

## **The traditional way of professional development in inclusive education: Still effective or not?**

**Suhendri\*, Norimune Kawai**

Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan

\*E-mail: [d196070@hiroshima-u.ac.jp](mailto:d196070@hiroshima-u.ac.jp)

**Abstract:** Numerous studies suggest professional development to improve educators' attitudes toward inclusive education. However, not all professional development seems to be effective in boosting participants' attitudes. This current study is aimed to explore the effectiveness of professional development in inclusive education, especially for kindergarten principals in Indonesia. By conducting a 10-day professional development (n=60), the attitudes toward inclusive education of the participants were measured before and after the professional development using ITAIE (The Indonesian Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education). A paired T-Test was applied to find the differences in principals' attitudes toward inclusive education before and after the professional development. The finding revealed no significant improvement in kindergarten principals' attitudes toward inclusive education after joining the traditional way of professional development.

**Keywords:** professional development; principals attitudes; inclusive education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many scholars reveal that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education determine the successful implementation (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Barnes & Gaines, 2015; Elisa & Wrastari, 2013). In addition, teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education greatly influence the learning environment in inclusive schools (Monsen et al., 2014). Barnes and Gaines (2015) believed teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusive education could create a good school atmosphere to bring positive student achievements. .

One of the ways to gain the positive attitudes teachers need to attend professional development in inclusive education. In a study by Avramidis and Kalyva (2007), 60% of the 135 participants believed their attitudes would be affected by their knowledge. One-third said they could get more knowledge through professional development. In addition, Prinsloo (2006) believed that professional development was a key factor in positively impacting teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education.

In fact, principals' attitudes and knowledge towards inclusive education still become barriers to actualizing inclusive education as they lack professional development. Meanwhile, Slee (2010) points out that professional development programs keep struggling to equip teachers to implement inclusive education. Unfortunately, most studies reveal that 'sit and get' professional development has had fewer impacts on improving educators' competencies (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Nishimura, 2014; Tate, 2012). Therefore, the current study will explore the effectiveness of the traditional way of professional development to improve kindergarten principals' attitudes toward inclusive education.

## METHOD

The current study used a quasi-experiment comparison group design by applying a traditional way of professional development as the intervention. Upon obtaining ethical approval, 60 Indonesian kindergarten principals were asked to join the conventional professional development for ten days. Some participants represented each island to join the professional development. Due to the pandemic situation of COVID-19, the class was held online with 60 participants.

The ITAIE scale – The Indonesian Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education scale developed by Ediyanto (2020) was applied to measure the principals' attitudes toward inclusive education before and after the treatment. The instrument contains a six-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), to Strongly Agree (5). For the analysis, the Paired T-Test was applied to measure the significant difference between pre and after the professional development.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result(S)

#### *Respondent background*

In this current study, kindergarten principals joined the traditional professional development. The participants were asked to complete a survey about their attitudes toward inclusive education before and after the professional development was conducted. To indicate the level of the attitudes, the range of the mean will be as follows:

- A mean score of more than 3.5 ( $M > 3.5$ ) will be considered that kindergarten principals have a high positive attitude toward inclusive education at kindergartens,
- A mean score between 1.3 and 3.5 ( $1.3 \leq M \leq 3.5$ ) will indicate a moderate attitude,
- A mean score lower than 1.3 ( $M < 1.3$ ) will show the negative attitude of kindergarten principals towards implementing inclusive education at kindergartens.

From the quantitative data analysis in the control class, the mean score of principals' attitudes toward inclusive education before the professional development was 3.0 (see Table 1), between 1.3 and 3.5 ( $1.3 < M < 3.5$ ). It indicated that participants' attitudes towards inclusive education were moderate attitude. After the professional development, the attitudes were measured again. There was a slight improvement; the mean was 3.1 (Table 2), but still moderate attitudes.

**Table 1. The mean score of principals' attitudes toward inclusive education before and after the professional development**

Before the professional development			After the professional development		
Statistics	Value		Statistics	Value	
N	Valid	60	N	Valid	60
	Missing	0		Missing	0
Mean	3.0098		Mean	3.1256	
Std. Deviation	.44670		Std. Deviation	.42303	
Minimum	1.50		Minimum	2.18	
Maximum	4.09		Maximum	4.27	

The Paired T-Test analysis was applied to get more accurate data about the difference Paired Sample T-test was used to determine whether there are differences in kindergarten principals' attitudes before and after the conventional professional development in inclusive education.

The decision-making guideline in paired sample t-test was based on the significance value.

- If the probability or significance value (sig. 2-tailed) is less than 0.05 ( $<0.05$ ), then there is a significant difference between principals' attitudes before and after the professional development in inclusive education
- Conversely, if the value of probability or sig. (2-tailed) is higher than 0.05 ( $> 0.05$ ), then it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between principals' attitudes before and after the professional development in inclusive education

The Paired T-Test analysis found that the sig (2-tailed) value was 0.144 (Table 2). This value was more than 0.05. Since the sig. (2-tailed) was higher than 0.05 ( $> 0.05$ ), so it was concluded that there was no significant difference between principals' attitudes before and after the professional development. In other words, the traditional professional development did not successfully improve principals' attitudes toward inclusive education.

**Table 2. the Result of Paired T Test**

	Paired Differences			Sig (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1 VAR00001-VAR00002	-.11212	.58639	.07570	.144

### Discussion(s)

The traditional professional development in this current study did not apply any combination of professional development except the "sit and watch" method. As predicted, it did not improve teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Most studies claimed that the failure of traditional professional development to improve teachers' competencies was due to its top-down structure, one-size-fits-all nature, and lack of continuous follow-up and support (Shurr et al., 2014; Utami & Prestridge, 2018; Visser et al., 2014).

This finding reinforced some other studies about traditional professional development's failure to boost teachers' attitudes and competencies, for example, a study by Reina et al. (2019) and Ediyanto et al. (2020). They found that the traditional professional development failed to boost 40 Spanish Physical Education Teachers' (PET) attitudes towards inclusive education. This result was also in line with the study by Sykes (1996). He said that a traditional professional development where teachers do one-shot training was ineffective in developing their competencies. Artman et al. (2020) also argued that traditional professional development failed to meet teachers' needs. As a result, the students' achievements were also hard to gain.

However, some studies mentioned different results regarding the improvement of attitudes towards inclusive education after professional development. Many studies mentioned that professional development could boost teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, such as Ediyanto (2020), Kuyini and Desai (2008), Lambe (2007), and Male (2011). Male (2011) revealed that forty-eight teachers, who were enrolled in a master's program in Special and Inclusive Education, indicated having more positive attitudes at the end of the professional development compared with at the beginning for four categories of inclusion, namely physical/sensory; social; academic; and behavioral.

## CONCLUSION

A positive attitude toward inclusive education is a key element in implementing inclusion. One of the ways for educators to achieve it is by joining professional development. However, not every professional development has successfully improved educators' attitudes toward inclusion. This current study revealed that the traditional professional development in inclusive education had failed to improve kindergarten principals' attitudes toward inclusion. The principal's attitudes remained moderate before and after the professional development. However, this finding could not be generalized in other areas of education except in a kindergarten setting with a limited number of participants. Future studies with more participants and comparison control and experiment group would give comprehensive results.

## REFERENCES

- Artman, B., Danner, N., & Crow, S. R. (2020). Teacher-directed professional development: An alternative to conventional professional development. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning*, 17(1), 39-50.
- Avramidis, E., & Kalyva, E. (2007). The influence of teaching experience and professional development on Greek teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 22(4), 367–389.
- Barnes, M. C., & Gaines, T. (2015). Teachers' attitudes and perceptions of inclusion about grade level and years of experience. *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, 3(3), 1–20.
- Ediyanto. (2020). The development of an instrument to measure Indonesian teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. [Doctoral dissertation, Hiroshima University]. <https://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/00049557>
- Ediyanto, E., Maulida, R., Atika, I. N., & Kawai, N. (2020). The pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education: An empirical study in Yogyakarta City, Indonesia. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 11(1), 65-73.
- Elisa, S., & Wrastari, A. T. (2013). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education viewed from the forming factors of attitude. *Jurnal Psikologi Perkembangan dan Pendidikan*, 2(1), 1-10.
- Kuyini, A. B., & Desai, I. (2008). Providing instruction to students with special needs in inclusive classrooms in Ghana: Issues and challenges. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 4(1), 22–39.
- Lambe, J. (2007). Northern Ireland Student Teachers' Changing Attitudes towards Inclusive Education during Initial Teacher Training. *International journal of special education*, 22(1), 59-71.
- Male, D. B. (2011). The impact of a professional development programme on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. *Support for Learning*, 26(4), 182-186.
- McLeskey, J., & Waldron, N. L. (2002). Professional development and inclusive schools: Reflections on effective practice. *The Teacher Educator*, 37(3), 159-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730209555291>
- Monsen, J. J., Ewing, D. L., & Kwoka, M. (2014). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, perceived adequacy of support and classroom learning environment. *Learning Environments Research*, 17(1), 113–126. doi:10.1007/s10984-013-9144-8
- Nishimura, T. (2014). Effective professional development of teachers: A guide to actualizing inclusive schooling. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 10(1), 19-42.
- Prinsloo, E. (2001). Working towards inclusive education in South African classrooms. *South African journal of education*, 21(4), 344-348.
- Reina, R., Healy, S., Roldán, A., Hemmelmayr, I., & Klavina, A. (2019). Incluye-T: a professional development program to increase the self-efficacy of physical educators towards inclusion. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 24(4), 319-331.
- Shurr, J., Hilth, M., Jasper, A., McCollow, M., & Heroux, J. (2014). Another tool in the belt: Self-directed professional development for teachers of students with moderate and severe disabilities. *Physical Disabilities: Education and Related Services*, 33(1), 17-38.
- Slee, R. (2010). Political economy, inclusive education, and teacher education. In C. Forlin (Ed.), *Teacher education for inclusion: Changing paradigms and innovative approaches* (pp. 13–22). London: Routledge.
- Sykes, G. (1996). Reform of and as professional development. *Phi delta kappan*, 77(7), 464.
- Tate, M. L. (2012). "Sit and Get" Won't Grow Dendrites: 20 Professional Learning Strategies That Engage the Adult Brain. Corwin Press.

- Utami, I. L. P., & Prestridge, S. (2018). How English teachers learn in Indonesia: Tension between policy-driven and self-driven professional development. *Teflin Journal*, 29(2), 245-265.
- Visser, R. D., Calvert Evering, L., & Barrett, D. E. (2014). #TwitterforTeachers: The implications of twitter as a self-directed professional development tool for K-12 teachers. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 46(4), 396-413.