

## **Inclusive Practices: Levels of Teacher Collaboration in Regular Schools**

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**Abstract:** This research aims to analyze the collaborative learning in inclusive schools from the perspective of teachers and its implementation. Collaborative learning will be a challenge if there are children with special needs and regular students learning together in inclusive class. This research used quantitative research method with descriptive approach. This research was conducted in 10 inclusive schools involving 20 teachers (10 special teachers and 10 regular teachers). The results showed the acceptance of the existence of children with special needs by regular teachers related to the collaboration process in inclusive schools. The collaboration levels that occurred were 50% very good (level 1), 30% good (level 2) and 20% poor (level 3). Collaborative learning will succeed when the regular teachers accept the existence of children with special needs.

**Keywords:** collaboration, regular teacher, special teacher.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Inclusive education allows all children to learn together without discrimination (Armstrong, 2007; Junaidi et al., 2022; Ediyanto et al., 2023, Amka et al., 2023). All children have the same opportunity to develop their potential (Saharan & Sethi, 2011). The different abilities are owned by each child, even the identical twins also have differences (Ainscow, 2016). A good education system must be able to accommodate it all.

Children with special needs have the same rights in educational services (Veck, 2014). The equality of rights is the equality of acceptance. The educational services are certainly different from regular children because require special services (Armstrong, 2010). Some children with special needs require greater portion of development services than academic services (Lewis & Norwich, 2007). The determination of this service is determined by the identification results and good assessment (Squires, Humphrey, Barlow, & Wigelsworth, 2012). The purpose of all this is to ensure that children with special needs can attend, participate and excel regular children in inclusive schools (Ainscow & Miles, 2008).

The existence of children with special needs in regular schools is a challenge. Collaboration between regular and special teachers is needed (Ainscow & West, 2006). Widodo's research showed that the collaboration of regular teachers and special teachers can improve the academic abilities of students with special needs (Widodo, Hufad, Sunardi, & Nandiyanto, 2020). The role of the two teachers is very important in the success of learning in inclusive schools.

The research on inclusive education for children with special needs discuss a lot about flexible schools. Good schools must fulfill the inclusion index (Brokamp, 2017). Teachers must have behaviors that accept diversity (Yada & Savolainen, 2017). There has not been much discussion about the perspective of collaboration and its implementation. The author wants to raise this issue in detail in this research.

## METHOD

This research used quantitative method with a descriptive approach. Quantitative method emphasizes objective measurement and statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys (Zwiener-Collins et al., 2023). The research settings were carried out in 10 inclusive schools of elementary school, junior high school and senior high school in Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Data collection techniques were carried out by observation and interview. Observations made to see the implementation of learning in inclusive class. Interviews were conducted for each of the 10 regular teachers and 10 special teachers. Specific data collected related to the acceptance of teachers, the level of collaboration and cooperation in the learning process. The level of collaboration was classified into 3 levels, very good was categorized to be level 1, good was to be level 2 and poor was to be level 3.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### *The profile of regular teachers and special teachers in inclusive schools*

Table 1 shows the list of regular and special teachers who collaborated. Ten schools involved had different levels, namely elementary school, junior high school and senior high school. Ten teachers paired in an inclusive class carried out the collaboration. There were three teachers with Master Degree education and the rest were teachers with Bachelor Degree education.

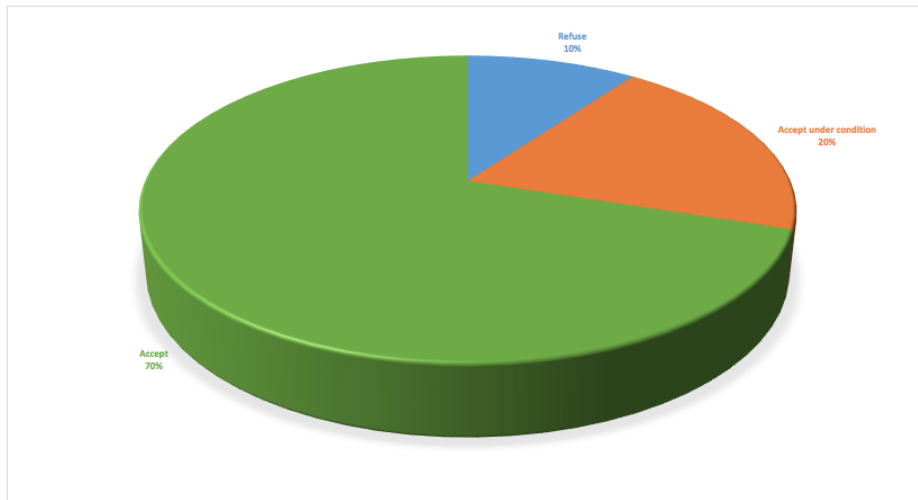
**Table 1.** Distribution of Regular and Special Teachers Collaboration in inclusive schools

No	Initial Name	Gender	Last Education	Age	Initial Name	Gender	Last Education	Age	School Degree Level
1	ED	F	Master Degree	<35	AR	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Junior High School
2	FA	M	Bachelor Degree	>35	DW	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Senior High School
3	HH	F	Bachelor Degree	<35	SJ	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Junior High School
4	NM	F	Master Degree	<35	TY	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Junior High School
5	IY	M	Bachelor Degree	>35	UG	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Senior High School
6	BR	F	Bachelor Degree	<35	MC	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Elementary School
7	AM	M	Bachelor Degree	>35	WT	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Senior High School
8	UR	F	Bachelor Degree	<35	MM	M	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Elementary School
9	NM	F	Bachelor Degree	<35	FK	M	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Elementary School
10	MW	F	Master Degree	<35	BB	F	Bachelor in Special Education	<35	Elementary School

Collaboration With

#### *Perspective of regular teachers on children with special needs*

Figure 1 shows the acceptance data for children with special needs. The data showed that 70% of regular teachers accepted the existence of children with special needs in their classes. As many as 20% of regular teachers were willing to accept under the condition that the children are categorized as children with mild disabilities. While 10% said they refused even though currently there were children with special needs in their classes, due to they were forced by the law to accept.



**Figure 1.** Regular Teachers' Acceptance of Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Schools

Figure 2 shows the three levels of collaboration data from 10 pairs of teachers. Data showed that 50% of pairing teachers were at level 1. They collaborated very well in classroom learning. As many as 30% of pairing teachers were at level 2. This means that they did the collaboration well during learning. The 20% pairing teachers showed the level of collaboration that was not good. Between regular teachers and special teachers did not do the collaboration process.

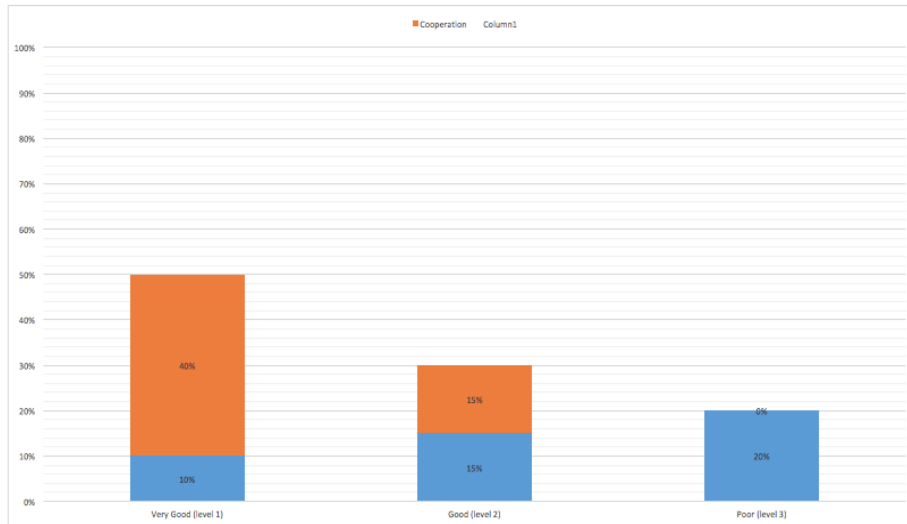


**Figure 2.** The Level of Collaboration between Regular Teachers and Special Teachers in Inclusive Schools

***Implementation of collaboration in learning***  
**Learning Planning**

Learning begins with the planning process. The results of this research indicated that most of the plans were arranged individually. Regular teachers arranged regular learning plans according to the curriculum. The special teachers made plans based on academic assessment and the development of students with special needs.

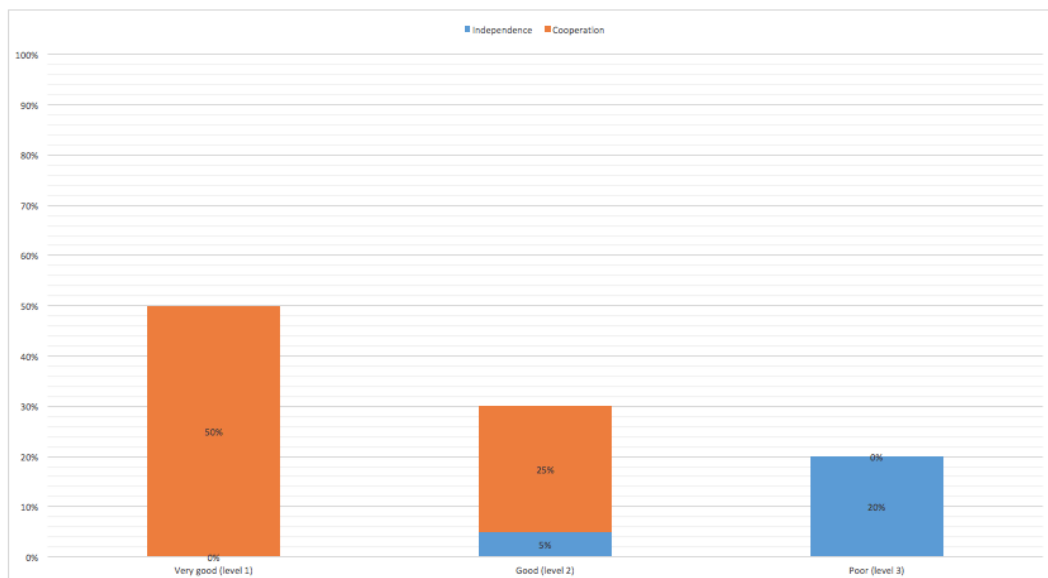
Figure 3 shows the cooperation scores from each level of collaboration focused on learning planning activities. At level 1, regular and special teacher learning plans carried out 40% cooperation activities and left 10% independent activities. This illustration shows that at this level the cooperation in learning planning activities was very dominant. At level 2 learning planning activities, the portion of cooperation and independence was carried out at 50:50. At level 3, there was no visible cooperation activity.



**Figure 3.** Cooperation Scores in Collaboration of Learning Planning

**Learning Implementation**

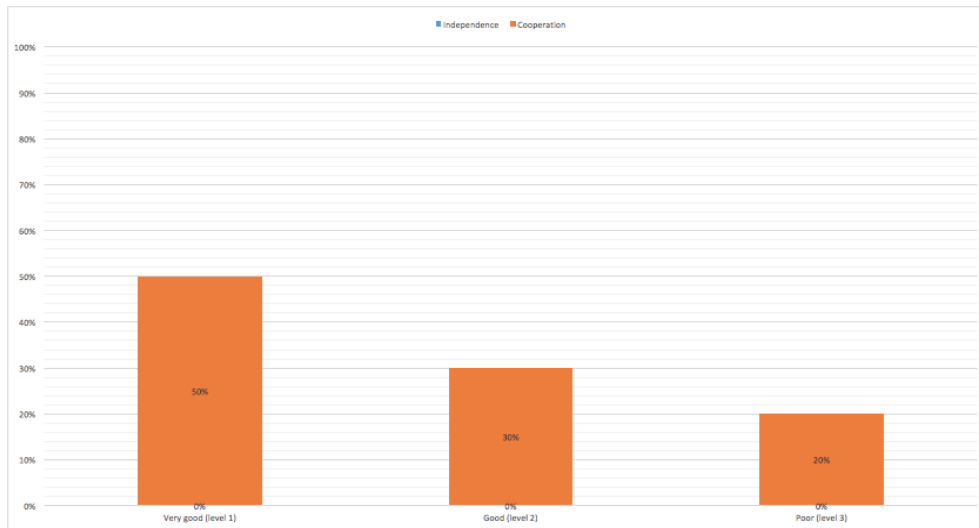
Figure 4 shows the cooperation scores from each level of collaboration focused on the learning planning process. At level 1, all activities were carried out in cooperation. At level 2, cooperation was more dominant with a score of 25% and only 5% independent. At level 3, all activities were carried out independently.



**Figure 4.** Cooperation Scores in Collaboration of Learning Implementation

**Evaluation**

Figure 5 shows the cooperation scores from each level of collaboration focused on learning evaluation activities. At each level of collaboration showed that all evaluation processes were carried out in cooperation.



**Figure 5.** Cooperation Scores in Collaboration of Learning Evaluation

**Discussion**

The teacher has the task to assist students in learning (Hussin & Hamdan, 2016). Inclusion classes require teachers who have good knowledge in academics and child development (Austin, 2001). Most of the regular teachers in this research accepted the existence of children with special needs in their classes. The author saw in their perspectives that all children with special needs have the same right to learn. Inclusive education gives students the right according to their potential (Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). Inclusive education enables fair education without discrimination (Armstrong, 2017). The differences that exist in each student are seen as unique diversity (Kalonde, 2019). Good teachers are able to solve all diverse problems (Chitiyo & Brinda, 2018). Collaboration is one way to overcome problems in the classroom (Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). Learning problems will be easier if solved together (Pratt, Imbody, Wolf, & Patterson, 2017).

Teachers with higher education tend to accept children with special needs (Morgado, et al, 2016). The author assumes that the level of education makes teachers wiser. The vastness in thinking makes someone sees the positive side of something (Nixon, 2015). Academic maturity makes many alternative solutions to problems (Pintrich, 2004). Access to many references makes confidence in acting (Litchfield, 2002).

This research showed that female teachers cared more about children with special needs. Women instinctively use their feelings in their behavior (Sansone, 2017). Caring as a mother makes her more close to children (Gauvain & Perez, 2008). This makes the acceptance of children with special needs to be very good.

Teachers at young age are more receptive to children with special needs. Young age provides a motivational impetus for learning and facing challenges (Fallon, 2010). A more

primed physical ability makes activity unlimited (Ruskova, 1992). But the older teachers will be better in experience and patience (Tsai, 2015).

Learning will run well if it is preceded by careful planning (Redfern, 2018). This research showed that most of the planning was carried out with good cooperation between regular and special teachers. Cooperation makes it easier for teachers to design learning (Crevecoeurs et al., 2014). Special teachers provide input through individual learning programs for children with special needs (Mogonea, 2019). Regular teachers develop general learning plans with minor adjustments for some students (Fennick, 2001). Discussions between regular and special teachers are needed to complete learning planning (Bešić et al., 2017).

The ability of the teacher to activate a pleasant learning atmosphere is very much needed in the inclusive class. This will not happen if it is not done in cooperation. Regular teachers coordinate overall students assisted by special teachers who ensure the material is delivered to children with special needs (Embury & Dinnesen, 2012). Collaboration will make a positive contribution to learning in inclusive class (Widodo, 2020).

Evaluation is needed to measure the success of a learning (McKague et al., 2014). The author saw cooperation in evaluation in this research. Regular teachers are not able to make their own evaluations (Lin & Lin, 2019). Special teacher assistance will make evaluations more ideal for children with special needs (Navarro et al., 2016). The ideal evaluation includes academic and development (Arocena et al., 2018). The inability of regular teachers is what makes them have to work with special teachers (Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

This research showed the perspective of regular teachers regarding the acceptance of children with special needs in inclusive classes affected the level of collaboration. The acceptance of the existence of children with special needs in Banjarmasin inclusive schools made the collaborative levels even better. Of the research subjects, 50% were at level 1, 30% were at level 2 and 20% were at level 3. The implementation of cooperation in the collaboration level was seen in the process of planning, implementing and evaluating learning. Collaborative learning is successful if the regular teacher accepts the existence of children with special needs.

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