



DOES GENDER AFFECT ATTITUDES IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS? EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIAN PRIMARY EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Gender roles influence how inclusive schools are viewed through differences in attitudes, experiences, and social norms attached to gender identity. This study aimed to determine the effect of gender on students' attitudes toward inclusive elementary and junior high schools, and the difference in average attitudes between males and females. This research was completed with a quantitative approach using descriptive analysis and an independent-sample t-test. The sample in this study consisted of 431 students, consisting of 195 elementary school students and 236 first Junior high school students in Padang city. The results of this study showed no influence of gender on students' attitudes towards inclusive and special education, which indicates that both elementary and junior high school students already have a good attitude category. Research conducted by researchers is useful to provide input and information for government and school, and specifically for teachers that students' attitudes towards students with special needs in the view of students have been good and equitable between males and females. That is, tolerance education has been successful. Novelty of research that attitude was not influenced by gender.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education for all is inclusive education. Through inclusive education, children's limitations can be covered by conditions of mutual reinforcement between students (Ediyanto et al., 2017). Children with special needs can optimize their potential with normal children. It is proven that inclusive has a positive effect on students with and without special needs in learning outcomes and socialization (Berman & MacArthur, 2017), (You et al., 2019). Inclusive schools have a positive impact on children, including (1) warmth and ability to be friends; (2) developing a personal understanding of the diversity of children; (3) raising awareness of other children; (4) development of social abilities; and (5) decreased anxiety about human differences that give rise to comfort and awareness (King & Ryan, 2019), (Krmpač-Grljušić & Kolak, 2018). So that inclusion creates a harmonious school and community.

The Directorate of Special Education states that the objectives of inclusive education in Indonesia are as follows Directorate of Special Education and Special Services Development. "National Inclusive Education Development Master Plan 2019-2024". Retrieved from <http://pk.kemdikbud.go.id/>, (2019): (1) providing the widest possible opportunity for all children (including children with special needs) to obtain an education that suits their needs; (2) help accelerate the compulsory basic education learning program; (3) helps improve the quality of primary and secondary education by reducing the number of classes and dropping out of school; (4) Creating an education system that values diversity, is non-discriminatory, and friendly to learning; (5) fulfilling the mandate of the 1945 Constitution in particular Article 32 paragraph 1 which reads "every citizen has the right to education", and paragraph 2 which reads "every citizen must follow basic education and the government is obliged to finance it." By understanding the meaning of education as a wholly inclusive, knowledge creation, environmental relationships in schools and communities that make diversity a symbol of national unity based on government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 17 of 2010. "Management and Implementation of Education". Retrieved from www.djpp.depkumham.go.id, (2010).

1.1 Inclusive education

The term inclusion in the realm of education is associated with an educational model that does not discriminate against individuals based on their abilities or abnormalities (Abba & Rashid, 2020; Theodoridis & Kraemer, 2013). In Indonesia, an inclusive education provider school is a school that accommodates all students in the same school (Andini, et al., 2020) (Kurniawati et al., 2012). This school provides a decent and challenging educational program, but it is adapted to the abilities and needs of each student as well as the help and support that teachers can provide to make children successful (Ediyanto et al., 2017; Kurniawati et al., 2017). Each of them receives the same educational services without discrimination from one another.

Inclusive education is a solution that is very possible for the education of children with special needs (Tait & Mundia, 2013). This solution has been found after a long process in the international conversation. In Indonesia inclusive education is officially defined as an education service system that includes children with special needs to learn together with their peers in the regular school closest to where they live (Muazza et al., 2018). Inclusive education has benefits for all students. All students can experience develop (You et al., 2019).

Researchers use the terms inclusive and special education to describe regular schools that accept children with special needs. This term is obtained by researchers based on a preliminary study that schools that accept children with special needs will make the school appropriate for children with special needs. This term emphasizes that regular schools that become inclusive schools must adapt school facilities for children with special needs (Lemberger-Truelove et al., 2020). This term will provide a classification that schools that are labeled inclusive will provide services for all children according to their individual needs (Naraian, et al., 2020).

1.2 Attitude

Attitude refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior of interest. Attitudes are formed by a series of beliefs and production values that are placed on behavioral outcomes (Ajzen, 2014). The attitude can be interpreted that a person can be biased in assessing, evaluating, or weighing the situation or state of a disabled person. Thus, giving rise to views that give rise to an attitude readiness assessment towards behavior with inclusive education. Studies that have relevance to teacher readiness about inclusive education have shown that; their attitude towards inclusive education is a strong predictor for their teaching practices (kim, 2011; Savolainen, et al., 2012).

Researchers want to describe how students' attitudes (non-disabilities) towards special students in inclusive and special education. Attitudes can be good or bad. Good and bad students in attitude will have an impact on students with special needs (Sahin & Gedik, 2022). This impact will affect the learning process to the process that can inhibit learning (Lee,., Chang & Haegele, 2020), (Thomas & Rose, 2020). So, that researchers want to know how students' attitudes in dealing with friends with disabilities in their school (Polikandrioti et al., 2020).

1.3 Gender

Gender in sociology refers to a set of characteristics that are associated with the sex of the individual (a person) and directed at the social role or identity in society (Treceñe, 2019). WHO imposes gender restrictions as "a set of roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes deemed appropriate for men and women, socially constructed, in a society". In Indonesia, there are several schools that separate men and women by gender (Oey-Gardiner, 1991). Gender can also be a separate occupation (Machiridza, 2015), and in the past it also became a gap in education (Machiridza, 2015). Not only in Indonesia, gender becomes an issue in government (Nguyen et al., 2022) (Prodip, 2014) (Sumardi, 2020) (Wahyudiati, 2022). So that the issue of gender becomes an interesting conversation to be analyzed in the attitude of students in inclusive.

The concept of gender is different from sex or sex that is biological, although in everyday speech sex and gender are considered to be the same. The level of feminism or masculine of an individual is gender. So that in practice something that is considered masculine in one culture can be considered as feminine in another culture (Elmorally, 2017). In other words, masculine or feminine traits depend on the socio-cultural context rather than solely on gender differences. However, in Indonesia gender is divided into two are male and female (Machiridza, 2015),(Williams, 2005).

Gender roles influence how inclusive schools are viewed through differences in attitudes, experiences, and social norms attached to gender identity. Women, often associated with the role of empathetic caregivers, tend to be more supportive of inclusive education, while men focus more on policy or logistical aspects. Female teachers tend to be more attuned to the individual needs of students, while men, who are more often in administrative positions, view inclusion from a managerial perspective. These stereotypes can create a gap in understanding inclusion as a shared responsibility. Therefore, equitable training for all genders is needed to ensure a balanced and effective inclusive approach.

The research question in this study is to overcome the effect of gender on students' attitudes toward disabled friends in inclusive schools. This study aims to explore the students' attitude categories towards peers' disabilities in both inclusive and special education, both in elementary and junior high school, based on gender.

1. What are the differences in students' attitudes towards peers' disabilities based on gender?

2. Does gender affect students' attitudes towards peers' disabilities?

2. METHOD

Research Design: This research uses a quantitative research approach. **Sample:** the sample in this study amounted to 431 students, consisting of 195 elementary school students and 236 first-year high school students in the city of Padang. The technique of taking samples uses stratified random sampling. **Instrument:** The instrument adoption from Musher that is "Chedoke-McMaster Attitudes Towards Children with Handicaps scale (Musher, 2016) with a validity of 0.848. The instrument, with 36 items with 5 scales, measures attitudes toward children with disabilities in three dimensions: affective (emotions), behavioral (actions), and cognitive (beliefs). **Procedure and analysis data:** the data collection procedure in this study is shown in Figure 1 below.

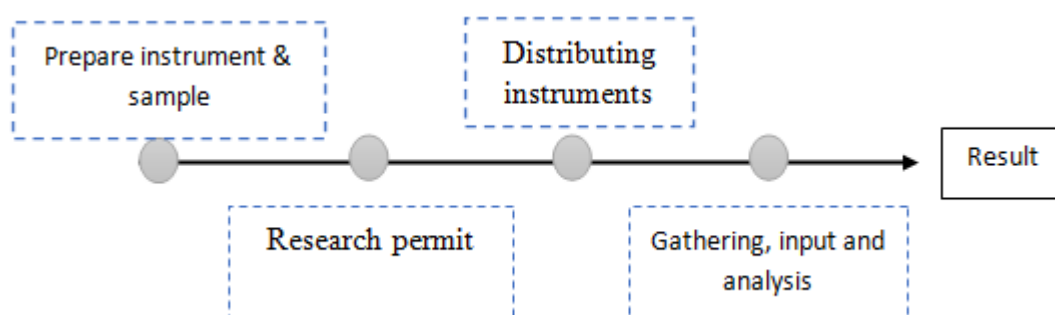


Fig. 1 – Collecting data procedure

Figure 1 shows the flow of research to get results. In completing the study used 4 stages in writing. Data analysis used by SPSS to analyze descriptive, regression, and independent sample t-tests. Analysis descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, percentages, and given the attitude category for student. The categories of questionnaire of student's attitude include very good, good, enough, not good, and very not good, as shown on table 1

Table 1 – Categories of Students' Attitudes in Inclusive Education

Category	Attitude
Very Not Good	36-64.8
Not Good	64.9-93.6
Enough	93.7-122.4
Good	122.5-151.2
Very Good	151.3-180

The table above shows the categorization of students' attitudes towards students with disabilities at school. The purpose of categorizing is to make it easier to assess student attitudes in an inclusive. Regression predicted the attitude based on the gender of the student with inclusive education. An independent sample t-test is used to measure the mean of the male and female genders at the level of the school.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Describe the effect of gender on students' attitudes towards disabled friends in inclusive and special schools. It analysis was funded the novelty of research. Furthermore, describe differences in the attitudes of students towards friends with disabilities based on gender

Descriptive Statistic Results

The total of student is 431, an male as much as 152 respondents and female as much as 279 respondents. Then table 4 also shows the male in elementary as much as 57 respondent or 27.5% of male and 95 respondent or 62.5% of male. The female in elementary as much as 102 respondent or 36.56% of female and 177 respondent or 63.44% of female. From the results of the table, it was found that more female students received education than men. This perception or reality has reversed the fact in the past that male has a high education. This fact will lead to gender equality (Infante & Darmawan, 2022), anyone can work not based on gender (Adzawla et al., 2019)(Sharma, 2020).

Table 3 – The students' attitude of male

Attitude	Elm	Jhs	Mean	Min	Max	%
Very not good	0	0				0
Not good	0	2				1.32
Enough	10	28	129.15	91	158	25.00
Good	45	61				69.74
Very good	2	4				3.95

Elm= elementary; Jhs= junior high school

Afterward, Table 3 shows that male students' attitude in elementary and junior high schools as much 152 respondents, dominated by good category, as much as 106 respondents. So, student's attitude in pleasure for elementary school toward inclusive and special education is categorized good. Then table 3 also shows the attitude in pleasure is Very not good as much as 0%, not good as much as 1.32%, attitude in pleasure with enough category as much as 25%. Then in good category as much as 69.74% and the last one is very good category as much as 3.95%. From 152 students get a mean value of 129.15, a maximum value of 158, and a minimum value of 91. The results show that male students have a good attitude towards friends with disabilities. This proves that male has good educational values, learning in schools produces values of living together (Bhat & Khan, 2022).

Table 4 – The students' attitude of female

Attitude	Elm	Jhs	Mean	Min	Max	%
Very not good	0	0				0
Not good	2	2				1.43
Enough	26	34	131.50	83	162	21.51
Good	66	129				69.89
Very good	8	12				7.17

Elm= elementary; Jhs= junior high school

Table 4 shows that female students' attitude in junior high schools as much 279 respondents, dominated by good category, as much as 195 respondents. So, female students' attitude in pleasure for elementary and junior high toward inclusive and special education is categorized good. Then table 4 also shows the attitude in pleasure is Very not good as much as 0%, not good as much as 1.43%, attitude in pleasure with enough category as much as 21.51%. Then in good category as much as 69.89% and the last one is very good category as much as 7.17%. From 279 students get a mean value of 131.5, a maximum value of 162, and a minimum value of 83.

Table 4 shows that students who have good attitudes towards disabled friends. This finding shows regular students (non-disabilities) have a good attitude. This attitude will have a good impact on the implementation of inclusive education and special education. This finding is information that can be made as a strengthening by the government to provide policies related to the implementation of inclusive education and special education in Padang City.

When students show a good attitude towards students with disabilities, the learning process will be better. In addition, the school environment will be harmonious and have a good influence on children with special needs. Good friend treatment will provide reinforcement in the learning process of students with special needs (Asrial et al., 2020) (Wang & Qi, 2020).

From these results, female students have a good attitude towards friends with disabilities. It means having attention and can help each other in the learning process (Mardhatillah et al., 2019). So that in this case between male and female do not have differences in attitudes towards students with disabilities (Okech et al., 2021).

These findings support the view that students without disabilities can create a harmonious inclusive environment, which strengthens the learning process of students with special needs. This positive attitude also indicates the potential to strengthen the implementation of inclusive education in Padang through supportive government policies. In addition, these results indicate that gender differences are not significant in determining attitudes towards friends with disabilities, underscoring the importance of an equitable intervention program for all students to encourage the sustainability of positive attitudes in the school environment.

The Regression between Gender toward Students' Attitude

For the results of the influence of gender with students' attitude in inclusive of elementary and junior high school can be seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Result of regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	SD		
1 (Constant)	126.801	2.415	52.506	.000
Gender	2.350	1.408	1.669	.096

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude

From Table 5, it can be seen the results of a simple regression test found that the regression equation is

$$Y = 126.801 + 2.350X$$

Eq (1) shows that X is variable for gender, but gender does not significant effect on a student's attitude ($p > 0.05$), see table 6. From the table, it has been proven that gender does not affect attitudes. This means that male and female attitudes towards disability students are equally good, and yet female students are better at acting towards this disability as evidenced by a positive sign on the gender coefficient, although it is not significant. Male students have advantages in attention and how he responds in situations, such as in terms of learning (Martino et al., 2022; Safapour et al., 2019).

Table 6 – Model summary of regression

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.080 ^a	.006	.004	13.9663

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender

The results of simple regression analysis based on table 6 showed that the value of coefficient of determination was (R^2) 0.006, this means that the contribution of gender to students' attitude is 0.6%, while the remaining 99.4% is influenced by other variables. From the results of the table, it can be concluded that the role of gender in attitudes is only 0.6%, meaning that gender does not significantly influence the formation of students' attitudes towards friends with disabilities in inclusive schools both at the elementary and high school level.

Table 6 shows that gender did not show a significant predictor of students' attitudes towards friends. That is, a male or female does not have a significant influence on the attitudes of students with special needs. This finding provides confirmation that students do not discriminate against students who have different conditions (have physical and mental limitations). This condition will have a good impact on the school environment (Brown & Rogers, 2020).

These findings confirm that both male and female students tend to have equal attitudes towards friends with disabilities, without showing discrimination based on physical or mental differences. This condition suggests that other factors, such as the school environment, inclusive values taught, and social experiences, may play a greater role in shaping students' attitudes. This equality of attitudes is a positive indication of the success of inclusive education, because it creates a more harmonious and supportive school environment for all students regardless of their conditions.

Differences of Students' Attitude at Inclusive Elementary and Junior High School

Independent sample t-test also was used to find out whether there is a difference between students' attitudes at inclusive elementary and junior high school.

Based on Table 7, the result shows there are no differences among students' attitudes based on gender ($t(429) = -1.669$, $p > 0.05$). The results of the analysis produced in the above table, it can be seen that there are no differences in attitudes between males and females

Table 7 – Independent sample T-test for students' attitude base on gender

	Gender	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig.	95% confidence interval	
							Lower	Upper
Attitude	male	129.15	13.4891	-1.669	429	0.096	-	0.4169

					5.1179	
female	131.50	14.2187	-1.696	324.54 5	- 5.0777	0.3767

This finding is slightly different from previous findings. In general, gender has an influence on learning outcomes, learning styles (Yu, 2021), anxiety in dealing with something (Thelwall et al., 2020), but here gender does not affect students' attitudes toward peers with disabilities. However, it can be assumed that this is influenced by factors other than gender. The findings show the good side of student attitude in differences abilities by males and females. Male and female students do not have the difference to behave towards students with disabilities. This means that male or female students (non-disabled) can play, study, and discuss together with students with disabilities. If this condition is maintained it will have a good effect on the physical and mental health of children with disabilities. Friends will give a good influence on the learning process (Ediyanto et al., 2017; Kurniawati et al., 2017; Theodoridis & Kraemer, 2013).

Other factors that may influence are social (Musher, 2016)(Harfiani, 2019)(Paulsrud & Nilholm, 2023) and cultural (Ghafar & Rahman, 2019)(Mónico et al., 2018) factors of Indonesia. Indonesian culture and in principle use the term "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" meaning that despite having differences it still has one goal (unity in diversity). This principle can be assumed to have been a student's character since childhood. Thus, to improve the quality of inclusive education (Dube, 2020) (Ghafar & Rahman, 2019)(Moriña, 2017), schools and government must focus on other factors, apart from gender because gender does not affect attitudes in inclusive education for students.

The difference between sex and gender is that the first is closely related to certain biological and physical characteristics of chromosomes and genitalia (external or internal). While gender identity is shaped more by social and cultural perception about stereotypes of male and female in society. Because gender is determined socially, the ideology and insight of a society or a nation participate in building ideas about this identity (Version, 2022). It is very natural that gender does not affect one's view of people who have special needs/disabilities as long as they still have a sense of humanity and empathy (Demchenko, 2021) (Nilholm, 2021).

This study shows that gender does not significantly influence students' attitudes towards friends with disabilities, which is different from previous findings that linked gender to learning outcomes and anxiety. This may be influenced by social and cultural factors in Indonesia, which encourage unity in diversity from an early age. Therefore, to improve the quality of inclusive education, attention should be paid to social and cultural factors, such as norms of humanity and empathy, which play a greater role in shaping students' attitudes towards friends with disabilities than gender.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study found that gender does not have an effect on students' attitudes toward disabled friends in elementary and junior high labeled inclusive and special education. The results show that males and females have a good attitude. However, gender cannot be used as a predictor of attitudes toward disability friends in inclusive and special education at both elementary and junior high school levels. The role of gender is only 0.6% on attitudes, meaning that 99.4% of other variables make up students' attitudes towards disability. The implication is that researchers must then look for variables that might be predictors of attitude, for example social, cultural, educational background, and knowledge variables. The practical application of the results of this study is that schools and related parties, such as governments and educational institutions, need to focus on factors other than gender in designing inclusive education programs. To improve students' attitudes towards friends with disabilities, effective interventions can involve strengthening social and cultural education, such as understanding diversity and empathy from an early age. Training programs for teachers and students that prioritize knowledge about disabilities, as well as creating a more socially and culturally inclusive environment, can help shape positive attitudes towards friends with disabilities. In addition, paying attention to students' educational backgrounds and knowledge about disabilities will also enrich their perspectives and support the implementation of more effective inclusive education.

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