

Research Article

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Evaluating Inclusive Education Initiatives in Indonesia: From Policy to Practice

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Abstract

Background/purpose. Inclusive education ensures that all students, including those with disabilities, have access to quality education. Despite global and national policies, challenges persist in implementing these policies effectively, especially in local contexts. This study evaluates the implementation of inclusive education policies in diverse regions of Indonesia, focusing on urban-rural disparities. The aim is to identify factors influencing the success or challenges in policy implementation and provide recommendations for stakeholders.

Materials/methods. A mixed-methods case study design was employed in South Sulawesi and East Java. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions involving 150 educators, 50 local government officials, and 30 community members. The study assessed the status of policy implementation, stakeholder perceptions, and the role of local governments.

Results. Urban areas like Surabaya and Makassar, with established Units for Disability Services (ULDs) and regular training programs, reported stronger support, with 75% and 72% of educators receiving adequate training. In contrast, rural areas like Pamekasan and Maros faced significant challenges, with only 55% and 48% of educators receiving sufficient training. Urban educators felt more equipped to implement inclusive practices, while rural educators encountered barriers due to limited funding and logistical constraints.

Conclusion. The study concludes that region-specific strategies, enhanced funding for rural areas, sustainable training programs, and stronger partnerships between schools and local governments are essential to foster a more inclusive educational environment across Indonesia. Addressing these disparities is crucial for ensuring equitable access to inclusive education for all students, particularly those with disabilities.



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1. Introduction

Inclusive education is a fundamental right that guarantees all individuals, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, access to quality education (Baglieri, 2022; Bunbury, 2020; Schwab, 2020). This principle is rooted in the belief that every student deserves an equal opportunity to learn and thrive in an educational setting, regardless of their background or challenges. The global recognition of inclusive education has led many countries to adopt policies and frameworks aimed at promoting educational equity, ensuring that every student receives fair treatment and equal opportunities to learn and thrive (Amayo Et Al., 2021; Killen & Rutland, 2022; Shaeffer, 2019; Kniahnytska et al., 2021). In recent decades, international bodies such as the United Nations and UNESCO have underscored the importance of inclusive education, emphasizing its role in fostering social cohesion and reducing discrimination (Bemiller, 2019; Juvonen et al., 2019; Sánchez et al., 2019). These efforts are about providing access and ensuring that educational systems are designed to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

In line with these global commitments, Indonesia has also prioritized inclusive education, evident through its national policies, including the recently enacted Permendikbudristek No. 48/2023. This regulation mandates the provision of appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities across all educational levels, from early childhood education to higher education institutions (Andriana & Evans, 2020; Humaira et al., 2021; Nuruddin & Muhamad Ahyar Rasidi, 2023; Suprihatiningrum, 2021). This regulation mandates the provision of appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities across all educational levels, from early childhood education to higher education institutions. By addressing disparities in educational access, this regulation aims to ensure that all students, particularly those with disabilities, receive an equitable opportunity to participate fully in the educational system. The policy framework in Indonesia reflects a growing international consensus that inclusive education is not just a moral imperative but also a practical necessity for building more inclusive societies.

However, despite these legislative efforts, significant challenges persist in translating policy into effective practice, particularly at the local level (Humaira et al., 2021; Nuruddin & Rasidi, 2023; Andriana & Evans, 2020). Implementing inclusive education is not merely a matter of policy adoption but involves a complex process of integration into existing educational systems. Research indicates that while comprehensive national guidelines are in place, local educational institutions frequently encounter substantial barriers, including inadequate resources, a lack of trained personnel, and insufficient awareness among stakeholders (Djone & Suryani, 2019; Hosshan et al., 2020; Masrurroh & Hendriani, 2022; Rohman, 2019; Handoyo et al., 2021). These challenges are compounded by regional disparities, where urban areas often have better access to resources and support systems compared to rural areas. This urban-rural divide is a significant factor in the uneven implementation of inclusive education policies.

The current study aims to evaluate the implementation of inclusive education policies in diverse regions of Indonesia, focusing on urban-rural disparities. While previous research has highlighted the challenges of implementing inclusive education policies at the local level (Efendi et al., 2022; Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023; Kurniawati, 2021), this current study seeks to fill the gap by providing a detailed analysis of how these policies are enacted in specific regional contexts. By examining the effectiveness of these efforts and the challenges encountered, the study aims to clarify the factors influencing successful implementation. It assesses how well educational institutions align their practices with national guidelines and identifies key obstacles hindering progress. Through a case study approach, this research delves into the practical realities of policy implementation, offering insights based on the experiences of schools and educational authorities.

The study addresses three key research questions: (1) What is the current status of the implementation of inclusive education policies in South Sulawesi and East Java, and what are the key challenges faced by local educational institutions? (2) How do key stakeholders, including educators, local government officials, and community members, perceive and respond to the implementation of inclusive education initiatives in these regions? (3) What role do local governments play in facilitating or hindering the execution of inclusive education policies, and what recommendations can improve their implementation in South Sulawesi and East Java?

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of inclusive education by providing a detailed analysis of the implementation challenges and successes in diverse regional context. Specifically, it aims to tackle challenges: (1) the uneven distribution of resources and support systems between urban and rural areas, which affects the quality and accessibility of inclusive education; (2) the lack of trained personnel and awareness among stakeholders, which hampers the effective implementation of inclusive policies; (3) the need for region-specific strategies to address the unique challenges, faced by different regions.

The broader implications of this research extend beyond the immediate findings. By highlighting the importance of regional disparities and the need for tailored strategies, this study contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education. It underscores the importance of considering local contexts in policy implementation and provides a framework for future research and policy development. Ultimately, this research supports the creation of a more inclusive educational environment that recognizes and respects diverse needs, aiming to bridge the gap between policy creation and practical application to develop effective, meaningful educational practices.

2. Literature Review

The literature on inclusive education highlights several key challenges and strategies for effective implementation. Inclusive education is about policy adoption and successfully integrating these policies into existing educational systems. Studies have shown that despite the existence of comprehensive national guidelines, local educational institutions often face significant obstacles in implementing inclusive education. These obstacles include limited resources, insufficiently trained staff, and a lack of awareness among those involved in the educational process. (Djone & Suryani, 2019; Hosshan et al., 2020; Masruroh & Hendriani, 2022; Rohman, 2019; Handoyo et al., 2021). These challenges are compounded by regional disparities, where urban areas often have better access to resources and support systems compared to rural areas. This urban-rural divide is a significant factor in the uneven implementation of inclusive education policies.

One of the primary challenges in implementing inclusive education is the need for well-trained educators. Dalton. et al. (2012) explored the potential of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a strategy to equip educators with skills for curriculum differentiation, addressing diverse learning needs in inclusive classrooms. This approach primarily focuses on teacher training to bridge skill gaps within a single, unified framework. In contrast, the current research on Indonesia's inclusive education policy highlights significant regional disparities, particularly between urban and rural areas. Urban regions demonstrate more robust support systems, with established training programs and disability services, whereas rural areas face barriers due to limited resources and inadequate training. Unlike the South African context, where a specific instructional design model is introduced, Indonesia's challenges point to a need for region-specific strategies and resource allocation to address varying levels of support and infrastructure.

Similarly, Saloviita (2020) examined the attitudes of teachers in Finland towards inclusive education, finding that overall acceptance of inclusive practices varied significantly depending on factors such as teacher experience, training, and perceived support. The study revealed that while many teachers recognized the importance of inclusivity, they expressed concerns about the

challenges of implementing inclusive practices effectively, particularly in classrooms with limited resources or support staff. Saloviita's research highlighted the need for increased professional development and systemic support to foster more positive attitudes and build teachers' confidence in inclusive teaching. In contrast, our study highlights the significant regional disparities in inclusive education implementation in Indonesia, revealing how localized factors, such as access to resources and infrastructure, shape educators' attitudes and abilities to support inclusive practices.

Another study conducted by Sari et al. (2022) explores the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, highlighting both achievements and challenges. Through a literature review of national and international research from the last decade, the study finds that inclusive education has seen progress, especially in larger urban areas, where the presence of special educators, tailored classroom management, and curriculum adjustments have contributed to its success. However, challenges persist in smaller cities, where schools often lack adequate facilities, special assistant teachers, and awareness about inclusive practices. The authors argue that the government must extend its focus beyond urban centers to support smaller regions and improve access to inclusive education for students with disabilities. Despite the progress made, the study emphasizes the need for better data collection and policy adjustments to address disparities in inclusive education across different regions of Indonesia.

These studies highlight key challenges in inclusive education, including policy scope, educator training, administrative integration, and community engagement. However, there remains a gap in understanding how these factors interact within specific regional contexts in Indonesia. To address this, the current study focuses on a case study of two provinces, South Sulawesi and East Java. The rationale for selecting South Sulawesi and East Java as research locations is grounded in the literature on regional disparities in inclusive education implementation. Studies have shown that urban areas often have better access to resources and support systems compared to rural areas, leading to significant differences in the effectiveness of inclusive education policies (Djone & Suryani, 2019; Masruroh & Hendriani, 2022; Sari et al., 2022), and the need for a comprehensive understanding of how these policies are enacted in diverse local context (Nuruddin & Rasidi, 2023; Humaira et al., 2021). By examining these regions, this research aims to uncover how inclusive education policies are enacted in diverse local contexts, identifying factors contributing to their success or hindering implementation. The study offers practical recommendations to bridge the gap between national directives and local execution, tailored to the unique needs of each area.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The mixed-methods case study design was chosen for this research to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the implementation of inclusive education policies. This design integrates both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, allowing for a more detailed and context-rich analysis. The quantitative data involved the use of structured online questionnaires, which were designed to gather numerical data on the status of policy implementation, common challenges, and stakeholder perceptions. The online format was chosen to ensure convenience and accessibility for participants despite geographic limitations. The qualitative data included in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), which were conducted to gain deeper insight into the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders. These methods were chosen to capture the complexity and context of the implementation process, as well as the challenges and successes encountered. The interviews and FGDs were conducted using a combination of face-to-face and online methods, depending on accessibility and availability of participants. The flexibility ensured that a diverse range of voices could be included in the study, enhancing the richness of the data collected.

Also, observations were conducted, focusing on how stakeholders engaged in discussion about policy implementation.

The rationale behind choosing this mixed-methods approach is grounded in the need to capture both the breadth and depth of the implementation process. Quantitative data provided measurable trends and patterns, while qualitative data offered rich, contextual insight that helped explain these trends. This combination allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education policies in the selected regions.

3.2. Participants and Settings

The study was conducted in two provinces, South Sulawesi and East Java, chosen for their distinct regional contexts and varying degrees of policy implementation. A total of 230 participants were involved in the research, including 150 educators from various educational levels (early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education) who actively engaged in inclusive education practices. Additionally, 50 local government officials responsible for educational policy implementation and support, as well as 30 community members and parents of students with disabilities, provided insights into the community's role in inclusive education. Given the geographic dispersion and logistical challenges of reaching participants individually, the study employed a combination of online and face-to-face methods for data collection.

The participant selection process was carefully designed to ensure a diverse and representative sample. The study employed purposive sampling, which is particularly suitable for this research given the need to capture detailed insights from individuals with specific knowledge and experience in inclusive education. The criteria for inclusion were as follows: (1) educators actively involved in inclusive education practices across various educational levels (early childhood, primary secondary, and higher education); (2) local government officials responsible for educational policy implementation and support; and (3) community members and parents of students with disabilities who could provide valuable insights into the community's role in inclusive education. The criteria for exclusion included individuals who did not have direct involvement in inclusive education practices or policy implementation.

Participants were recruited through a combination of professional networks, educational institutions, and government offices. Initial contact was made via email or phone messages, followed by an invitation to participate in the study. The invitation included a detailed description of the study's objectives, the expected time commitment, and assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation. For those who agreed to participate, a consent form was provided, and they were given the option to complete the survey online or participate in interviews and focus group discussions via video conferencing platforms. This approach ensured flexibility and inclusivity, accommodating participants from both urban and rural areas.

3.3. Instruments

The research utilized three main instruments for data collection:

1. **Questionnaires:** A structured online questionnaire developed using Google Forms was designed to gather quantitative data. It included closed-ended questions to assess the status of policy implementation, common challenges, and stakeholder perceptions. The online format allowed participants to complete the questionnaire conveniently despite geographic limitations.

2. **In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These were conducted in two ways: (a) **Face-to-Face Interviews/FGDs:** For easily reachable participants, face-to-face interactions were held via video conferencing platforms, allowing for more personalized engagement. (b) **Online**

Interviews/FGDs: For participants who were difficult to reach due to geographical constraints, online interviews and FGDs were conducted using digital communication tools. This ensured inclusivity and flexibility in participation, regardless of location.

3. Observations: Observational data were systematically collected through structured observation of educational institutions in both urban and rural areas. These observations focused on the implementation of inclusive education practices. Also, observational data were gathered during both online meetings and focus group discussions (FGDs) to capture the dynamics of stakeholder engagement in discussions about policy implementation. Field notes were used to document non-verbal cues, interactions, and additional insights that were not captured through direct questions.

3.4. Procedures

The research was conducted in several phases:

1. Preparation: Development of questionnaires and interview guides, including pilot testing, to ensure clarity and relevance. Participants were recruited through professional networks, educational institutions, and government offices.

2. Quantitative Data Collection: The online questionnaires were distributed to educators, government officials, and community members in South Sulawesi and East Java. Participants were invited to complete the survey over a two-week period, and follow-up reminders were sent to increase response rates.

3. Qualitative Data Collection, which included Face-to-Face Interviews and FGDs: For participants who were more accessible, face-to-face interactions encouraged more direct engagement and detailed discussions. And Online Interviews and FGDs: For geographically distant participants, online sessions were conducted using digital platforms. These sessions were recorded (with consent) for accurate transcription and analysis. Observations were also conducted during these discussions to capture additional context.

4. Ethical Considerations: Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and individuals were allowed to withdraw at any point without consequences.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for this study comprised both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative data, responses from the online questionnaires were automatically compiled via Google Forms, which ensured efficient data management. This structured format allowed for the systematic collection of data regarding the implementation of inclusive education policies.

The qualitative data were collected through a combination of online and in-person interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observation by visiting local institutions. These visits allowed for firsthand observation of how local educational institutions facilitate their programs. Detailed notes were taken during the discussions, and all sessions were transcribed verbatim to ensure an accurate representation of participants' insights. This approach provided a comprehensive view, capturing verbal and non-verbal elements, adding depth to the qualitative analysis and enriching the understanding of stakeholder experiences.

The analysis of the data followed distinct pathways for quantitative and qualitative approaches. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, were employed to analyze responses from the online questionnaires for quantitative data analysis. This analysis helped to identify common patterns and trends in the data. Additionally, inferential statistical methods, such as chi-square tests, were utilized to examine relationships between variables when applicable, providing further insights into the effectiveness of inclusive education policies.

On the qualitative side, transcripts from the interviews and FGDs were subjected to thematic analysis, which facilitated the identification of key themes, patterns, and insights within the data. Coding was performed to categorize responses, allowing researchers to document recurrent themes and gain a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder experiences and perceptions regarding inclusive education initiatives.

To ensure consistency and depth in qualitative data collection, detailed guidelines were developed for both interview guidelines, including a set of open-ended questions designed to explore stakeholders' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to inclusive education. These questions were pilot-tested to ensure clarity and relevance. The interview protocol also included prompts for follow-up questions to delve deeper into participants' responses. For FGDs, a structured discussion guide was developed to facilitate group interactions and capture diverse viewpoints. The guide included key topics such as policy implementation, resource allocation, training programs, and community engagement. Each FGD was moderated by a trained facilitator who ensured that all participants had the opportunity to contribute. Detailed notes were taken during each session, and all discussions were recorded with participants' consent for accurate transcription and analysis.

Meanwhile, observation data were collected through structured observation of educational institutions in both urban and rural areas. The observation protocol included specific criteria to assess the implementation of inclusive education practices, such as the presence of Units for Disability Services (ULDs), accessibility features, and the integration of students with disabilities in classrooms. Observation used a standardized checklist to document their observation, ensuring consistency across different sites.

Triangulation was employed to enhance the robustness of the findings. Data from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations were compared and corroborated to ensure consistency and validate findings across different sources. This method provided a more nuanced interpretation of the results, reinforcing the study's conclusions.

Several measures were implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. First, the instruments used, including the questionnaires and interview guides, underwent review by experts in educational policy and inclusive education to ensure content validity. A pilot study was conducted to refine these instruments, confirming that they effectively captured the desired data.

Regarding reliability, consistency in data collection was maintained through the use of standardized instruments and protocols across all participants. Reliability checks on the quantitative data were performed via test-retest reliability assessments, ensuring stable measurements over time. In qualitative analysis, inter-coder reliability was enhanced by having multiple researchers independently code a subset of the data, with any discrepancies resolved through discussion.

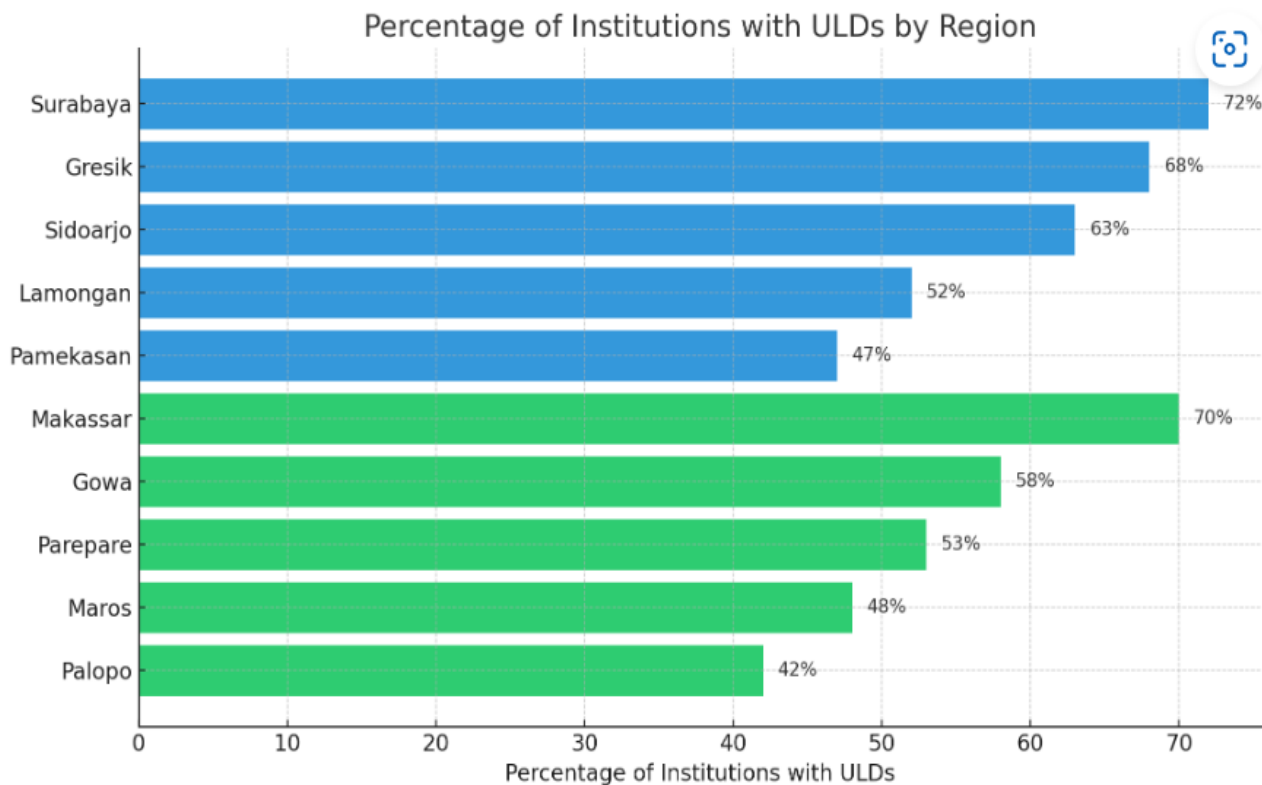
Finally, triangulation of data sources bolstered the credibility of the findings, ensuring that conclusions were based on multiple pieces of evidence. Additionally, member checking was employed, wherein preliminary findings were shared with a select group of participants to verify interpretations and solicit further insights, thereby enriching the research outcomes.

4. Results

RQ. #1: *What is the current status of the implementation of inclusive education policies in South Sulawesi and East Java, and what are the key challenges faced by local educational institutions?*

The findings for this research question are presented based on data from each specific region within East Java and South Sulawesi. This approach allows for a clearer understanding of how inclusive education policies are being implemented across these different localities.

4.1. Institutional Support for Inclusive Education (Units for Disability Services - ULDs)

Figure 1. Institutions with Units for Disability Services (ULDs)

The data on the establishment of Units for Disability Services (ULDs) across various regions in East Java and South Sulawesi reveal significant regional disparities in the implementation of inclusive education policies. Urban centers such as Surabaya (72%) and Makassar (70%) show higher percentages of institutions with ULDs, reflecting stronger adherence to policy initiatives. This can be attributed to better economic and administrative support, where local governments actively promote inclusive practices through funding, training, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations. In contrast, rural areas like Pamekasan (47%) and Palopo (42%) exhibit lower implementation rates, suggesting challenges such as limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and fewer training opportunities for educators. The urban-rural divide is apparent, with urban areas benefitting from greater access to resources and support while rural schools struggle to overcome logistical and economic barriers.

Other factors influencing the establishment of ULDs include community engagement and the level of local government support. Regions with active community organizations and advocacy groups tend to see better outcomes, as these entities help raise awareness and drive local initiatives that promote inclusive education. Additionally, the availability of professional development programs plays a critical role, as well-trained staff are more confident in managing and supporting students with disabilities. However, local policy implementation inconsistencies, especially in regions like Maros (48%) and Palopo (42%), highlight the need for clearer guidelines, stronger administrative structures, and consistent enforcement of national policies. Overall, addressing these disparities through targeted interventions, including improved funding, enhanced training programs, and increased community involvement, is essential to achieving more equitable access to inclusive education across all regions.

4.2. Availability of Training and Competency Development for Educators

The analysis of the availability of training and competency development programs for educators across different regions reveals disparities in the levels of support and training provided. The data focuses on the percentage of educators who have received training specific to inclusive education practices and the availability of professional development programs aimed at enhancing their skills in managing diverse classrooms.

Figure 2. Training and Professional Development Across Regions



The chart presents a comparison of the percentage of people who received training and those who participated in professional development programs across ten regions. The data reveals a variety of trends in engagement with these initiatives, highlighting disparities among the regions. In Surabaya, the highest levels of participation are evident, with 75% of individuals receiving training and 68% involved in professional development programs. This indicates a strong commitment to both professional growth and skill development. The close percentage between the two metrics suggests that Surabaya has successfully integrated both training and development into its workforce strategies, ensuring a well-rounded approach to professional enhancement.

Gresik follows closely behind Surabaya, with 71% of individuals receiving training and 65% participating in professional development programs. Similar to Surabaya, the percentages are relatively high, showing that Gresik is also proactive in engaging its workforce in both forms of professional growth. The small gap between the two categories points to a balanced emphasis on both immediate training and long-term professional development. Meanwhile, in Sidoarjo, the trend remains positive but slightly lower, with 69% of participants having received training and 62% engaged in professional development programs. While still reflecting a strong focus on workforce development, the numbers here suggest that there might be slightly less emphasis on follow-up professional development compared to the initial training received. Lamongan exhibits a noticeable decline, with 63% of individuals having received training and 57% involved in professional development programs. The participation rates are lower than in the previously mentioned regions, suggesting that while Lamongan has a solid foundation for training, there might be room for improvement in sustaining longer-term professional growth through development programs. In

Pamekasan, both training and professional development rates drop further, to 55% and 52%, respectively. However, the smaller gap between the two metrics indicates that while fewer individuals may be participating overall, those who do are engaging in both training and development at similar rates. This could suggest a more balanced, albeit lower-scale, effort to support workforce development.

A significant increase in participation is observed in Makassar, where 72% of individuals received training and 65% were involved in professional development programs. These figures place Makassar among the top-performing regions, showing that it prioritizes both the initial and ongoing professional growth of its workforce. The relatively high rates indicate a proactive approach to maintaining a skilled and well-developed workforce. In Gowa, the percentages are similarly strong, with 67% of participants having received training and 60% engaged in professional development programs. These numbers reflect a positive commitment to both training and development, though slightly lower than in Makassar. Gowa maintains its position as one of the better-performing regions in terms of workforce engagement.

In contrast, Parepare shows a significant drop in participation rates, with 54% receiving training and only 46% engaging in professional development programs. The gap between training and professional development is wider here, suggesting that while some individuals are receiving training, fewer are continuing on to professional development. This indicates potential challenges in maintaining engagement after the initial training phase.

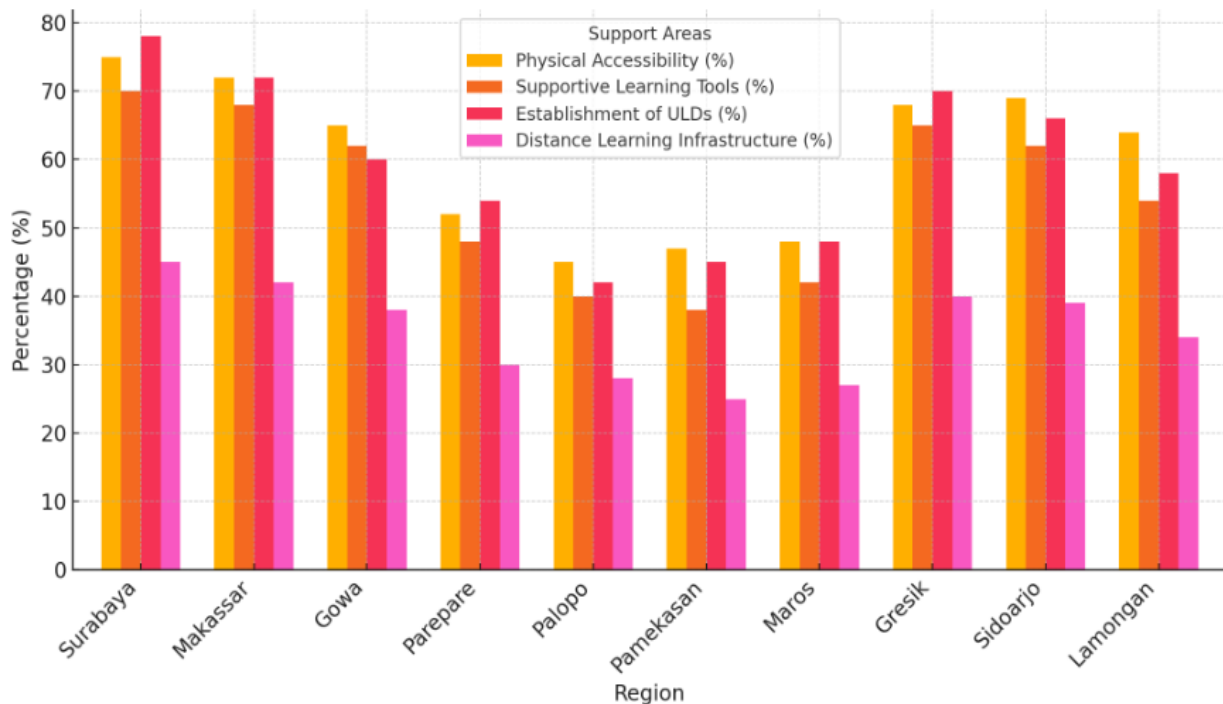
Maros exhibits one of the lowest levels of participation, with 48% of individuals having received training and 42% involved in professional development programs. These figures suggest that Maros is struggling to engage its workforce in both areas and may require targeted interventions to boost participation in both training and ongoing professional development.

Finally, Palopo shows a similar trend to Maros, with 50% of individuals receiving training and 45% involved in professional development programs. While the percentages are slightly higher than in Maros, Palopo still ranks among the lower-performing regions, indicating that there is significant room for improvement in both initial and sustained professional engagement.

In conclusion, the data reveals clear regional disparities in training and professional development engagement. Surabaya, Makassar, and Gresik stand out as top performers with high levels of participation, while regions like Parepare, Maros, and Palopo show much lower engagement, indicating potential areas for growth. The data suggests that while some regions are succeeding in fostering both immediate and long-term professional growth, others may need more support to boost participation in these critical programs.

4.3. Accessibility and Infrastructure Support

Based on the evaluation of accessibility and infrastructure support across educational institutions in South Sulawesi and East Java, there are notable differences in the implementation of inclusive education policies. While there is a general awareness and effort to improve accessibility for students with disabilities, significant disparities persist between urban and rural areas.

Figure 3. Accessibility and Infrastructure Support by Region

The above diagram presents a comparative analysis of accessibility and infrastructure support across ten regions: Surabaya, Makassar, Gowa, Parepare, Palopo, Pamekasan, Maros, Gresik, Sidoarjo, and Lamongan. The assessment covers four key areas: physical accessibility, supportive learning tools, the establishment of Universal Learning Design (ULD) centers, and distance learning infrastructure.

Physical accessibility refers to the provision of facilities that make buildings and spaces accessible to individuals with disabilities, such as ramps and elevators. Supportive learning tools include assistive technologies and learning aids designed to support students with various needs. The establishment of ULD centers indicates the presence of dedicated initiatives to promote inclusive education by catering to diverse learning styles and abilities. Lastly, distance learning infrastructure measures the availability of resources that support online education, including digital platforms and internet connectivity.

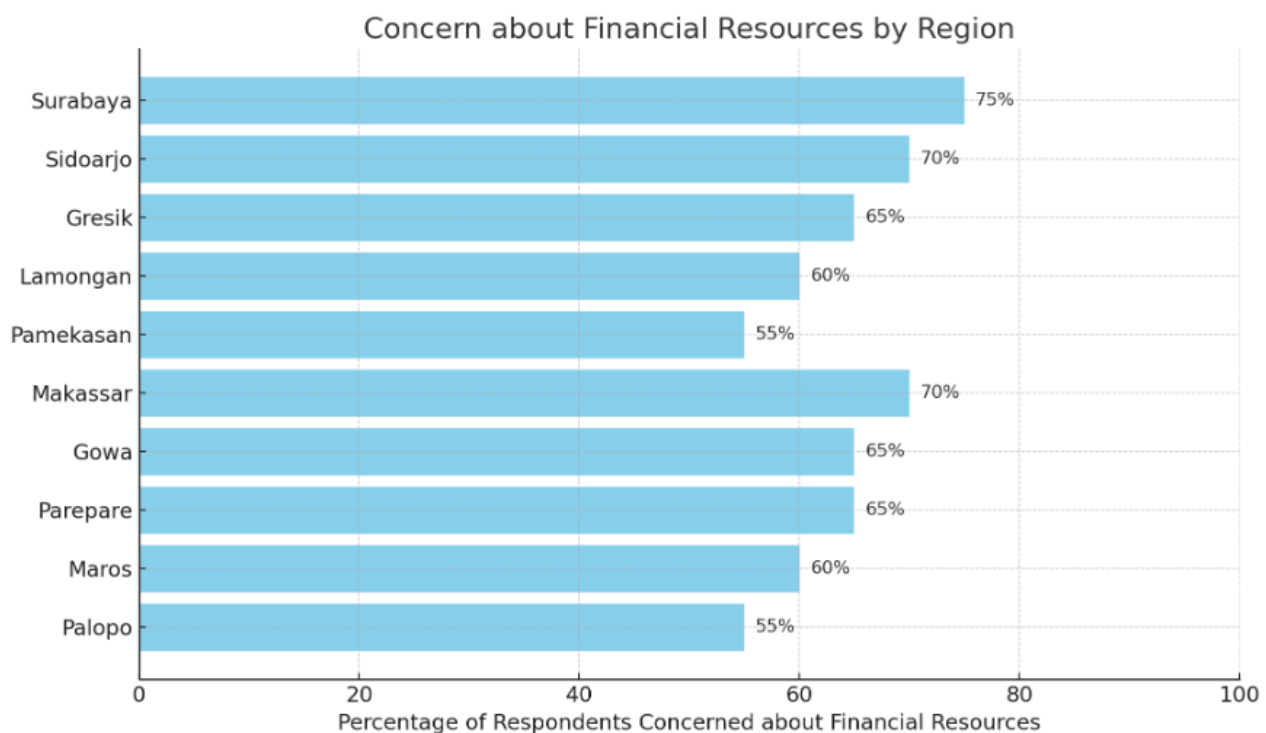
From the data, Surabaya continues to lead in most categories, particularly in the establishment of ULD centers (78%) and physical accessibility (75%), reflecting its strong commitment to inclusive education. Makassar follows closely, showing high scores in physical accessibility (72%) and supportive learning tools (68%), although its distance learning infrastructure is slightly weaker at 42%. Gresik also ranks high, especially in physical accessibility (68%) and supportive learning tools (65%), making it one of the stronger regions in terms of infrastructure support.

On the other hand, regions like Palopo, Pamekasan, and Maros show lower performance across all categories. Palopo, for example, has the lowest scores in both supportive learning tools (40%) and distance learning infrastructure (28%), indicating a need for significant improvements. Parepare and Gowa show moderate levels of support but still lag behind the leading regions, especially in distance learning infrastructure, where their scores are 30% and 38%, respectively. Lamongan, the newly added region, presents moderate levels of accessibility and infrastructure support. It shows a reasonable balance across the four categories, with slightly higher scores in physical accessibility (64%) and the establishment of ULD centres (58%) but lower scores in distance learning infrastructure (34%).

Overall, the chart highlights noticeable disparities among the regions. Surabaya, Makassar, and Gresik emerge as leaders with more developed infrastructure for inclusive education, while regions like Palopo, Pamekasan, and Maros would benefit from targeted efforts to enhance their support systems, particularly in distance learning capabilities. These insights underscore the need for a more equitable distribution of resources and investments to ensure inclusive education is accessible to all regions.

4.4. Financial Resources and Budget Allocation

Figure 4. Financial Resources by Region



In East Java, financial constraints emerged as a significant concern among respondents, highlighting the pervasive issue of inadequate funding across the region. Notably, 75% of respondents in Surabaya expressed worries regarding insufficient financial resources, underscoring that even in the region's most developed city, budgetary limitations hinder the effective implementation of educational policies. This sentiment reflects a broader trend where urban centres, despite their economic advantages, still grapple with funding challenges that restrict the breadth and effectiveness of educational initiatives.

In Sidoarjo and Gresik, a high percentage of respondents also reported similar concerns, with 70% from Sidoarjo and 65% from Gresik indicating budgetary constraints. This data suggests that the challenges associated with funding are not confined to the largest urban centers but extend into adjacent areas, impacting the overall quality of education and the ability to meet policy objectives. In contrast, rural areas like Lamongan and Pamekasan reported lower percentages of respondents concerned about financial resources, at 60% and 55%, respectively. While these figures indicate slightly less financial strain compared to their urban counterparts, they still reflect a significant challenge. Limited resources continue to pose barriers to effective educational policy implementation (DeMatthews et al., 2021; Lubin & Fernal, 2022), suggesting that rural regions, while experiencing less acute financial stress, still require greater support to enhance educational outcomes.

The situation in South Sulawesi mirrors the concerns raised in East Java, with financial resources being a critical issue across the region. In Makassar, 70% of respondents reported facing financial

constraints, aligning closely with the results from Surabaya. This illustrates that urban environments in South Sulawesi also contend with significant budget limitations that threaten the efficacy of educational programs and policies. Both Gowa and Parepare recorded a 65% concern rate regarding financial support, reinforcing the notion that funding issues are widespread and not isolated to major urban centers, affecting even smaller cities within the region. Lastly, Maros and Palopo reported that 60% and 55% of respondents, respectively, voice concerns over financial resources. This data suggests that while urban and suburban areas experience pronounced financial challenges, rural regions like Maros and Palopo face unique obstacles that amplify the impact of these limitations on educational policy implementation. The overall trend highlights the critical need for enhanced financial support across all areas of South Sulawesi, particularly to assist rural communities that often experience the most significant repercussions of inadequate funding.

RQ. #2: *How do key stakeholders, including educators, local government officials, and community members, perceive and respond to the implementation of inclusive education initiatives in these regions?*

This section presents the results related to how key stakeholders such as educators, local government officials, and community members perceive and respond to the implementation of inclusive education initiatives in South Sulawesi and East Java. These stakeholder groups play critical roles in the success of these policies: educators are responsible for directly supporting and teaching students with disabilities, local government officials oversee the allocation of resources and the enforcement of policy directives, and community members, including parents and local organizations, contribute through advocacy, support, and partnership initiatives. Understanding their perceptions and responses provides valuable insights into the strengths and challenges of implementing inclusive education across these regions (Bhuyan, 2019; Paseka & Schwab, 2020; Su et al., 2020).

The data for this analysis was gathered through a combination of interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted both offline and online. This mixed approach allowed for greater flexibility in reaching participants, ensuring that insights were collected from a diverse range of voices, including those in urban and rural settings. The discussions provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their experiences, views, and concerns, offering a comprehensive perspective on how inclusive education policies are being translated into practice. The analysis highlights stakeholders' perceptions regarding the effectiveness and challenges of these initiatives, as well as their responses to the current implementation strategies in their respective regions.

4.5. Perceptions of Educators

Educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of inclusive education policies varied across regions in East Java and South Sulawesi, reflecting differences in training availability, support structures, and resource allocation. Overall, educators in urban areas such as Surabaya, Gresik, and Makassar reported feeling more adequately supported in implementing inclusive practices compared to their counterparts in rural regions like Pamekasan, Maros, and Palopo.

The survey data shows that urban centres like Surabaya and Makassar lead in educator preparedness, with 75% and 72% of educators, respectively, reporting adequate training and around 65% engaged in ongoing professional development. Gresik also shows positive engagement, with 71% receiving training. These figures indicate a robust approach to educator support in these areas. In contrast, rural regions such as Pamekasan, Maros, and Palopo lag behind, with only 55%, 48%, and 50% of educators, respectively, reporting adequate training and less involvement in ongoing development. This disparity suggests resource distribution and access challenges, with rural educators facing more obstacles in implementing inclusive practices. Addressing these regional gaps

through targeted support and training initiatives is essential for equitable and effective policy implementation.

The interviews and focus group discussions provided valuable insights into the varying levels of support educators receive across urban and rural regions. Educators in urban areas like Surabaya, Makassar, and Gresik generally reported more robust support systems. An educator from Surabaya remarked:

Excerpt 1: *"The training programs here are regular and well-structured, which helps us address most challenges, but there is always room for improvement, especially in specialized training."*

Similarly, a teacher from Makassar stated:

Excerpt 2: *"We receive good support, but sometimes it feels like the training does not cover all the diverse needs we encounter."*

In Gresik, an educator noted:

Excerpt 3: *"Our school has strong backing from local authorities, and professional development programs are ongoing, which boosts our confidence in implementing inclusive practices."*

In contrast, educators from rural regions expressed concerns over limited training opportunities and inadequate resources. A teacher from Lamongan shared:

Excerpt 4: *"We get some training, but it is not consistent, and it leaves us unprepared for the unique needs of our students."*

Similarly, an educator from Pamekasan mentioned:

Excerpt 5: *"There is a lack of follow-up after the initial training, so it is hard to maintain the momentum needed for effective implementation."*

In South Sulawesi, a teacher from Gowa added:

Excerpt 6: *"Our resources are limited, and although we try our best, we need more hands-on training and support."*

An educator from Maros echoed these concerns, saying:

Excerpt 7: *"We face many challenges here, from outdated materials to infrequent training sessions. It makes it difficult to apply inclusive education policies effectively."*

These excerpts highlight regional disparities in support and resources. Educators in urban areas generally feel more equipped and confident, while those in rural regions struggle due to inconsistent training and limited resources. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensure that inclusive education policies can be implemented effectively across all regions.

4.6. Perceptions of Local Government Officials

Local government officials shared varied perspectives on the implementation of inclusive education, with clear distinctions between urban and rural regions across East Java and South Sulawesi. Officials in urban areas like Surabaya, Makassar, Gresik, and Sidoarjo generally viewed the implementation as more successful, pointing to proactive measures and collaborations that have supported educators and schools. An official from Surabaya stated:

Excerpt 8: *"Our partnerships with local NGOs have been instrumental in providing additional resources and training for teachers, which has greatly improved our implementation of inclusive education policies."*

Similarly, in Makassar, an official remarked:

Excerpt 9: *"We have made good progress, but we continue to face challenges, particularly in extending these initiatives to all areas. Still, our focus on regular training and outreach has been effective."*

Officials in Gresik and Sidoarjo emphasized the importance of ongoing support, with one from Gresik noting:

Excerpt 10: *"We have prioritized professional development, and our structured programs have helped educators feel more prepared."*

However, officials from rural regions expressed more concerns, highlighting challenges such as limited funding and logistical difficulties. In Lamongan, an official shared:

Excerpt 11: *"The commitment is there, but we often struggle with resources. We need more funding to ensure all schools can participate effectively."*

A government representative from Pamekasan added:

Excerpt 12: *"It is hard to implement these policies consistently when schools are spread out and resources are scarce."*

In South Sulawesi, officials from Palopo and Parepare echoed these sentiments, with one from Palopo stating:

Excerpt 13: *"We do our best, but without enough support, especially in rural schools, it is a difficult task."*

An official from Maros further explained:

Excerpt 14: *"Our biggest challenge is maintaining consistent training for teachers. The infrastructure to support inclusive education is still lacking, and we need more coordinated efforts."*

These excerpts reflect a significant contrast between urban and rural regions. Urban areas like Surabaya, Makassar, Gresik, and Sidoarjo have made notable strides due to structured programs, community partnerships, and stronger funding mechanisms. In contrast, rural regions such as Lamongan, Pamekasan, Palopo, Parepare, and Maros continue to face critical challenges, primarily related to limited resources and infrastructure. Addressing these disparities is essential for creating a more equitable implementation of inclusive education policies across all regions.

4.7. Perceptions of Community Members

Community members, including parents and local NGOs, have expressed varied perceptions regarding the implementation of inclusive education in their areas. Many recognize its importance in fostering equality and enhancing opportunities for all students, particularly those with disabilities or special needs. This growing awareness reflects a desire for educational settings that cater to diverse learning requirements and promote belonging among all students.

Active community involvement is evident through various initiatives and advocacy efforts. Parents play a crucial role in supporting inclusive practices, advocating for resources such as specialized teacher training and improved school accessibility for instance: One parent from Surabaya emphasizes:

Excerpt 15: *"As a mother of a child with special needs, I believe inclusive education is vital. It gives my child a chance to learn alongside peers and develop social skills."*

Local NGOs significantly contribute by partnering with schools to develop programs that facilitate inclusive practices. For instance, an NGO in Makassar established an inclusive classroom model, providing adaptive learning materials and training for teachers, which resulted in improved academic performance and social integration for students with diverse needs shared:

Excerpt 16: *"We have partnered with schools to provide training for teachers and resources for inclusive classrooms. The changes we have seen are encouraging; children with disabilities now participate more actively."*

Despite these successes, barriers remain that hinder broader community support for inclusive education. Awareness gaps about the principles and benefits of inclusive practices persist, leading to resistance or apathy. Additionally, cultural attitudes significantly shape perceptions of disability. Such stigma can result in discriminatory practices, marginalizing students with disabilities and complicating efforts to foster inclusive educational settings. Addressing these cultural barriers requires not only systemic changes but also a shift in community attitudes toward disability. As in Gowa, a community member reflected on the stigma, stating:

Excerpt 16: *"There is still a lot of misunderstanding and stigma in our community."*

Also, an NGO in Maros, highlighted efforts to combat this:

Excerpt 17: *"We conduct workshops and outreach programs to help families understand the importance of inclusivity. Education is key to changing attitudes."*

In summary, while community perceptions of inclusive education are largely optimistic, significant challenges persist. Through advocacy, initiatives, and partnerships, community members are working collectively to foster an educational landscape that embraces inclusivity as a shared responsibility.

RQ. #3: *What role do local governments play in facilitating or hindering the execution of inclusive education policies, and what recommendations can improve their implementation in South Sulawesi and East Java?*

This research question examined the role of local governments in implementing inclusive education policies using a qualitative approach. Data collection involved in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted both online and in person to gain a comprehensive understanding of local government involvement. Interviews were carried out with government officials and representatives from local organizations (NGOs) to explore policy challenges, implementation strategies, and the impact of local government support. FGDs, organized with parents, educators, and community members in both virtual and physical settings, provided insights into their experiences and views on local government actions. This qualitative approach allowed for a detailed thematic analysis, highlighting key challenges, successes, and community perceptions regarding the role of local governments in supporting inclusive education.

The research identified several key factors that facilitate the role of local governments in implementing inclusive education policies:

Policy Support and Frameworks: Local governments have established various policies and frameworks aimed at promoting inclusive education (Ashikali et al., 2021; Yigitcanlar et al., 2021). These policies often outline clear guidelines for schools to integrate students with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms. Specific initiatives have been introduced to support these policies, such as inclusive education action plans and strategic collaborations with educational institutions. For example, one local government developed a regional roadmap for inclusive education, which provides detailed steps for schools to enhance accessibility and support for students with disabilities. Interviews with government officials revealed a strong emphasis on creating inclusive policies that align with national standards, ensuring consistency in implementation across various regions.

Funding and Resource Allocation: The allocation of financial resources plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Aina & Bipath, 2020; Manju Dhingra, 2019). Local governments have launched funding initiatives to support schools and organizations in adopting

inclusive practices. For instance, in several regions, specific grants were introduced to help schools acquire adaptive learning materials and enhance physical accessibility for students with disabilities. Focus group discussions highlighted the importance of consistent funding, with participants noting that schools with better financial support from local governments were more successful in integrating inclusive practices. Despite these efforts, some areas still face challenges in maintaining consistent funding, indicating the need for more sustainable financial planning.

Training and Professional Development: Local governments have also been active in facilitating training programs for teachers and educational staff to equip them with the skills necessary for inclusive education. These training sessions often cover topics such as special education needs, inclusive classroom management, and effective use of adaptive technologies. Partnerships with local organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions have been instrumental in these efforts, allowing for sharing expertise and resources. Interviews with local organization (NGOs) representatives highlighted successful collaborations where local governments worked alongside non-profits to deliver workshops and certification programs for educators, which improved the overall quality of inclusive education delivery.

Community Engagement and Advocacy: Engaging the community has been another significant aspect of local government efforts. The research found that local governments often foster community involvement by organizing awareness campaigns, workshops, and advocacy events that include parents, and local organization (NGOs) (Antoninis et al., 2020; Breyer et al., 2021; Muchsin et al., 2022). These initiatives aim to build a culture of inclusivity and support within the community, encouraging active participation in educational activities. For example, one focus group discussion revealed a local initiative where parents were invited to workshops that helped them understand the importance of inclusive education and how they could support their children's learning at home. Such initiatives have strengthened the relationship between schools, families, and the broader community, facilitating a more supportive environment for inclusive education.

The research also identified several hindering factors that affect the effective implementation of inclusive education policies by local governments:

Lack of Awareness and Understanding: One of the primary challenges is the gap in awareness and understanding of inclusive education policies among local government officials. This lack of comprehension can lead to inconsistent policy implementation, as officials may not fully grasp the principles of inclusivity or the specific needs of students with disabilities. Interviews with stakeholders revealed that, in some cases, local government representatives lacked the necessary training to effectively support inclusive practices, leading to inadequate planning and resource allocation. This gap often results in fragmented efforts where policies exist on paper but are not executed effectively in schools.

Insufficient Funding: Another significant barrier is the issue of insufficient funding. Many local governments struggle to allocate adequate financial resources to support inclusive education, which limits the ability of schools to implement necessary changes. Reports and discussions during focus group sessions highlighted that funding often falls short of what is required for specialized training, adaptive learning materials, and infrastructural improvements. For instance, in one region, a lack of consistent funding meant that schools could not maintain accessibility upgrades, leading to ongoing challenges for students with mobility issues. The financial constraints also limit the ability to provide ongoing professional development for teachers, further hampering the adoption of inclusive practices.

Bureaucratic Challenges: Bureaucratic hurdles and rigid administrative processes also pose significant challenges to the timely and effective implementation of inclusive education policies. In many cases, the approval and execution of programs are delayed due to lengthy administrative

procedures, leading to missed opportunities for timely intervention and support. Some focus group participants pointed out that schools often face extensive paperwork and slow processes when seeking government assistance or funding, which discourages them from pursuing inclusive initiatives. This red tape not only delays the implementation of programs but can also lead to a loss of momentum and motivation among educators and community members pushing for inclusivity.

Cultural Attitudes and Resistance: Cultural attitudes within local government structures can further complicate the implementation of inclusive education (Simón et al., 2019; van Steen & Wilson, 2020). In some areas, there is resistance to change due to longstanding beliefs and stereotypes about disability, which can undermine inclusive initiatives. Interviews highlighted instances where officials held prejudiced views that influenced decision-making, leading to a lack of proactive support for inclusive policies. For example, one interviewee noted that certain local leaders viewed disability through a lens of charity rather than as a human rights issue, which resulted in policies that were more about providing minimal support rather than fostering genuine inclusivity. These cultural barriers indicate a need for deeper advocacy and education to shift perceptions and encourage a more inclusive mindset across all levels of government.

The qualitative analysis from interviews and FGDs reveals that local governments play a pivotal role in facilitating inclusive education through strategic policy-making, resource allocation, professional development, and community engagement. While these efforts have contributed to progress, the success varies depending on regional resources and community support. However, significant hindering factors persist, such as inadequate funding, bureaucratic challenges, and cultural resistance. Addressing these issues requires not only increased financial resources and streamlined administrative processes but also a concerted effort to improve awareness and shift attitudes within local government bodies to ensure more consistent and effective implementation of inclusive education.

5. Discussion

This study revealed significant regional disparities in the implementation of inclusive education policies (Permendikbudristek No. 48/2023) across South Sulawesi and East Java. Urban areas, such as Surabaya and Makassar, showed higher levels of support, with well-established Units for Disability Services (ULDS) and regular training programs for educators. In contrast, rural regions like Pamekasan, Maros, and Palopo faced challenges related to limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent policy enforcement, which hindered effective implementation.

The perceptions of key stakeholders further illustrated these differences. Educators in urban areas reported feeling more equipped and supported to implement inclusive practices, citing regular training and strong institutional backing (Aguliera & Nightengale-Lee, 2020; Justice et al., 2014; Moberg et al., 2020; Silva-Laya et al., 2020). However, educators from rural areas expressed concerns over insufficient training and a lack of resources, affecting their ability to apply inclusive education effectively (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019; DeMatthews et al., 2021; Welsh & Swain, 2020). Similarly, while local government officials in urban centers highlighted successful partnerships and ongoing development programs, those in rural areas pointed to funding constraints and logistical difficulties that limited their capacity to support inclusive education initiatives (Ainscow, 2020; Kiling et al., 2019; Kurniawati, 2021; Riswari et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2019).

Overall, the role of local governments was found to be crucial in determining the success of policy implementation. Urban areas benefited from structured programs and collaborations that facilitated inclusive practices (Sharma et al., 2019), (Nuruddin & Muhamad Ahyar Rasidi, 2023), (Sánchez et al., 2019), (Arifin et al., 2022; Barianty et al., 2022) whereas rural regions struggled with inconsistent funding and logistical barriers (Efendi et al., 2022; Faragher et al., 2021; Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023; Ramayani et al., 2022; Rante et al., 2020; Riowati et al., 2022). These findings underscore the need

for tailored, region-specific strategies to address these challenges and promote equitable access to inclusive education across different areas.

The results align with findings from previous studies by Saloviita (2020) and Dalton et al. (2022), both of which emphasize the role of teacher attitudes and professional support in effective inclusive education. Saloviita's study on Finnish teachers' attitudes highlighted the importance of comprehensive training and systemic support to build confidence in implementing inclusive practices. Similarly, Dalton et al.'s research in South Africa introduced Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a practical framework to address diverse student needs and facilitate teacher collaboration. In the context of Indonesia, this study also underscores how well-developed infrastructure and resources in urban areas, such as Surabaya and Makassar, support inclusive practices more effectively than in rural areas like Pamekasan, Palopo, and Maros, where limited resources and training hinder policy implementation. Unlike prior studies, this research provides a detailed analysis of how regional disparities, such as infrastructure availability and community involvement, shape the success of inclusive education across different provinces.

The implications of these findings are significant for policymakers and educational practitioners. In urban centers like Surabaya, the presence of regular training programs and established Units for Disability Services (ULDs) reflect successful policy implementation. However, the consistent gap in rural areas points to a need for more targeted, region-specific strategies. For instance, officials in Palopo and Parepare highlighted ongoing issues related to funding and logistical challenges, which could be mitigated through dedicated regional funding schemes or mobile training units to reach educators in remote areas. Addressing these disparities is crucial to ensuring that inclusive education policies are not just implemented on paper but are translated into effective practices across all regions (Azorín & Ainscow, 2020; Francisco et al., 2020; Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023; Krischler et al., 2019; Moriña, 2017; Ramayani et al., 2022; Rante et al., 2020).

While this study provides comprehensive insights, it is not without limitations. Though effective for reaching a broad sample, the use of online surveys and interviews may have limited engagement from stakeholders less familiar with digital platforms. Additionally, the focus on two provinces, while offering depth, suggests that further research should explore other regions of Indonesia to gain a broader understanding of how inclusive education policies are being implemented nationwide.

Future studies could expand on these findings by exploring the impact of community-led initiatives in rural areas or examining the role of NGOs in bridging the gap between national policies and local implementation. Further research could also investigate how cultural attitudes toward disability influence policy acceptance and effectiveness, particularly in regions where stigma remains a significant barrier. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the progress of current policy initiatives over time would provide insights into the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of inclusive education programs.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of inclusive education policies (Permendikbudristek No. 48/2023) in South Sulawesi and East Java, highlighting key regional disparities and the factors influencing the success of these initiatives. The findings indicate that urban areas like Surabaya and Makassar have made significant strides, with strong institutional support, well-established Units for Disability Services (ULDs), and regular training programs for educators. These regions benefit from proactive local government efforts, effective partnerships, and robust resource allocation, which contribute to more successful policy implementation. In contrast, rural areas such as Pamekasan, Maros, and Palopo face ongoing challenges, including limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent training, which hinder their ability to implement inclusive practices effectively.

The study also highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement in the success of inclusive education policies. Educators, local government officials, and community members in urban regions reported more confidence and support in carrying out these initiatives, while their counterparts in rural areas pointed to significant barriers. The differences in perceptions between these groups underscore the need for more targeted, region-specific strategies that address the unique challenges faced by rural schools and communities. Local governments play a pivotal role in facilitating these efforts, and the findings suggest that stronger, coordinated approaches are needed to overcome logistical and financial constraints in rural settings.

The implications of this study are clear: achieving equitable access to inclusive education across all regions requires tailored interventions that address specific regional needs. For policymakers, this means prioritizing funding and resources for under-resourced areas, creating sustainable training programs for educators, and fostering stronger partnerships between schools, government agencies, and community organizations.

For future research can expand on the current study's findings by investigating the sustained effects of existing policy measures and assessing the potential of community-driven initiatives to bolster inclusive education in rural contexts. Longitudinal studies could track the long-term impact of current policy initiatives, providing valuable insights into their sustainability and effectiveness over time. This would help identify enduring challenges and successes, guiding future policy adjustments.

Additionally, exploring the role of community-led efforts in rural areas is essential. Understanding how local communities can drive and support inclusive education initiatives can provide valuable insights for policy development and implementation. Community workshops, awareness programs, and advocacy campaigns can play a crucial role in changing cultural attitudes and fostering a more inclusive mindset across all levels of society.

7. Suggestion

The findings of this study on the implementation of inclusive education policies in Indonesia highlight several key areas that require attention to enhance the effectiveness of these policies. Based on the reported results, the following recommendations are proposed to support the ongoing efforts in promoting inclusive education: (1) enhanced regional-specific strategies, (2) increased funding and resource allocation, (3) sustainable training programs, (4) strengthened partnership between schools and local governments, (5) community engagement and advocacy, (6) data collection and policy adjustments, and (7) addressing cultural attitudes and stigma.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers, educators, and community members can work together to create a more inclusive educational environment that recognizes and respects the diverse needs of all students. This will not only enhance the effectiveness of inclusive education policies but also contribute to the broader goal of achieving educational equity in Indonesia.

Declarations

Author Contributions. All authors have read and approved the published on the final version of the article)

Conflicts of Interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Approval. This study was conducted with a strong commitment to ethical standards, ensuring the protection of participants' rights and privacy. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Gresik. The committee's approval underscores the study's adherence to ethical guidelines and principles.

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's objectives and their rights to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the study, with all data being anonymized to protect the identity of participants. Personal information was securely stored and accessed only by the research team for the purposes of the study.

Data Availability Statement. The data supporting the results reported in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The dataset includes survey responses, interview transcripts, and focus group discussion records, which were collected from 150 educators, 50 local government officials, and 30 community members across South Sulawesi and East Java. The data are stored securely and anonymized to protect the privacy of participants. Requests for access to the data should be directed to the corresponding author, who can be contacted at nurfauziyah@umg.ac.id

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