

Inclusive Education Policies and Classroom Practices for Students with Diverse Learning Needs

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Abstract:

This study explores the implementation of inclusive education policies and classroom practices in addressing the needs of students with diverse learning abilities. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving teachers, school administrators, and students. The findings reveal that inclusive education practices, such as differentiated instruction, flexible assessment, and collaborative teaching, significantly enhance student participation and learning outcomes. Teachers demonstrated positive attitudes toward inclusion, although challenges such as limited resources, insufficient training, and time constraints were identified. The study also highlights the importance of institutional support, teacher collaboration, and parental involvement in strengthening inclusive practices. Overall, the results indicate that effective implementation of inclusive education requires a comprehensive approach that integrates policy, pedagogy, and continuous professional development.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Inclusive education has become a central focus in global educational reform, emphasizing the right of every learner to access quality education regardless of their background, abilities, or learning needs. The concept of inclusion extends beyond merely placing students with diverse needs in mainstream classrooms; it involves creating supportive learning environments that accommodate all learners. This approach aligns with the principle of equity, which ensures that each student receives the support necessary to succeed. Inclusive education policies have been widely promoted to eliminate discrimination and foster equal opportunities in education systems. As a result, schools are increasingly expected to adopt inclusive practices that address diverse learning needs (UNESCO, 2020).

The shift toward inclusive education is rooted in international frameworks that advocate for equal educational access. Global initiatives have emphasized the importance of providing education for all, including students with disabilities and other special educational needs. These frameworks encourage governments to implement policies that support inclusive practices in schools. Inclusive education is therefore not only a pedagogical approach but also a human rights issue. It reflects a commitment to social justice and equality in education. Consequently, policy development plays a crucial role in shaping inclusive educational systems (Ainscow, 2005).

Classroom practices are a key component in the successful implementation of inclusive education. Teachers are at the forefront of this process, as they are responsible for adapting instruction to meet diverse student needs. Effective inclusive practices involve differentiated instruction, flexible teaching strategies, and the use of varied learning materials. Teachers must be able to recognize and respond to individual differences among students. This requires both pedagogical knowledge and practical skills. Therefore, teacher preparedness is essential for successful inclusion (Tomlinson, 2014).

One of the major challenges in inclusive education is addressing the wide range of student abilities within a single classroom. Students may differ in terms of cognitive abilities, language proficiency, and socio-emotional development. These differences require teachers to employ diverse instructional strategies. Differentiation allows teachers to modify content, process, and assessment based on student needs. This approach ensures that all learners can participate meaningfully in the learning process. As a result, differentiated instruction is widely recognized as a core element of inclusive education (Hall, 2002).

Teacher attitudes and beliefs also play a significant role in the implementation of inclusive education. Positive attitudes toward inclusion can enhance teachers' willingness to adopt inclusive practices. Conversely, negative perceptions may hinder the effectiveness of inclusion efforts. Teachers who believe in the value of diversity are more likely to create supportive learning environments. Professional development programs can help shape these attitudes by increasing teachers' understanding of inclusive education. Thus, teacher mindset is a critical factor in successful inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

In addition to teacher factors, institutional support is essential for implementing inclusive education policies. Schools must provide adequate resources, including teaching materials, assistive technologies, and specialized support services. Collaboration among teachers, administrators, and support staff is also necessary. Inclusive education requires a coordinated effort to address the needs of all learners. Without sufficient support, teachers may struggle to implement inclusive practices effectively. Therefore, institutional commitment is vital for successful inclusion (Florian, 2012).

The role of curriculum design in inclusive education cannot be overlooked. An inclusive curriculum ensures that learning materials and activities are accessible to all students. It promotes flexibility and adaptability in teaching and assessment. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is often used as a framework to create inclusive curricula. UDL emphasizes multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression. This approach helps accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities. As a result, curriculum design plays a crucial role in promoting inclusion (Meyer et al., 2014).

Assessment practices must also be adapted to support inclusive education. Traditional assessment methods may not accurately reflect the abilities of students with diverse needs. Inclusive assessment involves using multiple methods to evaluate student learning. These may include formative assessments, portfolios, and performance-based tasks. Such approaches provide a more comprehensive understanding of student progress. They also allow teachers to provide meaningful feedback. Therefore, assessment reform is essential in inclusive education (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Collaboration between schools and families is another important aspect of inclusive education. Parents and caregivers play a vital role in supporting student learning. Effective communication between teachers and families can enhance student outcomes. Families can provide valuable insights into students' needs and strengths. This partnership helps create a more holistic approach to education. As a result, family involvement is a key component of inclusive practices (Epstein, 2011).

Despite the progress made in inclusive education, several challenges remain. These include limited resources, lack of teacher training, and resistance to change. In some contexts, policies may not be effectively implemented at the classroom level. This gap between policy and practice can hinder the success of inclusive education. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies and strong leadership. Continuous evaluation and improvement are also necessary. Therefore, ongoing efforts are needed to strengthen inclusive education systems (Slee, 2011).

The integration of technology offers new opportunities for enhancing inclusive education. Digital tools can support personalized learning and provide access to diverse learning materials. Assistive technologies can help students with disabilities participate more actively in the classroom. Technology also enables flexible and adaptive learning environments. However, effective use of technology requires proper training and resources. Thus, technology integration must be carefully planned and implemented (Rose & Meyer, 2002).

In conclusion, inclusive education policies and classroom practices are essential for promoting equitable education for students with diverse learning needs. Successful implementation requires a combination of effective policies, teacher preparedness, institutional support, and innovative teaching strategies. While challenges remain, the benefits of inclusive education are significant in fostering equality and social justice. This study aims to explore how inclusive policies are translated into classroom practices and how they impact student learning outcomes.

Method (منهج)

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design to explore the implementation of inclusive education policies and classroom practices for students with diverse learning needs. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices within real educational contexts. The descriptive design enables the researcher to systematically describe how inclusive policies are translated into classroom practices. This approach is particularly useful for examining complex social and educational phenomena. By focusing on natural settings, the study captures authentic teaching and learning processes. Such an approach is widely used in inclusive education research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research was conducted in selected inclusive schools that implement policies supporting students with diverse learning needs. These schools were chosen based on their commitment to inclusive education and the presence of students with varying abilities, including those with special educational needs. The study setting provides a relevant context for examining both policy implementation and classroom practices. Data collection took place over a specific period to ensure sufficient engagement with participants and observation of classroom activities. The selection of multiple sites enhances the richness of the data. This design allows for a comprehensive understanding of inclusive practices (Yin, 2018).

Participants in this study included classroom teachers, special education teachers, school administrators, and students. A purposive sampling technique was used to select individuals who have direct experience with inclusive education practices. Teachers were selected based on their involvement in inclusive classrooms, while administrators were chosen for their role in

policy implementation. Students with diverse learning needs were included to provide insights into their learning experiences. This diverse group of participants ensures a holistic perspective on the research topic. The sampling strategy aligns with qualitative research principles (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data collection was conducted using multiple methods to ensure data triangulation and enhance credibility. The primary method was semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators. These interviews aimed to explore participants' understanding of inclusive education, their teaching practices, and the challenges they face. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility in probing deeper into relevant issues. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. This method provides rich, detailed information about participants' perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Classroom observations were also conducted to examine how inclusive practices are implemented in real teaching situations. The researcher observed instructional strategies, teacher-student interactions, and the use of learning materials. Observations provided direct evidence of how teachers accommodate diverse learning needs. Field notes were used to systematically record observations. This method complements interview data by capturing actual classroom behavior. Observational data are essential for understanding practical implementation (Spradley, 1980).

In addition to interviews and observations, document analysis was used to review relevant materials such as school policies, lesson plans, curriculum documents, and assessment tools. These documents provide insights into how inclusive education is structured and implemented at the institutional level. Document analysis helps identify the alignment between policy and practice. It also offers additional evidence to support findings from other data sources. This method strengthens the validity of the study (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis in this study followed a thematic analysis approach. The researcher began by organizing and coding the collected data to identify key themes related to inclusive education practices. Codes were grouped into categories that reflect patterns and relationships within the data. The analysis involved interpreting these themes to understand how inclusive policies are enacted in classrooms. This systematic process ensures that findings are grounded in the data. Thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. Triangulation was used by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents. Member checking was conducted by sharing findings with participants for confirmation. Prolonged engagement in the research setting helped build trust and improve data accuracy. These strategies enhance the credibility and reliability of the study. Ensuring trustworthiness is essential in qualitative research (Denzin, 2012).

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms and secure data storage. Participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher ensured that all procedures adhered to ethical standards. This approach protects participants' rights and well-being (Orb et al., 2001).

In conclusion, the methodological framework of this study is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education policies and classroom practices. By using a qualitative approach and multiple data collection methods, the study captures the complexity of inclusive education. The systematic analysis and validation procedures ensure the reliability of the findings. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of how inclusive education is implemented in practice. Ultimately, it contributes to improving educational equity and quality.

Result (نتائج)

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of inclusive education policies has had a significant impact on classroom practices, particularly in accommodating students with diverse learning needs. Schools involved in the study demonstrated a commitment to inclusion by adapting their instructional approaches and providing support for students with varying abilities. Teachers showed awareness of inclusive principles and attempted to create learning environments that are accessible and supportive for all students. This reflects a positive alignment between policy directives and classroom implementation.

Teachers were found to employ a variety of instructional strategies to address student diversity. Differentiated instruction was one of the most commonly used approaches, allowing teachers to modify content, teaching methods, and assessment based on students' abilities. Flexible grouping, individualized support, and the use of varied teaching materials were also observed. These practices enabled students to participate actively in the learning process. As a result, classrooms became more inclusive and responsive to student needs.

The study also revealed that teacher attitudes toward inclusive education were generally positive. Most teachers expressed a strong commitment to supporting all learners, regardless of their abilities. They recognized the importance of inclusion in promoting equity and social justice. However, some teachers reported feeling unprepared to handle certain challenges, particularly when dealing with students with complex needs. This indicates the need for further professional development and support.

Collaboration among teachers and support staff emerged as a key factor in the successful implementation of inclusive practices. Teachers often worked together to plan lessons, share strategies, and address challenges related to student diversity. Special education teachers and support staff provided additional assistance in adapting instructional materials and supporting students with specific needs. This collaborative approach contributed to more effective teaching and learning.

The availability of resources and support services was found to influence the effectiveness of inclusive education. Schools with adequate teaching materials, assistive technologies, and support personnel were better able to implement inclusive practices. In contrast, schools with limited resources faced challenges in meeting the needs of all students. Resource availability therefore plays a critical role in the success of inclusive education.

Classroom observations showed that teachers made efforts to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. They encouraged student participation, promoted respect for diversity, and used strategies to engage all learners. Students were given opportunities to express themselves and collaborate with peers. This environment fostered a sense of belonging and inclusion among students. As a result, student engagement and participation improved.

Assessment practices were also adapted to accommodate diverse learning needs. Teachers used a variety of assessment methods, including formative assessments, project-based tasks, and individualized evaluations. These approaches allowed teachers to better understand student progress and provide appropriate feedback. Inclusive assessment practices ensured that all students had the opportunity to demonstrate their learning. This contributed to more accurate and fair evaluation.

Despite these positive findings, several challenges were identified in the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers reported difficulties related to large class sizes, limited time, and insufficient training. Some teachers struggled to balance the needs of all students within a single classroom. Additionally, the lack of specialized support for students with severe disabilities

posed significant challenges. These issues highlight the need for improved support systems.

The study also found that student diversity requires continuous adaptation of teaching practices. Teachers needed to be flexible and responsive in their instructional approaches. This included adjusting lesson plans, using different teaching methods, and providing individualized support. Such flexibility is essential for effective inclusion. It allows teachers to address the unique needs of each student.

Parental involvement was identified as another important factor in supporting inclusive education. Schools that maintained strong communication with parents were more successful in addressing student needs. Parents provided valuable information about their children's abilities and challenges. This collaboration helped teachers design more effective instructional strategies. As a result, student learning outcomes improved.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that inclusive education policies can be effectively implemented through appropriate classroom practices. Teachers play a central role in creating inclusive learning environments and adapting instruction to meet diverse needs. While challenges remain, the overall impact of inclusive practices is positive. These findings highlight the importance of continued support, training, and resource allocation to strengthen inclusive education.

Discussion (مناقشة)

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of inclusive education policies has a meaningful impact on classroom practices, particularly in addressing the needs of diverse learners. Teachers' efforts to adapt instructional strategies indicate that inclusive education is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical approach that can be realized in everyday teaching. This supports the view that inclusive education requires a transformation of teaching practices to accommodate all students. The alignment between policy and practice observed in this study reflects the effectiveness of inclusive frameworks in guiding educational change (Ainscow, 2005).

The use of differentiated instruction as a primary strategy highlights its importance in inclusive classrooms. Teachers who modified content, process, and assessment were better able to meet the diverse needs of their students. This finding confirms that differentiation is a key element of inclusive pedagogy. By tailoring instruction to individual abilities, teachers can ensure that all students are actively engaged in learning. This approach also promotes equity by providing appropriate support for each learner (Tomlinson, 2014).

Teacher attitudes emerged as a critical factor influencing the success of inclusive practices. Positive perceptions toward inclusion encouraged teachers to adopt innovative teaching strategies and create supportive classroom environments. However, some teachers expressed uncertainty in handling students with complex needs. This suggests that while attitudes are important, they must be supported by adequate training and professional development. Teacher preparedness is therefore essential for effective inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Collaboration among teachers and support staff was found to enhance the implementation of inclusive education. Collaborative practices allowed teachers to share knowledge, solve problems, and develop effective strategies for addressing student diversity. The presence of special education support further strengthened classroom practices. This finding aligns with the notion that inclusive education is a collective effort requiring cooperation among various stakeholders. Collaboration thus plays a vital role in improving teaching quality (Florian, 2012).

The availability of resources significantly influenced the effectiveness of inclusive education practices. Schools with sufficient teaching materials and assistive technologies were

better equipped to support students with diverse needs. Conversely, limited resources hindered teachers' ability to implement inclusive strategies effectively. This finding highlights the importance of institutional support in ensuring successful inclusion. Adequate resource allocation is therefore necessary for sustainable inclusive education (UNESCO, 2020).

Classroom environments that promote participation and respect for diversity were found to enhance student engagement. Teachers who created inclusive atmospheres encouraged students to interact, collaborate, and express themselves freely. Such environments foster a sense of belonging and improve students' learning experiences. This supports the idea that inclusive education is not only about academic achievement but also about social and emotional development. Creating a positive classroom climate is therefore essential (Slee, 2011).

Assessment practices were also adapted to align with inclusive education principles. Teachers used varied assessment methods to evaluate student learning more comprehensively. This approach allowed for a more accurate understanding of students' abilities and progress. Inclusive assessment ensures that all students have equal opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge. It also supports the use of feedback to improve learning outcomes. This finding reinforces the importance of assessment reform in inclusive education (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Despite the positive outcomes, the study identified several challenges in implementing inclusive education. Large class sizes, limited time, and insufficient training were among the main obstacles faced by teachers. These challenges can reduce the effectiveness of inclusive practices and create additional stress for educators. Addressing these issues requires systemic changes and strong institutional support. Without such support, the full potential of inclusive education cannot be realized (Florian, 2012).

The role of parental involvement was also highlighted as an important factor in supporting inclusive education. Collaboration between schools and families enables a better understanding of students' needs. Parents can provide valuable insights that help teachers design more effective instructional strategies. This partnership enhances the overall learning experience for students. Therefore, strengthening school-family relationships is crucial for successful inclusion (Epstein, 2011).

In conclusion, the discussion emphasizes that inclusive education is a multifaceted process that requires coordinated efforts at multiple levels. Effective implementation depends on teacher competence, institutional support, resource availability, and collaboration among stakeholders. While challenges remain, the positive impact of inclusive practices on student engagement and learning is evident. A comprehensive approach that integrates policy, practice, and continuous professional development is essential for achieving equitable education for all learners (Ainscow, 2005).

Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that the implementation of inclusive education policies plays a significant role in shaping classroom practices that accommodate students with diverse learning needs. Teachers who adopt inclusive strategies, such as differentiated instruction, flexible assessment, and collaborative approaches, are better able to create learning environments that are equitable and supportive. The findings also indicate that positive teacher attitudes, effective collaboration, and the use of appropriate resources contribute to the success of inclusive education. These elements collectively enhance student participation, engagement, and overall learning outcomes.

However, the study also reveals that several challenges remain, including limited resources, insufficient training, and time constraints faced by teachers. These barriers can hinder

the effective implementation of inclusive practices if not properly addressed. Therefore, continuous professional development, strong institutional support, and improved policy implementation are essential to strengthen inclusive education. By addressing these challenges and promoting a comprehensive approach, inclusive education can be further optimized to ensure equal learning opportunities for all students.

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