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## **IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES IN COMPARATIVE STUDIES BETWEEN INDONESIA AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

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### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara sistematis literatur terkait implementasi kebijakan pendidikan inklusif di sekolah dasar dalam perspektif Islam: studi perbandingan antara Indonesia dan negara-negara, serta melakukan studi komparatif dengan praktik-praktik terbaik di negara-negara maju, guna menggali faktor-faktor yang mendukung keberhasilan pendidikan inklusif di negara-negara tersebut. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini tidak hanya akan menggambarkan keadaan saat ini, tetapi juga memberikan kontribusi bagi peningkatan kualitas pendidikan inklusif di tingkat sekolah dasar di Indonesia. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian Systematic Literature Review (SLR) dengan menggunakan analisis bibliometrik peneliti melakukan visualisasi menggunakan perangkat lunak VOSviewer dengan analisis co-occurrence untuk menggambarkan studi tentang kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa sekolah dasar. Berdasarkan hasil systematic literature review terhadap 42 artikel tentang penerapan kebijakan pendidikan inklusif di sekolah dasar baik di Indonesia maupun di negara maju, 4 kluster mengidentifikasi empat tema utama yang saling terkait: penanganan gangguan belajar spesifik, penanganan autisme, kebijakan pendidikan, dan aspek sosial pendidikan inklusif. Tantangan utama mencakup kesulitan integrasi sistem, keterbatasan sumber daya, dan kesenjangan kompetensi digital, sementara faktor pendukung meliputi kebijakan komprehensif, pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan, dan sistem pendukung terstruktur. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa keberhasilan implementasi kebijakan pendidikan inklusif membutuhkan pendekatan kontekstual yang mempertimbangkan keunikan tantangan dan potensi masing-masing negara, didukung oleh kolaborasi multistakeholder, pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan, dan kebijakan yang komprehensif, dengan rekomendasi untuk penguatan kebijakan adaptif, pengembangan program pelatihan guru berkelanjutan, dan penelitian lanjutan tentang dampak kebijakan inklusif.*

**Kata kunci:** Pendidikan; Inklusif; Perspektif Islam; Negara Maju; Negara Berkembang.

### **Abstract**

This study aims to systematically analyze the literature related to the implementation of inclusive education policies in primary schools from an Islamic perspective: a comparative study between Indonesia and other countries, as well as conduct a comparative study with best practices in developed countries, to explore the factors that support the success of inclusive education in these countries. Thus, this study will not only describe the current situation but also contribute to improving the quality of inclusive education at the primary school level in Indonesia. This study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) research using bibliometric analysis, the researcher conducted a visualization using VOSviewer software with co-occurrence analysis to describe the study of the critical thinking ability of

elementary school students. Based on the results of a systematic literature review of 42 articles on the implementation of inclusive education policies in elementary schools both in Indonesia and in developed countries, 4 clusters identified four main interrelated themes: handling specific learning disorders, handling autism, education policies, and social aspects of inclusive education. Key challenges include system integration difficulties, resource limitations, and digital competency gaps while supporting factors include comprehensive policies, ongoing professional development, and structured support systems. The study concludes that the successful implementation of inclusive education policies requires a contextual approach that considers the unique challenges and potentials of each country, supported by multi-stakeholder collaboration, continuous professional development, and comprehensive policies, with recommendations for strengthening adaptive policies, developing sustainable teacher training programs, and continuing research on the impact of inclusive policies.

**Keywords:** Education; Inclusive; Developed Countries; Developing Countries.

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## INTRODUCTION

The education system in every country must provide equal opportunities to all its citizens in obtaining education. The United Nations (UN) strategy to realize "Education For All (EFA)" is through the implementation of inclusive education services (Mayya, 2019). In recent years, inclusive education has become a major focus in the global education discourse. The researchers examined various policy aspects and strategic directions for the development of inclusive education to realize quality and affordable education for all (Perkins et al., 2024).

Inclusive education is defined as an education delivery system that provides services and opportunities for all children, including children with special needs and children with special intelligence or talent potential, to participate in education in a learning environment with children in general (Romadhon et al., 2021). (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014) expands this definition by emphasizing the importance of a learning environment that provides accommodation and support to meet the diverse social and academic needs of learners, without the need for special identification or labelling.

In the Islamic perspective, inclusive education has a strong foundation from the Quran and Hadith. The Qur'an affirms that Allah created human beings with differences to get to know each other (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). Islam teaches the principle of equality and respect for diversity, where every human being has the same potential and right to education, regardless of their physical or mental condition. The concept of rahmatan lil 'alamin in Islam also emphasizes the importance of providing affection and benefits to all beings, including in the context of education.

Inclusive education practices in developed countries show a variety of approaches that can be valuable learnings. In Finland, inclusive education has been thoroughly integrated into the national education system. Students with special needs receive three levels of support: general, intensive, and specialized support,



with an emphasis on early intervention and ongoing support (Thrupp, 2023). The United States implements a comprehensive Individual Education Program (IEP) for every student with special needs, supported by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that guarantees the right to education for all children.

In Japan, inclusive education focuses on the concept of "special support education" which emphasizes the provision of individualized support to students with special needs in a regular education setting, supported by a strong consultation system and active involvement of families in the educational process (Forlin et al., 2015). Meanwhile, Australia is developing a national framework for inclusive education that emphasizes curriculum adaptation, flexible assessment, and ongoing professional development for educators (Lautenbach & Heyder, 2019). Some Muslim countries such as Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates have successfully integrated Islamic values in their implementation of inclusive education, creating a model that blends modern principles with religious values.

A literature review shows that there is a significant theoretical gap in inclusive education research. First, although many theories and models of inclusive education have been developed in developed countries, there is not yet a comprehensive theoretical framework explaining how these models can be adapted in the context of developing countries with different socio-cultural characteristics. Second, previous studies have focused more on practical implementation aspects, but are still limited in developing theoretical constructs that explain the interaction between inclusive education policies and religious values and local wisdom.

Another theoretical gap can be seen in the lack of development of conceptual models that integrate top-down and bottom-up approaches in the implementation of inclusive education. (Yada et al., 2017) and (For & Education, 2024) have identified the importance of these two approaches, but there is no theoretical framework that comprehensively explains how the two approaches can be effectively integrated, especially in the context of different education systems. In Indonesia, this theoretical gap is compounded by the absence of a theoretical model that specifically examines how Islamic values can be integrated into the framework of inclusive education. Previous studies have focused more on the practical aspects of implementation, while the development of a theoretical foundation that accommodates Islamic perspectives in inclusive education is still very limited.

Based on these theoretical gaps, this study aims to analyze the implementation of inclusive education policies in primary schools from an Islamic perspective, as well as conduct a comparative study with best practices in developed countries that have successfully integrated religious values in inclusive education. This research is important considering that there are still limited

studies that integrate Islamic values in the implementation of inclusive education, especially in Indonesia.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of inclusive education models that integrate Islamic values, as well as offer theoretical and practical recommendations for the development of more effective inclusive education policies and practices in Indonesia, especially in the context of Islamic education. For this reason, the purpose of writing this article is to analyze how the trend of inclusive education policy research in elementary schools in the last five years, in which countries publications related to inclusive education policies in elementary schools have been researched the most, what research methods are most widely used related to inclusive education policy research in elementary schools, how to visualize the relationship between concepts inclusive education policy in primary schools, challenges and supporting factors in the implementation of inclusive education policy: Islamic perspectives in Indonesia and developed countries.

## **METHODS**

This study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) study using bibliometric analysis to describe the study of critical thinking skills of elementary school students. This method has developed rapidly and has become an important tool in research, useful for assessing contributions in a particular field of study or journal (Shang et al., 2015). Bibliometric analysis is widely known for its ability to evaluate characteristics, structures, relationships, patterns, and trends in current and future disciplines (Herrera-Franco et al., 2020).

In this study, the researcher used VOSviewer software, utilizing the co-occurrence feature to check the relationship and analyze the interconnection between keywords in the article pool (Roziqin et al., 2022). In addition, to improve data representation, we applied document analysis using Nvivo12 Plus to identify dominant keyword patterns and themes through a thematic approach. The word cloud technique is also used to visualize the keywords that appear most frequently in text (Perdana et al., 2023).

The data used in this study is sourced from the Scopus database, which is a multidisciplinary database that includes citations and abstracts from various literature sources such as peer-reviewed journals, trade journals, books, patent records, and conference publications (Joshi, 2016). The search was carried out using the keywords "Critical Thinking Ability" and "Elementary School". All data collected is primary data published as articles and journals registered and indexed by Scopus. The next step is to sort articles by inclusion criteria. Only relevant articles that meet the inclusion criteria will be used in the Research (Juandi & Tamur, 2020), (Jesson et al., 2011). To determine that the article is relevant and meets the criteria, we use the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA)



method. This method is carried out to identify, filter, test the feasibility, enter and analyze data according to research needs, and interpret the results of the analysis into narrative form. It was then further analyzed using the VOSviewer software according to the research question.

### **Include Criteria**

The inclusion criteria used in this study are Studies published in the last 5 years 2021-2024 (1) Research written in English (2) Studies that discuss inclusive education policies at the elementary school level (3) Types of literature: Articles used are in the form of research articles (4) Indexed by Scopus and Google Scholar (5) Articles written from developed countries (6) Articles that are open access. Articles that do not meet the included criteria will be removed from the analysis process. The data source in this study uses the Scopus database, which provides globally verified and indexed articles. The selection criteria for the article were carried out selectively by considering several main aspects, including relevance to inclusive education policies, pedagogical approaches used, the effectiveness of inclusive education programs discussed, and their contribution to theoretical and practical understanding in the context of inclusive education in various countries.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Collection Techniques focuses on inclusive education policies in primary schools. Researchers used search tools used to collect information, namely Scopus and Google Scholar with the keyword "inclusive education policy". Based on initial searches, 2036 articles discuss inclusive education policies. Then articles are classified based on the year of publication from the last 5 years leaving 1044 articles from 2020-2024 and eliminating 1019 articles, then articles are filtered again based on the type of document, namely research results in articles which leaves 769 articles, then articles are screening again according to the criteria for including research in developed countries 421, then the criteria for including area 75 subject, articles that do not speak English 5, Articles that are not open access 28 so that leaving 42 relevant ones to be analyzed, all article filtering is adjusted based on inclusion criteria. The protocol of this research is PRISMA. The selection process is carried out in 3 phases: identification, screening, and inclusion (Juandi & Tamur, 2020), (Liberati et al., 2009). The process of selecting articles is presented in the prism diagram below.

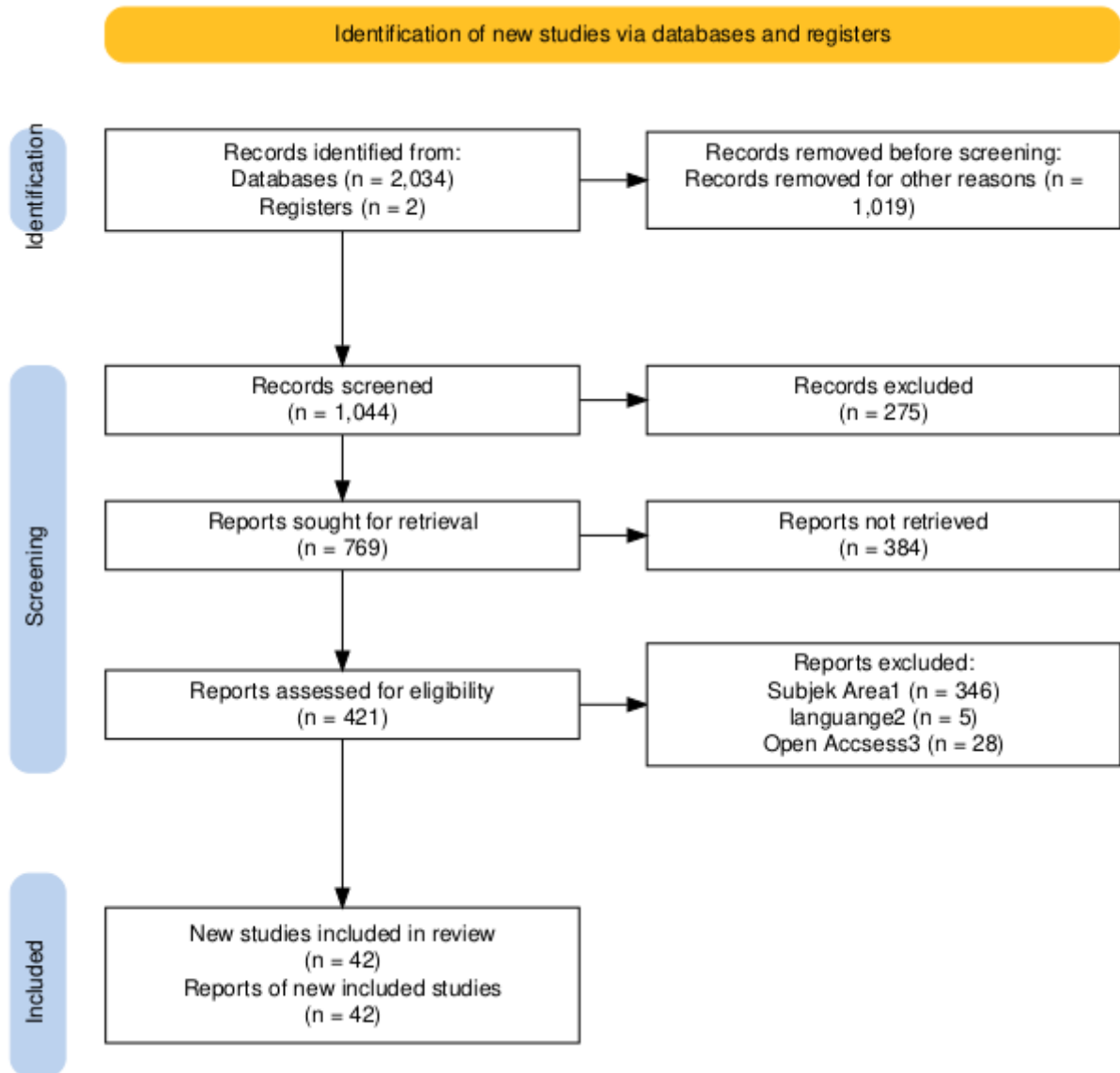


Figure 1. Article Screening Using PRISMA  
 Source: Scopus and Google Scholar Database

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Trends of Inclusive Education Policy in Elementary Schools in the Last 5 Years

Research trends regarding inclusive education policies in primary schools have become a topic that has increasingly attracted the attention of researchers in recent years. Inclusive education is considered very important in creating an equitable learning environment for all students, including those with special needs. Through scientific studies, researchers seek to understand the extent to which inclusive policies are implemented in primary schools, the challenges faced in their implementation, and find effective strategies to create a more inclusive education system. The following graph provides an overview of the trends in scientific

publications related to inclusive education from 2020 to 2024, revealing fluctuations in research interest and developments in the academic realm.

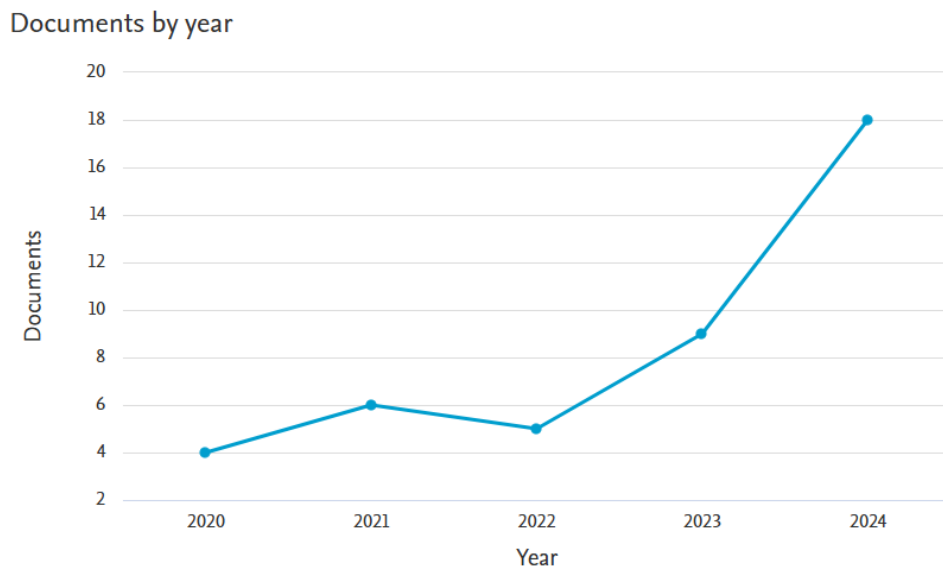


Figure 2. Research Trends Based on the Last 5 Years

Source: Scopus Database

In 2020, the number of publications was recorded at 4 articles, marking the beginning of attention to the topic of inclusive education policy in primary schools. At this stage, the topic of inclusive education may still be considered a new theme and receive less widespread attention among the academic community. Research in this period may still be in the early exploration stage to understand the challenges and opportunities of implementing inclusive education in primary schools.

Entering 2021, the number of publications increased to 6 articles, showing an increase of 2 articles compared to the previous year. This increase reflects the increasing interest of academics in reviewing inclusive education policies. This period may reflect the early recognition of the importance of inclusive education as one of the strategic steps in creating educational equity, especially at the primary school level. Although the number of publications is still relatively low, this upward trend gives a positive signal that this topic is starting to gain more attention.

However, in 2022, the number of publications actually decreased slightly to 5 articles, down 1 article compared to 2021. Nonetheless, the topic of inclusive education remains relevant and continues to be a concern for some academics who are committed to deepening their understanding of the importance of these policies in supporting students with special needs.

In 2023, the number of publications again showed a significant increase to 8 articles. This increase can reflect the increasingly widespread attention to inclusive education policies in primary schools. Some factors that may have contributed to this increase include the implementation of more tangible inclusive policies in various

schools, increased public and academic awareness of the importance of inclusive education, and support from governments and educational institutions to encourage research in this area. The year 2023 can be considered a phase of the awakening of academic interest in this topic after a period of stagnation in 2022.

The peak of attention to inclusive education policies occurred in 2024, where the number of publications jumped sharply to reach 18 articles, more than doubling compared to the previous year. This surge reflects that inclusive education has become one of the top priorities in basic education research and development. The year 2024 can be considered the peak of enthusiasm in inclusive education policy research, reflecting how this topic is increasingly recognized as a key element in an equity-oriented primary education system and the quality of learning for all students.

Overall, this graph shows a pattern that reflects the cycle in the world of research: the topic of inclusive education in primary schools initially received little attention, then fluctuated with a significant increase in 2023, until it finally peaked in 2024. This trend shows that inclusive education has grown to become one of the top priorities in academic research, along with increasing awareness of the importance of creating an inclusive, equitable, and equitable education system for all students, including students with special needs.

### The Most Researched Publication Countries Related to Inclusive Education Policies in Primary Schools

In different countries, the focus and intensity of research on inclusive education policies vary, depending on policy priorities, government support, and social and cultural needs in each region (Hanssen & Alekseeva, 2024). The following graph shows the distribution of scientific publications related to inclusive education policies in primary schools by country. This data provides insight into the countries most active in research on this topic, as well as revealing differences in research focus across regions.

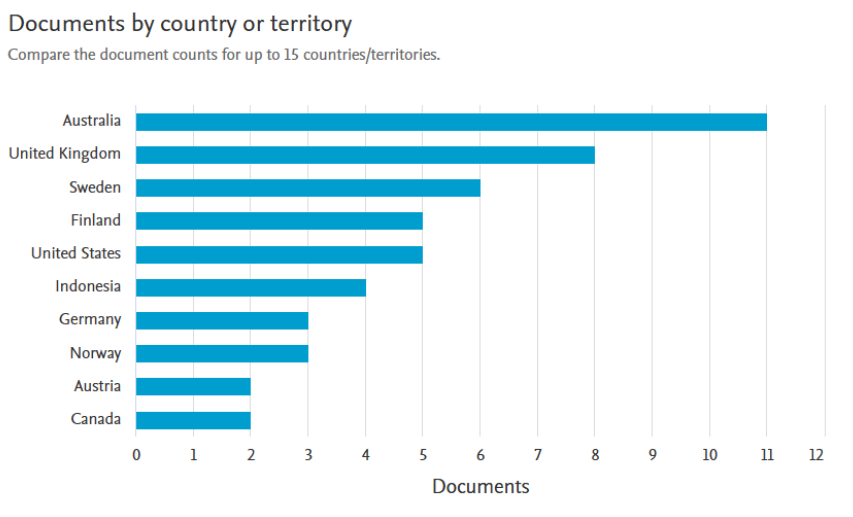


Figure 3. Research Trends by Country  
Source: Scopus Database



Based on the distribution graph of scientific publications related to inclusive education policies in primary schools, it can be seen that Australia is the country with the highest number of publications, namely 11 documents. This shows that Australia has very high attention to the development and implementation of inclusive education policies at the primary school level. In second place, the United Kingdom (United Kingdom) recorded several publications of 9 documents, confirming the importance of this topic in their education system. Sweden and Finland, two Scandinavian countries known for having inclusive education systems, each produced 6 documents. Furthermore, the United States (United States) was recorded with 5 documents, reflecting significant interest in inclusive education policy research, although it is relatively lower compared to countries in Europe and Australia. From the Asian region, Indonesia emerged with the contribution of 4 documents, showing increased attention to inclusive education in primary schools in the context of developing countries. Other countries such as Germany, Norway, Austria, and Canada have the same contribution, each producing 3 documents. This shows that there is even more attention to inclusive education, albeit with a lower intensity than the top countries.

From this data, it can be seen that attention to inclusive education policy research has a strong tendency in developed countries, especially Australia and European countries such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Finland. Their focus may be influenced by more structured education policies and a high awareness of the importance of creating an inclusive learning environment. Meanwhile, contributions from countries such as Indonesia show that inclusive education is also an important concern in developing countries, although the number of publications is still lower. This may reflect the challenges in the implementation of inclusive education as well as the limited research resources in these countries. This graph provides a clear picture of the global distribution of research interests, highlighting the differences in focus and priorities between countries in the development of inclusive education policies at the primary school level.

### **The Most Used Research Methods Related to Inclusive Education Policy Research in Primary Schools**

Based on the graph shown, research on inclusive education policies in primary schools is dominated by a qualitative approach with 24 studies. These findings indicate the researcher's preference to conduct in-depth exploration of the implementation of inclusive education policies through case studies, interviews, and direct observations in the field. A qualitative approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics, challenges, and supporting factors in the implementation of inclusive education policies.

The quantitative method took second place with 12 studies, demonstrating the need to measure policy effectiveness measurably through statistical data. Meanwhile, the mixed method 5 research combines qualitative and quantitative

approaches to obtain more comprehensive results. The R&D (Research and Development) method has the smallest percentage, namely 1 study, which shows that there is still limited development research in the context of inclusive education.

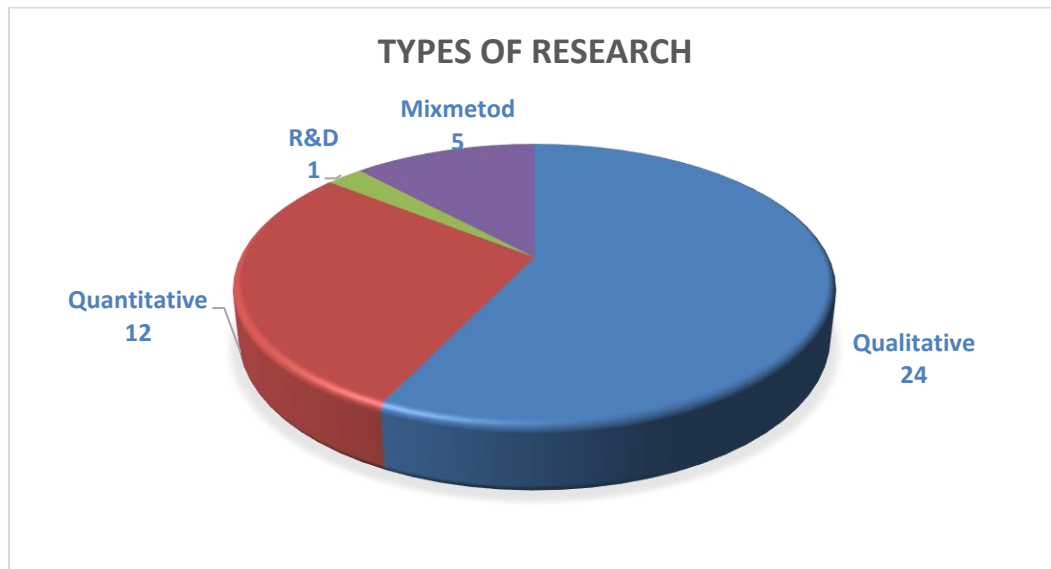


Figure 4. Research Trends Based on Methods  
Source: Scopus Database

#### **Visualization of Relationships Between Concepts of inclusive education policies in primary schools**

To understand the conceptual relationship in the research on the implementation of inclusive education policies for students in elementary schools, the researcher conducted a visualization using VOSviewer software with co-occurrence analysis. This analysis focused on keywords that appeared in 42 documents from the Scopus database. This approach allows us to identify and map the relationships between the various concepts that are often discussed in inclusive education policy research in primary schools (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). These visualizations help uncover the main themes and dominant trends in the literature, as well as show how these concepts are interrelated and evolve over time.

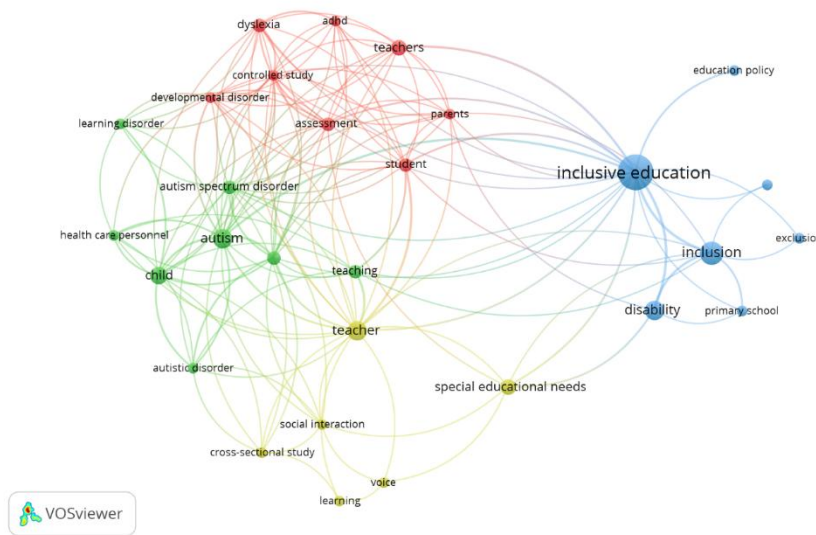


Figure 6. Cluster Analysis of Critical Thinking Skills Research of Students in Elementary Schools  
Source: Scopus Database

Table 1. Clusters and Concept Items

Cluster	Item Name	Number of Items (Color)
Cluster 1	ADHD, Assesment, Controled Study, Developmental Disolder, Dyslexsia, Parents, Students, Teachers	8 items (Red)
Cluster 2	Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Autistic Disorder, Child, Educational Status, Health Care Personnel, Learning Disorder, Teaching	8 items (Green)
Cluster 3	Disability, Early Childhood Education, Education Policy, Exclusion, Inclusive Education, Primary School	7 items (Blue)
Cluster 4	Cross-Sectional Study, Learning, Social Interaction, Special Education Need, Teacher Voice	6 items (Yellow)

Source: Scopus Database

In the analysis using VOSviewer, the researcher identified four clusters that reflect the main concepts that emerged in the research related to the implementation of inclusive education policies in primary schools.

**Cluster 1 (Red) Items:** ADHD, Assesment, Controled Study, Developmental Disolder, Dyslexsia, Parents, Students, Teachers (8 items). This cluster focuses on specific aspects of learning disorders such as dyslexia and ADHD, as well as their relationship with controlled study and developmental disorders. The relationship between clusters shows the importance of the role of assessment in identifying and managing this condition. The main component in this cluster involves the role of

parents and teachers in the process of handling learning disorders. It identifies a collaborative approach between educators and parents is critical in supporting students with special needs. This is in line with research conducted by (Zee et al., 2020), explaining that the active involvement of teachers and parents is very important in helping students with learning disabilities, especially in students with special needs.

**Cluster 2 (green) Items:** Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Autistic Disorder, Child, Educational Status, Health Care Personnel, Learning Disorder, Teaching (8 items) This cluster is centered on autism and autism spectrum disorder, with the involvement of health care personnel which shows the importance of a medical approach in treating autism. The nodes in this cluster show a close relationship between medical diagnosis and educational interventions. The existence of child nodes shows a focus on early intervention and age-based management. This cluster also illustrates the complexity of dealing with autism which requires collaboration between health workers and educators.

**Cluster 3 (Blue) Item:** Disability, Early Childhood Education, Education Policy, Exclusion, Inclusive Education, Primary School (7 items) This cluster places teachers and teaching as the center, showing the crucial role of educators in the implementation of inclusive education. The relationship between social interaction and learning nodes illustrates the importance of social aspects in the learning process. The voice and cross-sectional study nodes in this cluster indicate the importance of research and evaluation in teaching practice. This suggests that teaching approaches need to be based on empirical evidence and systematic research.

**Cluster 4 (Yellow) Item:** Cross-Sectional Study, Learning, Social Interaction, Special Education Need, Teacher Voice (6 items) This cluster focuses on the core concepts of inclusive education and inclusion, which are connected to education policy. This shows that the implementation of inclusive education requires strong and systematic policy support. The relationship between the disability node and primary school illustrates the focus on accessibility and adaptation of the education system. This cluster also demonstrates the importance of addressing exclusion in education, emphasizing the main goal of inclusive education to provide equal access to education for all students.

From the four clusters identified, it can be concluded that the red cluster shows a focus on the diagnostic aspects and treatment of specific learning disorders, with an emphasis on the role of assessment and collaboration between educators and parents. The green cluster focuses on treating autism which requires a multidisciplinary approach, involving health workers and educators in age-based interventions. The yellow cluster emphasizes the central role of teachers in the implementation of inclusive education, with special attention to social aspects and the development of research-based teaching methods. The blue cluster



describes an inclusive education policy and system framework that aims to reduce exclusion and increase the accessibility of education for.

### **Challenges and Supporting Factors in the Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy: An Islamic Perspective in Indonesia and Developed Countries**

Inclusive education has a fundamental foundation in Islamic teachings which is reflected in the Qur'an and Hadith. The Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 emphasizes diversity as human nature and the importance of knowing each other. (Wazdy & Yahya, 2024) analyzes that this verse is the theological basis for the acceptance of diversity in education. The hadith narrated by Bukhari about the obligation to study strengthens the concept of education as a universal right. (Fathurrohman et al., 2023) identified that the concept of rahmatan lil alamin and the principle of justice in Islam support the implementation of inclusive education. The implementation of inclusive education policies in Islamic educational institutions faces unique challenges. (Suriyati et al., 2023) identified three implementation models in Indonesian madrasas: full integration model, partial inclusion model, and collaborative model. (Feser et al., 2023) found a gap between policy and implementation, which in the context of madrasas is complicated by the need to integrate religious and general curricula.

Lubis & Ibrahim (2024) added that madrasas in Malaysia and Indonesia have developed adaptive models that integrate Islamic values with modern inclusive education. Sahin & Miles (2023) reveals the crucial role of ulama in providing theological legitimacy, developing an integrated curriculum, and building public awareness. The study of Hassan & Abdullah (2023) shows the contribution of Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in the development of implementation guidelines and training of madrasah teachers. (Mareta et al., 2024) identified the main supporting factors in the form of ukhuwah values, the principle of ta'awun, and the concept of maslahat and also emphasized the importance of policies that are in line with sharia and sustainable funding systems. (Forlin & Chambers, 2023) identifies innovative practices in the development of integrated curricula and Islamic values-based mentoring programs, recommending strengthening the capacity of madrasah teachers and the development of collaborative models in the implementation of inclusive education. (Kenny et al., 2023) strengthens the importance of comprehensive education system integration by considering Islamic aspects in its implementation.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the results of a systematic literature review of 42 articles on the implementation of inclusive education policies in elementary schools both in Indonesia and in developed countries, 4 clusters identified four main themes that are

interrelated: handling specific learning disorders, handling autism, education policies, and social aspects of inclusive education. Key challenges include system integration difficulties, resource limitations, and digital competency gaps, while supporting factors include comprehensive policies, ongoing professional development, and structured support systems. The study concludes that the successful implementation of inclusive education policies requires a contextual approach that considers the unique challenges and potentials of each country, supported by multi-stakeholder collaboration, continuous professional development, and comprehensive policies, with recommendations for strengthening adaptive policies, developing sustainable teacher training programs, and further research on the impact of inclusive policies.

Based on the results of the systematic literature review, the following operational recommendations for strengthening the implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools include organizing 40 hours of intensive training for regular teachers with 60% hands-on practice and weekly coaching by senior teachers (1:3 ratio), compiling a standardized Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and a tiered digital question bank for 5 different skill levels, providing 1 special assistant teacher for every 5 students with special needs and allocating 15% of the school budget for supporting facilities, holding monthly parent meetings and providing student development reports every 2 weeks, conducting student progress assessments every 3 months and monthly evaluation meetings of the support team with follow-up documentation.

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