen (2013). The TES questionnaire has good validity coefficient; between 0.34 – 3.32 and the reliability of the four components with Cronbach alpha coefficients which are also good; cognitive engagement ($\alpha = 0.93$); emotional engagement ($\alpha = 0.94$); social engagement ($\alpha = 0.93$) and partner engagement ($\alpha = 0.93$). TES consists of 25 items representing cognitive engagement (7 items); emotional engagement (7 items); social engagement (6 items) and partner engagement (5 items). The scale used a four-point Likert scale; ranged from 1 to 4 (1=strong disagreement and 4=strong agreement). Data were self-report from all respondents which were analyzed using multiple regression to examine the impact of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education on teachers' engagement in inclusive preschool.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A.Results

TABLE I. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

Demographics	N (n=201)
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	28
Female	174
<i>Education Background</i>	
High School	8
Diploma	6
Undergraduate	174
Postgraduate	14
<i>Teaching in IE</i>	
< a month	5
1 – 12 months	39
1 – 3 years	96
3 – 5 years	41
> 5 years	21
<i>Training Experiences</i>	
Yes	171
No	30

Data demographic shows that there were more female teachers than male teachers who were participated in this study. Most participants have higher education and most of them had the experience to interact with special needs children through teaching or other activities. Most of the participants have 1-3 years of working experience as a preschool inclusive teacher. Lastly; most of the participants have experienced training in the area of inclusive education; including to handle special needs children.

TABLE II. TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND TEACHERS' COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

	B	SE B	β
Constant	32.361	0.064	
Cognitive	-0.020	0.079	-0.020
Affective	-0.040	0.081	-0.040
Conative	0.413	0.067	0.413*

$$R^2 = 0.181 (p < 0.05); *p < 0.05$$

The results show that teachers' attitude toward inclusive education has a significant effect on teachers' engagement in cognitive aspect; $F(3;197)=14.54$; $p < 0.05$. The component of teachers' attitude that significantly influence teachers' engagement in cognitive aspect are conative ($b=0.413$; $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile; cognitive ($b=-0.020$; $p > 0.05$) and affective components ($b=-0.040$; $p > 0.05$) have no impact. The R^2 value of 18.1% shows that the variance of proportion in teachers' engagement in cognitive aspect could be explained by teachers' attitude.

TABLE III. TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

	B	SE B	β
Constant	27.984	5.505	
Cognitive	0.057	0.081	0.057
Affective	0.013	0.084	0.013
Conative	0.370	0.069	0.370*

$R^2 = 0.139$ ($p < 0.05$); * $p < 0.05$

The results show that teachers' attitude toward inclusive education has a significant effect on teachers' engagement in emotional aspect; $F(3;197)=10.61$; $p < 0.05$. The component of teachers' attitude that significantly influence teachers' engagement in emotional aspect are conative ($b=0.370$; $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile; cognitive ($b=0.057$ $p > 0.05$) and affective components ($b=0.013$; $p > 0.05$) have no impact. The R^2 value of 13.9% shows that the variance of proportion in teachers' engagement in emotional aspect could be explained by teachers' attitude.

TABLE IV. TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND TEACHERS' SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

	B	SE B	β
Constant	32.053	5.434	
Cognitive	-0.100	0.080	-0.100
Affective	0.053	0.082	0.053
Conative	0.407	0.068	0.407*

$R^2 = 0.161$ ($p < 0.05$); * $p < 0.05$

The result shows that teachers' attitude toward inclusive education has a significant effect on teachers' engagement in emotional aspect; $F(3;197)=12.63$; $p < 0.05$. The component of teachers' attitude that significantly influence teachers' engagement in social aspect are conative ($b=0.407$; $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile; cognitive ($b=-0.100$ $p > 0.05$) and affective components ($b=0.053$; $p > 0.05$) have no impact. The R^2 value of 16.1% shows that the variance of proportion in teachers' engagement in social aspect could be explained by teachers' attitude.

TABLE 5 TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND TEACHERS' PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

	B	SE B	β
Constant	30.659	5.472	
Cognitive	-0.008	0.081	-0.008
Affective	0.006	0.083	0.006
Conative	0.388	0.069	0.388*

$R^2 = 0.150$ ($p < 0.05$); * $p < 0.05$

The result shows that teachers' attitude toward inclusive education has a significant effect on teachers' engagement in a social aspect; $F(3;197)=11.54.63$; $p < 0.05$. The component of teachers' attitude that significantly influences teachers' engagement in the

partner aspect is conative ($b=0.388$; $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile; cognitive ($b=-0.008$; $p > 0.05$) and affective components ($b=0.006$; $p > 0.05$). The R^2 value of 15% shows that teachers' attitude could explain the variance of proportion in teachers' engagement in the partner aspect.

B. Discussion

The results of the study show that only the conative component of teachers' attitude has a significant influence on each aspect of teachers' engagement. There is a possibility that the behaviour displayed as a manifestation of the teacher's attitude towards inclusive education is temporary. In this case; the level of teacher engagement tends to be moderate. [26] developed five levels of engagement theory which explained the motives and personal meanings related to an object that would form attitudes toward an object and promote the level of engagement: authentic engagement; ritual engagement; passive compliance; retreatism; and rebellion.

In the authentic engagement; a person perceives involved activities as being personally meaningful; exhibits a high level of interest; and perseveres when he/she encounters difficulties. A person believes that their tasks/responsibilities are challenging and will encourage them to think; as well as believe he/she can accomplish these tasks. Also; they demonstrate high levels of comprehension and understanding. In the level of ritual engagement; a person follows others' directions and complete the tasks/responsibilities; but they do not place personal value in completing these tasks/responsibilities. The motivation for teachers derives not from their expectations; but instead for extrinsic rewards; such as colleagues approval or gaining respect. Also; they may learn information at a higher cognitive level; but it is only superficially retained. In the passive compliance level; since person efforts hold little meaning; he/she exhibits the least amount of effort necessary for completing tasks/responsibilities and often pay as little attention as possible to details. Furthermore; they learn information at a lower cognitive level and have only a superficial understanding.

According to the results of the study; teacher engagement may be at the level of ritual engagement. The attitude of teachers is formed by the desire to get extrinsic rewards or only to carry out responsibilities and avoid punishment from other people. This kind of attitude will be disappeared if there are no people who encourage it. It is in line with the research conducted by [26]; although in a different context. One of the findings of the research conducted on high school students who examined the attitude towards school and level of engagement was the ritual engagement was only a significant predictor for the dimension of the entity to be longed for. In other words; students' opinions of the school as a long-term for and supportive of personal development were associated with their level of engagement. Students' attitude toward school changed positively when exhibited authentic engagement and ritual engagement. Besides; engagement is

not directly observable; especially if it is only based on self-report [27]. A genuine effort must be made to attend to their learning activities [26]; such as by observing or administering questionnaires to students as a form of data triangulation.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this research; it is found that teachers' engagement may result in ritual levels of engagement towards inclusive education. The motivation for teachers derives not from their expectations; but instead for extrinsic rewards; such as colleagues' approval or gaining respect. In addition; they may learn information at a higher cognitive level; but it is only superficially. For this reason; teachers need to be provided with functional teacher training programs that foster positive attitudes and provide them with meaningful experiences. By doing so; teachers will be internally motivated and ultimately exhibit authentic engagement. For further research; it is suggested that teachers' attitudes and their engagement should be examined at different levels; because this can be affected by variables such as family; economic conditions; psychological problems; etc.

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