

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Inclusive education has gained significant global attention as it promotes equal opportunities for all students, particularly those with disability; ensuring student with all backgrounds and needs can participate in shared learning environments (UNICEF Regional Office Europe and Central Asia, 2017). International frameworks like the CRPD (United Nation, 2006), and SDGs, specifically Goal 4 (SDGs), calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2015) which have prompted and reinforced nations initiatives to integrate students with disabilities into mainstream education settings (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020). As one of the country that signed CRPD, Indonesia has ratified its commitment trough laws such as UU No. 19 Tahun 2011, Perkemendikbud No. 70 Tahun 2009, and UU No. 08 Tahun 2016, in which mandate inclusive education, ensuring accommodations for students with disabilities (Badan Standar, 2022). These government efforts are crucial given the number of people with disabilities in the country has reached 22.97 million, or around 8.56% of the population according to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022 (Biro Humas Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2020).

Despite having a large number of people with disability and legal commitments made, Indonesia as a country is far from reaching the word “Inclusive”. According to The 2020 Inclusive Index, Indonesia ranks 125th globally with a score of 26.5, placing it well below developed countries and even some ASEAN nations (Staf Ahli Bidang Sosial dan Penanggulangan Kemiskinan Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, 2021) . In addition, the lack of essential infrastructure such as wheelchair ramps, accessible toilets, and assistive technologies, along with social issues like cultural beliefs, stigmatization, inadequate teacher training, and poor community acceptance, have emerged as significant barriers in the country (Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023; Nabiela & Ulfatin, 2023; Sowiyah & Perdana, 2022; Suhendri, 2020). Addressing this challenge underscores the concept of inclusive education as a shared responsibility where realizing the ideal system hinges not only on government support, but also the active engagement of educators, school administrators, parents, and peers (Rusmono, 2020; Subban et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2022; Ydo, 2020).

Peers as one of the components that play a significant role in inclusive education, influence both the academic success and social life of students with disabilities (Dalcin, 2022; Drazdowski et al., 2024; Golsteyn et al., 2021). A review of peer intervention studies shows that peer involvement positively impacts various aspects, especially their social skills (Muqoddam & Hendriani, 2020). In university settings, strong peer relationships and attachment to the institution correlate with better levels of student adjustment (Maunder, 2018). Additionally, those who are aware of inclusive education principles are more likely to engage in activities promoting inclusivity (Rendon et al., 2023). Programs like the Student Equality Network at Surrey University, UK, provide platforms for students with disability to share and advocate their experiences, fostering greater peer understanding (University of Surrey Students' Union, n.d.). Moreover, volunteering not only benefits those receiving support but also enriches the volunteers' experience, gaining new skills, and nurturing empathy and social responsibility (Chung et al., 2021; Khasanzyanova, 2017; Nichol et al., 2023). This reciprocal relationship is further evidenced by (Dalcin, 2022) and (Yuwono, 2021) findings that students with special needs significantly influence the learning achievements of volunteer student companions, highlighting the mutual benefits of inclusive volunteering.

In many studies Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) have been providing theoretical framework for a broad scope of studies, where it has helped understand what influence an individual's decision to engage in certain behavior. According to TRA, an individual's intention to perform a behavior is the most significant predictor of their actual behavior, and this intention is shaped by two key factors: attitudes and subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). A study on communicating climate change to schoolchildren in Vietnam has also proven that TRA is a good model to predict behaviour (Nguyen et al., 2018). TRA has also been used in a study related to Covid-19 Vaccine Acceptance and Technology Acceptance, where Awareness has been predominantly being one of the additional variables in addition to the framework of the theory (Akther & Nur, 2022; Dinev & Hu, 2007).

Furthermore, peoples' attitudes towards people with disability have been aligned with the level of awareness individuals have, showing greater awareness predicts more favorable attitudes (Albaum et al., 2022; Grahita Kusumastuti et al., 2019; Scior, 2011; Sheridan & Scior, 2013). This correlation extends to the willingness to volunteer, as

awareness programs on inclusive education have been shown to improve attitudes and readiness for inclusive practices among preservice teachers (Pingle & Garg, 2015). Inclusive youth volunteer programs also proven to enhance knowledge and social outcomes for all participants, underscoring potential for a well-structured volunteer programs which foster a more inclusive and empathetic campus environment (Miller et al., 2003). Organization of volunteer activities within the framework of inclusive education, particularly through innovative technologies, has also been found to be an effective way to engage students and promote inclusive practices (Saltanat et al., 2022). Therefore universities should integrate comprehensive education and training on inclusivity into their curricula to create a more aware, informed, and empathetic student body and faculty, in support of the development of successful inclusive learning environments (Lombardi et al., 2015; Moraña, 2017; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2019; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013)

While existing research has explored various aspects of inclusive education awareness, especially among teachers (Chary & Perumal, 2022; GÜLAY & ALTUN, 2023; Rendon et al., 2023; Wahyuno et al., 2021) there is a notable gap in the study for university students or university peers' awareness of inclusive education and how it influences their willingness to volunteer in inclusive education settings. This study aims to address this gap by leveraging the principles of Theory of Reasoned Action and investigating how awareness of inclusive education principles influences university students' willingness to engage in inclusive education volunteer activities that support students with disabilities.

1.2 Problem Identification

Assessing Bandung University's Students' awareness of inclusive education and how it impacted their willingness to volunteer in the inclusive education.

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of the research is to investigate and understand the level of awareness among university students regarding inclusive education, as well as to explore how their level of awareness influences their willingness to volunteer and support inclusive education initiatives.

1.4 Research Significance

This research holds critical significance in shedding light on the nuanced dynamics of inclusive education awareness among university students and its profound impact on their willingness to actively engage in supporting inclusive education initiatives. Despite the growing emphasis on inclusive education within academic and policy frameworks, there remains a substantial gap in scholarly discourse regarding the role of individual awareness in fostering proactive involvement among students.

While existing literature often addresses structural and systemic factors influencing inclusive education, it frequently overlooks the depth of personal awareness and its pivotal role in driving student engagement. This deficiency in research impedes a comprehensive understanding of the motivational and attitudinal factors that underlie student participation in inclusive education efforts. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how individual awareness shapes students' willingness to support and participate in inclusive education initiatives, ultimately contributing to more effective and informed strategies for promoting inclusivity within educational environments.