

Inclusive education at Universitas Negeri Surabaya: Perceptions and realities of students with disabilities

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ABSTRACT:

Promoting inclusive higher education in Indonesia continues to face significant challenges for students with special needs related to physical accessibility, socio-cultural barriers and stigmatisation. Employing a qualitative case study approach, we delve into the perspectives and real-life experiences of students with special needs at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). Leveraging Zoom, we conducted semi-structured interviews with fifteen students struggling with deafness, blindness, physical disabilities, autism, quadriplegia and cerebral palsy. Three primary themes emerged: the need for suitable accommodations, opportunities for social integration, and the availability of university resources. We conclude that despite some improvements, students with special needs at UNESA continue to encounter impediments in pursuing higher education. Our findings underline the necessity for further policy development and enhanced backing from the academic community to foster inclusive education at UNESA, thereby catering to the academic aspirations of students with special needs.

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INTRODUCTION

Challenges persist for students with special needs when it comes to accessing equal educational opportunities (Bunbury, 2018; Couzens et al., 2015; Dunn, 2019; Ehlinger & Ropers, 2020; Garca-González et al., 2020; Langørgen & Magnus, 2020; Lovett et al., 2014; Mutanga, 2017). Obstacles such as physical limitations, societal and cultural barriers, bias and stigma can lead to academic hardships for these students, particularly within higher education. Furthermore, policies and practices in higher education often limit inclusion and can promote a self-centred perspective that favours the needs of the institution as opposed to the students (Mosia & Phasha, 2017). Students who have special needs may also frequently encounter a significant lack of fair treatment, access to resources and disparities while progressing through professional degree programmes like law and medicine, even when they are aware of the challenges and requirements associated with their impairment (Ndlovu, 2019). Thus, inclusive education in higher education has become a major issue with far-reaching effects (Collins et al. 2018).

Inclusive education is not a new concept in Indonesian higher education. Indeed, on November 30, 2016, the Indonesian government passed Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System and Regulation. Other government regulations include Law No. 70 of 2009 decreed by the Minister of National Education, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CPRD), the Disability Act No. 8 of 2016, and Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. Therefore, government regulations are on track to keep inclusive education alive in the Indonesian educational sector. What remains is to assess the extent to which these government policies and regulations are implemented and their positive or negative consequences at all levels, particularly in higher education.

Even though UNESA is well-known as a leading state university promoting inclusive education in Indonesia, research on the implementation of government policies and regulations from the students' perspective at the university is literally non-existent. In this article, we examine the perceptions and realities of UNESA students with special needs. We attempt to portray the challenges and opportunities of inclusive education for students with special needs and how it impacts their studies and future professional careers. To this end, we examine why Indonesian government initiatives and policies to increase social inclusion at UNESA have succeeded or failed to

create an inclusive environment for students with special needs. We define inclusive education in higher education as the ability of students with special needs to access and enjoy the rights and privileges they deserve without constraints in the context of policies, practices and social environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is extensive academic literature on inclusive education in Indonesia, especially in higher education. For example, Rasmitadila et al. (2020) examined students' perceptions of the blended learning (BLA) strategy in inclusive education courses at a private university in West Java, Indonesia, in the 5th semester of the 2017-2018 academic years. Their findings indicate four types of student attention: the presentation of learning management systems (LMS), accessibility, advantages, and sustainability. Even though university internet connectivity is inconsistent and slow, BLA benefits students by providing more learning experience, information, learning paradigm changes, and flexible and autonomous learning.

In a cross-country study, Faragher et al. (2021) mention that the number of special education teachers in Indonesia remains insufficient despite university efforts to provide study/major degrees in special education. Thus, it is concerning that special education teachers are considered necessary to meet the educational needs of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) rather than inclusive education teachers with learning support qualifications. A lack of special equipment, resources and media for students with special needs (both those with disabilities and those with gifts and skills) is another issue (Sunardi, Yusuf, et al., 2011; Ajisuksmo, 2017; Ediyanto, et al., 2017; Afrianty, 2019; Lintang Sari & Emaliana, 2020; Humaira & Rachmadtullah, 2021; Riswari, et al., 2022). Tarsidi (2004) and Maulida et al. (2020) documented an ongoing progression, wherein certain universities have begun incorporating inclusive education either as a standalone subject or as integral components within related courses. Additionally, faculty members across various universities have been engaging in workshops or seminars focused on inclusive education. There is also a noticeable increase in the proactive efforts of Provincial Offices of Education towards the promotion of inclusive education.

University experiences of students with special needs

The number of students with special needs enrolled in higher education has increased over time (Couzens et al.,

2015; Ehlinger and Ropers, 2020; Holzberg et al., 2017; Jansen et al., 2018). Due to institutional provisions and support through legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is now possible to assert that students with special needs may feel more at ease pursuing higher education (Ehlinger & Ropers, 2020; Morina et al., 2019; Pino & Mortari, 2014).

Under disability Acts in Indonesia, a substantial number of higher education students with special needs are fairly treated and provided with tools that make them to easily navigate campus. These students historically struggled to explore the academic environment due to these concerns (Forber-Pratt et al., 2019; Weis et al., 2016). Students with special needs are given modifications to learn essential information and skills. Although most government policies and regulations still do not specify what accommodations students must receive, certain key components are believed to be included in the accommodation supply process (Dunn, 2019). We argue that higher education institutions should introduce changes that often meet the needs of these students. Universities must create a Universal Design for Learning (ULD) that promotes inclusive practices that allow all students, regardless of aptitude, to survive and prosper. To attain this objective, higher education institutions often seek guidance from medical and psychiatric experts across diverse fields, as noted by Ramaahlo et al. (2018) and Weis et al. (2016).

Due to the fact that the success of a student with a special needs at a university maybe heavily dependent on the university's understanding of their impairment, this process frequently results in a uniform response, which in turn creates barriers and affects how students life experience at the university (Mutanga & Walker, 2017; Pearson and Boskovich, 2019; Ramaahlo et al., 2018). The readiness of higher education institutions to embrace and implement certain rules and regulations without consulting the individuals who will use them may result in additional barriers to students' academic growth.

Policies and practises inclusion in Indonesia and at UNESA

The 1945 Constitution, Article 31, Paragraph 1 and Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System guarantee education access for students with physical disabilities in Indonesia. The government provides quality education to all children, including those with physical disabilities. The government does this by passing and ensuring the implementation of diversity-respecting and

non-discriminatory education policies and regulations under Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009. Contained in these policies and regulations is the acknowledgement of the universal rights to opportunities for people with special needs to study together at higher education level.

Students with special needs who meet the requirements should be able to pursue their education at the higher education level in a manner that is simple, secure and comfortable with the help of rules and processes that are simple and accessible. As one of the state universities in Indonesia that promotes inclusive education, UNESA has been committed to initiating and implementing programmes since 2010 and has a long history of caring about student diversity in terms of financial ability, culture, ability, ethnic group, size, different ages, different background and genders. Since the Surabaya State Special Education Teacher School changed into State University of Surabaya (formerly IKIP Surabaya) on June 20, 1994, following decree No. SK: 162/DIK-TI/KEP/1994, students with vision, hearing and other special needs have been accepted more.

Based on its commitment to being a disability-friendly campus, UNESA continues to develop innovative solutions to promote awareness of the presence of students with special needs and to provide accessibility in the form of facilities and infrastructure. The Minister of Education and Culture designated UNESA as an inclusive campus on August 29, 2012, recognising the efforts made to accommodate students with special needs. As an inclusive campus, UNESA has a moral obligation to improve the quantity and quality of its services.

The above literature explores significant facets of inclusive education within Indonesian higher education. However, there has been a notable absence in addressing the viewpoints and actual experiences of students with special needs, which constitutes our main area of interest. This particular article showcases the manner in which disparities in policy implementation impact students with special needs at UNESA, both during their academic journey and upon graduation.

Moreover, the article delves into the influence of factors such as academic programmes, educational levels and gender orientations on UNESA's students with special needs. Consequently, this research serves as a foundational stepping stone for future comparative analyses of inclusive educational approaches across Indonesian higher education institutions, as well as drawing parallels with other countries and regions, taking into account socio-cultural variations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We use the principles of social justice and law to encapsulate the notion of inclusive education, as initially outlined by Shyman (2022). In his work, he offers an all-encompassing perspective on inclusion that amalgamates the elements suggested by Ferguson (1995) and Idol (2006), all within the paradigm of social justice. As stated by Shyman (2022, p. 17), the definition of inclusive education is as follows:

1. A dynamic process through which students with and without special needs get their major forms of service delivery in the general education setting.
2. All essential supports, such as environmental modifications, instructional differentiation, and curricular material change, are accessible.
3. Based on a clear grasp of what the setting would be like, the individual, if able, has demonstrated a clear desire to be taught in the general education context.
4. Educational services should be offered in different environments only when all other choices for essential support in the general education classroom have been explored or the individual has demonstrated a clear desire for a different environment.
5. If service is given in a different context, it will be gradually replaced at the appropriate pace by service delivery in a normal school environment.
6. The choice to educate in a general education classroom is based solely on the appropriateness and accessibility of tailored aids and student preference.

It is important to keep in mind that the principles of social justice and law are vital for studying inclusive education as they ensure equitable access, non-discrimination and diverse perspectives. They hold educational institutions accountable, drive policy development and offer conflict resolution mechanisms. Social justice principles emphasise fair resource distribution and value diversity, enriching learning environments. Legal frameworks prevent exclusion and mandate accommodations, promoting equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of background or abilities. Together, these principles shape inclusive education by fostering fairness, acknowledging diversity, and providing a framework for addressing challenges within educational systems.

Expanding upon the work of Shyman (2022), our approach involves conceptualising the concept of social justice within the sphere of inclusive education at UNESA. In this context, we extend our focus beyond just the educators to include students without physical disabilities, academic personnel, and crucially, the established

guidelines and legal structure of both UNESA and the Indonesian educational framework. These multifaceted elements collectively function as benchmarks for evaluating the attainment of inclusive education goals.

Other theoretical approaches considered include those advanced by Sheehy et al. (2019) and Maryanti et al. (2021) who found that teachers' epistemological beliefs influence their views on inclusive education. Therefore, international epistemological research must adopt a more nuanced perspective of constructivist learning models to better understand and inform how inclusive pedagogy is practised.

In addition, we use the deficit-oriented discourses of Reeves et al., (2022) to analyse inclusive education policies and procedures at UNESA. This article examines the effects of normative and oppressive discourses on the othering of disabled students, the governance of disability, internalised oppression, ontological violence, and invisible labour.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is an evidence-based naturalistic approach that allows researchers to relate directly to the participants' lives and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Participants are observed in their natural environment, and their experiences serve as the study's focal point. Qualitative research provides the opportunity to conduct interpretive, naturalistic and comprehensive research (Anderson, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Given, 2008). Unlike quantitative research, which aims to quantify a problem and provide numerical examples, qualitative research provides both structured and unstructured insight and knowledge into participants' experiences by asking why questions (Denny & Weckesser, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Given, 2008). We employed this technique to collect data that helped us to compare the live and experiences of UNESA students with physical disabilities. This involved the administration of semi-structured interviews in Indonesian and later translated into English using DeepL for transcription and analysis. This method of collecting data gave us a detailed understanding of how special needs affect the educational progression of these students.

DATA COLLECTION

We collected data through both primary and secondary sources. We used purposive sampling to recruit fifteen

special needs students at UNESA to provide in-depth and comprehensive information about their perspectives and experiences with inclusive education on campus. To ensure that the sample is representative, we selected students irrespective of gender, including but not limited to students with blindness, deafness, MR, physical impairments, autism, sensory difficulties, mutism, slow learners and mental health concerns. We further distributed the sample depending on education level (undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate) and faculties and departments. The University Disability Centre assisted us in getting access to the students. Due to confidentiality concerns, we could not communicate directly with participants and had to go via the coordinator for disability assistance.

After obtaining their approval and using the designed semi-structured interviews as a guide, discussions were held with selected students online via Zoom. Each discussion lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. The semi-structured interviews were held in Bahasa Indonesia with 13 questions consisting of questions about impact of disability, support services and efficacy, curriculum and environment accessibilities, lecturer/professor responsiveness, inclusivity perception, challenges and awareness of rights, and interpersonal relationships. An interview guide serves as a crucial tool for interviewers to connect with participants and maintain consistency with

the research theme (Pedersen et al., 2015). Participants were given the chance to both read and hear a question, prompting them to elaborate on their answers. If needed, additional questions were posed. Notes were made during the interview to capture emerging themes, create new inquiries, or revisit questions that needed more explicit clarification. Interviews were scheduled at times that best suited the participants. Participants turned off their cameras for anonymity. During this step, there were no participants who withdrew from the process. All participant names were pseudonyms in this study to keep confidentiality. A voice recorder was used as a backup device. The laptop and voice recorder were kept in a safe area to preserve the confidentiality of the students. Throughout the interviews, the participants were allowed to speak uninterrupted and only asked clarifying questions when required.

The demographics of the participants are shown in table 1.

Secondary data obtained from peer-reviewed journals via online internet searches on platforms such as Google Scholar, Researchgate, Jstor, UNESA and the Indonesian government's websites. The streamlined secondary data was used to substantiate primary data, particularly in the areas of literature review, theory, methods and findings analysis.

Table 1. Participants' demography

No	Participant	Age	Sex	Disability	Department	Accommodation
1	Agus	21	Male	Autism	Culinary art education	Notes from Professor
2	Ida	20	Female	Deaf	Fashion education	Sign Language
3	Tika	20	Female	Quadriplegia	Indonesian literature education	Mobility
4	Santi	21	Female	Physical Impairment	Non-formal education	Mobility
5	Siti	20	Female	Blind	Music education	Reader apps
6	Joko	20	Male	Blind	Non-formal education	Reader apps
7	Muhammad	22	Male	Blind	Non-formal education	Reader apps
8	Ikhsan	21	Male	Blind	Indonesian literature education	Reader apps
9	Indah	20	Female	Deaf	Cosmetology education	Sign Language
10	Budi	21	Male	Blind	Special education	Reader apps
11	Imam	20	Male	Blind	Indonesian literature education	Laptop, Reader apps
12	Radit	20	Male	Deaf	Design graphic	written communication
13	Bahar	21	Male	Deaf	Design graphic	written communication
14	Ana	21	Female	Deaf	Fashion education	Sign Language
15	Vita	21	Female	Cerebral palsy	Technology Informatics	Mobility

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The Zoom meetings were initially recorded on audio-tapes and translated from the Indonesian language to English using DeepL Pro by the third author. The English transcriptions were then reviewed by the first and fourth authors to ensure their accuracy and alignment with the original meaning. With the transcripts prepared, all four authors performed joint thematic analysis, aligning with the approach detailed by Braun & Clarke (2006). This method is particularly apt when scientific research aims to identify underlying themes within data while considering the researcher’s reflective interaction with it. The data analysis process consisted of six sequential stages as per our approach (figure 1).

1. Familiarisation with the data

The transcripts were read and reread by the researchers to immerse themselves in the data, noting down initial ideas.

2. Generating initial codes

Systematic coding was done across the entire data set, assigning labels to segments of data that appeared to capture relevant and meaningful features.

3. Searching for themes

Codes were collated into potential themes by reviewing and clustering related codes.

4. Reviewing themes

Themes were then reviewed and refined, ensuring they were supported by the data. This involved checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set.

5. Defining and naming themes

Each theme was given a clear definition and name.

6. Producing the report

The final step involved weaving together the analytic narrative and supporting data extracts done primarily by the first and second authors. Throughout the analysis, the

researcher maintained a reflexive journal. This was used to track thoughts, feelings, and interpretations throughout the analytic process, ensuring transparency and rigor (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Below is tabular simplification of the method of data analysis used.

FINDINGS

Following the process of thematic analysis, several themes became evident in relation to accommodation (both academic and non-academic), socialisation (including the social environment and peer support), and university resources (encompassing professors, disability centre services, and curriculum accessibility).

a) Inclusive accommodations

Accommodation was identified as a significant aspect of the university experiences of students with special needs. The students advocated that as a result of their limitations, the University should provide accommodation in terms of learning. This finding is divided into two categories of accommodation, academics and non-academics accommodation.

Academic accommodations

Students agreed that their specific accommodations were important to their academic progress. Academic accommodation is a basic instrument required by students with disabilities for teaching and learning. While they did not let their disabilities prevent them from pursuing their educational goals, they did acknowledge that they require the essential assistance with regards to accommodation to be able to achieve academic success. However, many of these students still face numerous challenges in getting to their classroom. For example, Budi, blind students in special education require reader apps to access books and learning materials from lecturers. “Because I am blind,

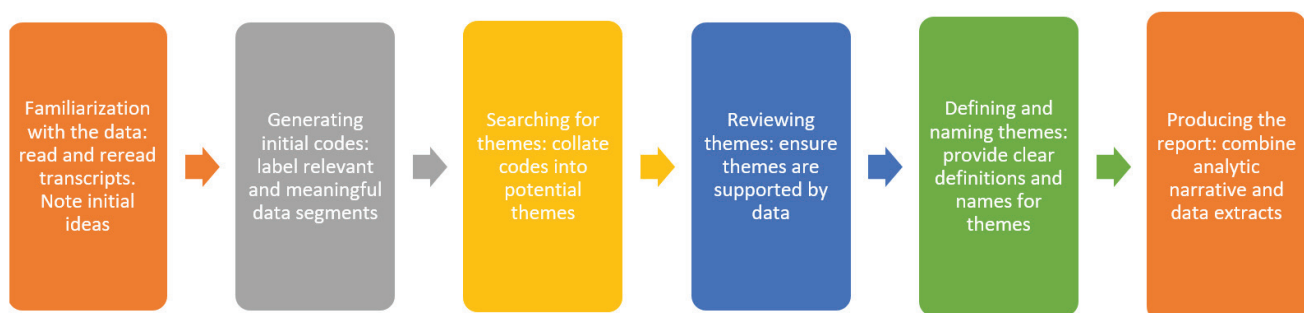


Figure 1. Thematic analysis stage by Braun & Clarke (2006)

the barrier for me in academics is visual material, so I need reader apps”, he clarified. Indah, a deaf student in the Cosmetology education department, also mentions it. She complained about the alternative academic accommodation she requires in her classroom. “Having running text on each lecture is easy for us to understand”, she said.

Non-academic accommodations

Joko, for example, described how he felt about his disability and how he requires university buildings that are accessible to him. Joko is completely blind and requires a guiding block to walk to class. It is also mentioned by Tika, who has a physical disability. She should attend one of the classes held upstairs. “When I attended the course class at that time, the class was upstairs, so when I went down the stairs, I was slow”, she explained. As a result, students who are blind, have physical disabilities, or have cerebral palsy face mobility issues on campus.

b) *Socialisation*

This social environment promoted social integration by encouraging students to speak up for their own rights and responsibilities. This study divides socialisation into two categories: social environment and peer assistance.

Social environment

Participants stated that the social structure of the University allowed them to interact with non-disabled peers. The University provides opportunities for all students to participate in various social activities and student organisations without regard to their socioeconomic status. However, Bahar, a deaf student in the Design Graphic Department, still struggles to interact with his peers. “The challenge is that no normal (hearing) students can sign language”, he explained. Another student, Santi, who has a physical disability, had difficulty socialising with non-disabled students.

Peers’ assistance

Peer assistance is one of the most frequently mentioned efforts for an inclusive environment, not only from a societal perspective but also from the academic needs of university students with disabilities. Classmates who assist students with disabilities who do not understand the lecturer’s explanation find it very effective in helping them catch up on learning disruptions. “I do not understand some explanations from lecturers, and some friends pick me up when I go to lectures”, Indah explained. Joko, a student in the non-formal education department, asked

his friends to repeat the lecturer’s presentations so that he could learn alongside them. “When I do not understand the lecturer’s explanation, I will ask a friend who understands or go to the class leader, and then when I go to class, sometimes I go and go home together with friends”, he said. Students are also more at ease studying and discussing the professor’s explanations with their close friends. “I usually go directly to the support person close to me and with whom I feel comfortable communicating”, said Agus, who has autism.

c) *University resources*

Students described the University’s resources as being extremely important to their educational experience. These resources include the Professor, Disabilities Centre Support, and Curriculum Access. Students agreed that the materials could either impair or help their academic progress. Most respondents believed that their academic development depended on whether or not these resources were used effectively.

Professor

Students overwhelmingly agreed that lecturers were crucial to their academic performance. They thought that lecturers were primarily accountable for their accommodations’ execution. When lecturers fail to perform their activities efficiently, it might hinder students’ academic growth. In particular, students regularly show that lecturers’ knowledge and responses might result in either access or inequality. For instance, Ida, who has hearing impairment, said, “lecturers’ too-rapid speech makes it sometimes difficult for me to comprehend, particularly when it comes to unfamiliar language”. Radit, the deaf student who chose communication with text-based communication, also complained, “I find it difficult in communication because they do not always understand my language, and I do not always comprehend what they are saying. I find communication difficult because I do not understand spoken language”.

However, some teachers may suspect students of lying about their condition. Even though they sometimes speak with lecturers and may be aware of their accommodations, it might be difficult to gain help, according to students. This was particularly important for students with invisible impairments. Bahar, a student with deaf explained, “Not all lecturers understand. We need to explain to them that we are capable. If we cannot do mainly visual assignments, then communication is very important”.

Apart from the criticism that students complained about the professor, some of them received additional

services from the professor including, giving longer time for students with disabilities to do assignments, providing learning materials that they could study and access, and some lecturers communicated and asked questions directly to students with disabilities through social media such as WhatsApp if they need an additional explanation about the course. One of the students said "Relationships with lecturers are good. Lecturers like to chat with me".

Disability centre support

The University's disability support services significantly ensured that students with disabilities get the necessary accommodations to excel in their respective fields. Prior to embarking on their educational adventure at the institution, students thought they needed to get these support services. Ana said, "I need Assistance from the disability centre to provide me with a sign language interpreter and support me in terms of communication with the professor when I have problems with courses".

Many students also feel glad for the disability centre according to the scholarship access. Muhammad said, "With the scholarship service, I thank the University disability centre which helped me to get a scholarship from the University. With this service, I do not have to think about costs anymore. I can focus on my education". Students have remarked on how accommodating the department was in actively incorporating them in developing accommodations. For example, Ida said that the inclusive atmosphere is still not evenly distributed throughout the department. So that hinders her from interacting with friends outside the department. Students think that the University should provide training for all departments to make the department members understand disabilities and be willing to support students with disability to provide access for disabled students in higher education levels.

Curriculum access- website, inclusive material

The majority of participants thought they could handle the curriculum. Some said it complimented their particular impairment. Even though the University has made efforts to adapt the curriculum regarding the flexibility of content and teaching methods, there are still some difficulties that students with disabilities experience, especially related to curriculum and teaching. For instance, Vita, a student with cerebral palsy in technology informatics development mentioned, "I need help understanding the material in lectures. Because sometimes there is material that I do not understand the language and meaning of the material". Siti, blind student from the Music depart-

ment, has difficulty accessing learning material. She said, "in my major there is music notation material. The material cannot be read by layer reader applications, which hinders my learning process".

University provided learning materials through the university website platform "vi-nesa" which is a learning management system (LMS) that can be accessed by both lecturers and students simultaneously. However, many students with disabilities still face difficulties in accessing vi-nesa according to their disability type. For example, Ikhsan, blind student from the Indonesian literature department said, "In Vi-nesa there are no reader apps available for me who is blind. For those with low vision, they cannot adjust the font size on the website, even though I need to read novels and poems according to my study programme".

DISCUSSION

Implementing inclusive education ideas in higher education might be difficult. Before being used in higher education, inclusive education was first created for younger students. The Indonesian education system allows all students to access education from early childhood to university. This research finding represented the realities and perceptions of students with disability who experience learning in the University in specially Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa) which is located in Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia.

The issues related to the student perception regarding the implementation of inclusive education identified in this study are accommodation, socialisation, and university resources. Accommodations enhance educational equity by facilitating access to educational opportunities for students (Lovett, 2021). The current study shows the adjustment and modification in academic and non-academic accommodation for a student with disabilities. Frequently, the accommodations provided to these students do not match their personal needs. However, students must seek accommodations at universities. According to research, lack of awareness for accommodations at universities is problematic for these students. Academic and social experiences of students may be impeded by low academic standards and non-inclusive practices of university community members (Grigal et al., 2022; Neubert et al., 2002; Hart et al., 2006). In this research, students also mentioned that social structure and peer's assistance support them in achieving academic success. It is clear that students with any type of disabilities need a companion and social environment

support from all university members. The third issue in this result is university resources. The problems that often arise in University do not have learning resources or sources of information that can provide problems that are faced by students (Rasmitadila et al., 2021). In this research, participants also mentioned that providing trained lecturers in terms of accommodating students with disability, accessible curriculum and support given by disability centres have a big impact on the university inclusion atmosphere.

The impact of Policy in Higher Education Level

Much research and literature emphasise the necessity of providing students with disabilities with the necessary adjustments to promote equality and access. Nonetheless, it remains difficult for students with disabilities to identify the required adjustments from the numerous stakeholders at all higher education institutions. The government regulations must be implemented, and institutional practices must be modified and addressed to provide students with assistance and equitable access

This part will concentrate on explaining the policy and practical implications of the research. Consequences for policy: although the Americans with Disabilities Act and Indonesian government regulations regarding persons with disabilities facilitate the access of persons with disabilities to different institutions and the provision of reasonable accommodations, the study's findings indicate that the University does not ensure equality. Students with disabilities continue to face several obstacles in gaining access to necessary accommodations and receiving help from relevant institutions. This statute must be changed to incorporate additional procedural protections in addition to granting accommodations. Implementing the policy will necessitate the imposition of harsher sanctions on institutions and organisations that fail to accommodate persons with impairments. Individuals or institutions that do not offer a fair educational experience for pupils with impairments might face increased penalties or court punishment.

Impact of teaching practice

The research demonstrated that students with impairments might get their accommodations via state institutions controlled by state statutes. However, these concessions were not properly applied. Even when pressed by students, many teachers were unwilling to guarantee that students get the necessary help. Thus, it may be permissible to assert that organisations must adopt processes that increase the accountability of personnel interacting

with kids with disabilities to guarantee that these students get the necessary classroom support services. The research revealed that the reaction of faculty members was dependent on the visibility of students' disabilities. This act may indicate that faculty members require training not just on disability legislation but also on how to accommodate students with diverse impairments. Such an endeavour by the University and other institutions may be crucial for assuring accessibility and fairness for students with impairments.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Based on the limitation of this study, it is recommended that future research investigate a more varied sample. Although obtaining data from only Indonesian participants was beneficial, a researcher may acquire plenty of information from a more varied set of disabilities. This study also suggests that students and teachers be included in future studies. When the views of these important stakeholders are examined alongside those of students with disabilities, researchers may get a greater understanding of the experiences of students with disabilities and the variables that impact them. Furthermore, seeing these students in class would be fascinating. Observation will provide a new perspective on how students' accommodations are applied and whether they are done correctly, as many students highlighted how unresponsive lecturers may be in applying their accommodations.

DECLARATION OF ETHICS

The project obtained complete ethical approval from the UNESA ethics committee. All participants were duly informed of their option to withdraw from the project at any point. Following their consent, interviews with participants were recorded, rendered anonymous, and transcribed. Anonymous interviews were securely stored on a password-protected computer for subsequent analysis.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that despite ongoing efforts, UNESA students with special needs continue to confront academic and curriculum obstacles. These challenges are rooted in difficulties understanding academic material due to instructional approaches and inadequate support from instructors. Communication issues with professors and the university's special needs programmes further impede their academic progress. Nevertheless, the research high-

lights that while these students encounter barriers to equitable academic opportunities, they maintain active social interactions with their peers. Evidently, these students are embraced within their social circles, demonstrating that the institution fosters an inclusive environment where their disabilities do not lead to discrimination.

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