



Trends and Problems in Inclusive Education Research from 2018 to 2023: Bibliometric Analysis

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Receive: 11/08/2024

Accepted: 10/09/2024

Published: 01/10/2024

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tren dan masalah dalam penelitian pendidikan inklusif pada periode 2018 hingga 2023 menggunakan pendekatan bibliometrik. Data diambil dari basis data Scopus, dengan 200 publikasi yang ditemukan, dan dipilah menjadi 159 artikel yang relevan, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan perangkat lunak Biblioshiny. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam jumlah publikasi terkait pendidikan inklusif, dengan lonjakan terbesar terjadi pada tahun 2019 dan 2020 sejumlah masing-masing 46 artikel. Kata kunci yang paling sering muncul adalah inclusive education, special needs, disability, dan inclusive pedagogy, yang mencerminkan fokus utama pada kebutuhan khusus dan pedagogi inklusif. Distribusi geografis menunjukkan bahwa penelitian didominasi oleh negara-negara maju seperti Amerika Serikat, Inggris, dan Australia, sementara negara-negara berkembang masih memiliki kontribusi yang relatif rendah. Jaringan kolaborasi antar peneliti kuat di antara negara maju, tetapi kolaborasi lintas negara dengan negara berkembang masih terbatas. Permasalahan utama yang diidentifikasi dalam literatur adalah kurangnya pelatihan guru, keterbatasan sumber daya, dan resistensi budaya. Selain itu, terdapat kesenjangan penelitian pada pendidikan inklusif di tingkat perguruan tinggi dan kurangnya solusi konkret untuk mengatasi masalah-masalah yang ada. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan penting tentang perkembangan penelitian pendidikan inklusif dan mengidentifikasi area yang masih perlu dieksplorasi lebih lanjut, terutama di negara-negara berkembang dan dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi.

Kata Kunci: pendidikan inklusif, bibliometrik, tren penelitian

Abstract

Using a bibliometric approach, this study analyses trends and problems in inclusive education research from 2018 to 2023. The data was taken from the Scopus database, with 200 publications found, sorted into 159 relevant articles, and then analyzed using the Biblioshiny software. The results showed a significant increase in the number of publications related to inclusive education, with the most significant spikes occurring in 2019 and 2020, with 46 articles each. The most frequently emerged keywords were inclusive education, special needs, disability, and inclusive pedagogy, which reflected the main focus on special needs and inclusive pedagogy. Geographical distribution shows that the research is dominated by developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, while developing countries still contribute relatively little. The network of collaboration between researchers is strong among developed countries, but cross-country collaboration with developing countries is still limited. The main problems identified in the literature are lack of teacher training, limited resources, and cultural resistance. In addition, there is a research gap in inclusive education at the university level and a lack of concrete solutions to address existing problems. This research provides important insights into the development of inclusive education research. It identifies areas that still need further exploration, especially in developing countries and in the context of higher education.

Keywords: inclusive education, bibliometrics, research trends

Introduction

Inclusive education is one of the topics that is gaining increasing attention in global discussions, especially in the context of efforts to provide equitable and equitable education for all individuals, regardless of ability, background, or physical condition [1]–[4]. As global awareness of the importance of inclusive education grows, many countries, including Indonesia, have adopted policies to support education that involves all learners, including those with special needs [5]–[7]. In the last ten years, improving access to education for marginalized groups has become one of the top priorities of international and national education policy [8], [9].

Research on inclusive education continues to increase. Various studies have explored different aspects of inclusive education, ranging from effective teaching strategies, policies and regulations to implementation challenges in the field [10]–[12]. One approach that is becoming increasingly popular is to use bibliometric analysis to understand trends and patterns in inclusive education research. This analysis allows the identification of development directions, the identification of frequently occurring problems, and the view of how themes and concepts in this field transform over time [13]–[16].

Several previous studies have examined global trends in inclusive education. For example, research by [17], [18] mapped the development of inclusive education research in various countries, revealing that despite a significant increase in related scientific publications, many problems still exist in policy implementation in schools.

Meanwhile, Balasubramanian & Banerjee (2024), Mwambe & Mrema (2024), and Wong et al. (2024) identified the main obstacles to inclusive education, namely the lack of teacher training, limited infrastructure, and cultural resistance in several educational contexts [19]–[21]. However, despite previous studies that address the trends and challenges of inclusive education, there have been no studies that specifically map the key trends and issues in inclusive education research in the last five years (2018-2023), which is the main focus of this study.

This study differs from previous studies because it uses bibliometric analysis to thoroughly explore inclusive research trends in a specific period, namely between 2018 and 2023.

The novelty of this study lies in its in-depth analysis of research topic trends, research collaboration patterns, the most productive journals, and the identification of gaps or problems that have most frequently arisen in inclusive education research over the past five years. Previous studies have emphasized policy evaluation and implementation in the field. Still, this study provides a big picture from an academic perspective of how inclusive education research has evolved over the period studied.

This research is vital because it provides a more comprehensive overview of the trends and problems that exist in inclusive education research so that it can be a reference for future researchers to understand the direction of development and the challenges faced. Thus, the results of this research can contribute to the development of better policies and more effective implementation strategies in inclusive education.

Research Objectives This research aims to:

- 1) Identify key trends in inclusive education research between 2018 and 2023;
- 2) Reveal the main problems that often arise in inclusive education research over the past five years; and
- 3) Provide insight into the direction of inclusive research development to support better policy decision-making.

Method

This study uses a bibliometric analysis approach to identify trends and problems in inclusive education research from 2018 to 2023. Bibliometric analysis allows researchers to evaluate scientific publications quantitatively in quantity and quality and analyze patterns in author networks and collaborations between researchers, institutions, and countries. The method used in this study consists of the following stages:

1. Research Design

This study is a quantitative descriptive study that focuses on the analysis of scientific literature on inclusive education. The unit of analysis of this study is scientific articles relevant to the topic of inclusive education published in international and national journals. The data analyzed included the number of publications, the most frequently occurring keywords, collaborations between authors, and the most productive journals in this field.

2. Data Collection

The data in this study was obtained from the Scopus database, known as the world's largest and most credible scientific literature database.

Data collection uses the PoP application and is carried out in the following steps:

- a. Search keywords: To get relevant articles, researchers used keywords such as "inclusive education", "inclusive pedagogy", "special needs education", and "disability education" combined with a range of publication years between 2018 and 2023.
- b. Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Articles taken in this study must meet several inclusion criteria, namely (1) published between 2018 and 2023, (2) articles covering key topics related to inclusive education, (3) articles

indexed in the Scopus database, and (4) articles are published in the form of journal articles (not in the form of books, book chapters, proceedings, conference papers, and review articles). Articles that do not meet these criteria are excluded from the analysis.

The search results using the PoP application found 200 publications on inclusion education, which were then sorted using the PRISMA method based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in 159 articles. The PRISMA method can be seen in the following figure 1:

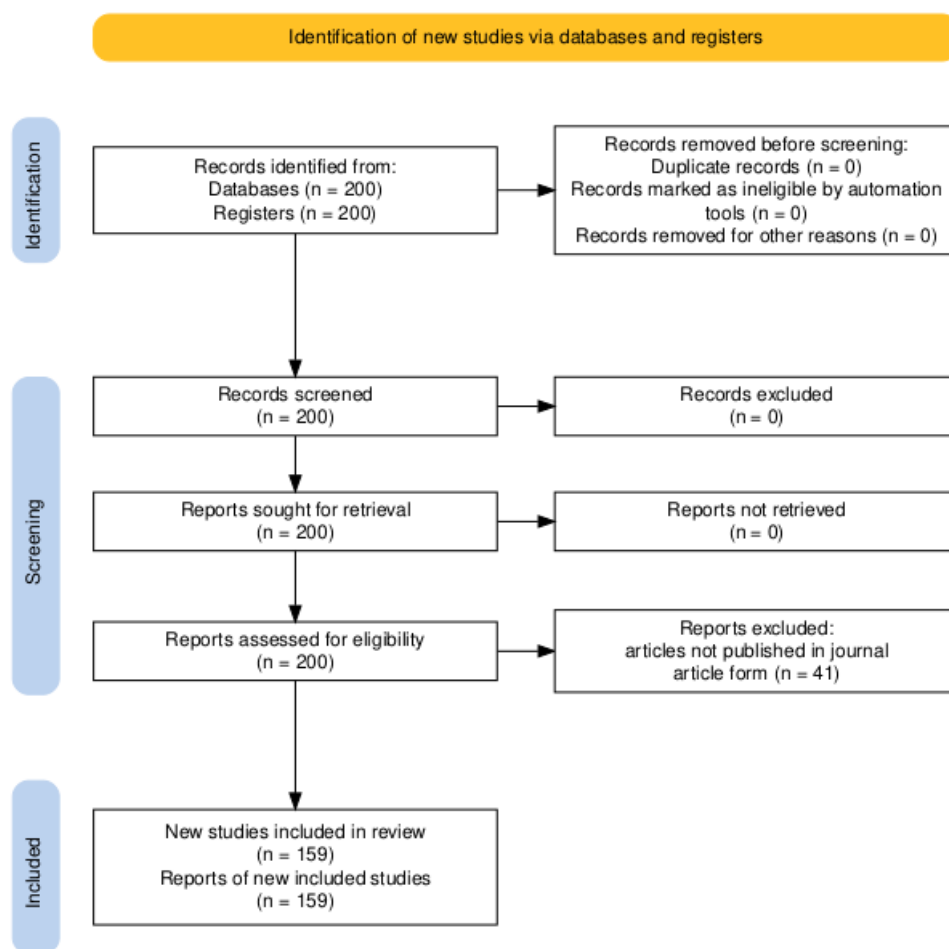


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

3. Data Analysis

The data obtained was then analyzed using Biblioshiny software, which was used to analyze the network and trends of literature. The analysis process consists of the following stages:

- a. Descriptive analysis: Conducted to identify the number of publications per year, the geographic distribution of the research, and the journals that are most productive in

publishing articles related to inclusive education.

- b. Keyword analysis: Use co-word analysis to identify the keywords that appear most frequently in the analyzed article and group those keywords into a few key themes.
- c. Researcher collaboration analysis: The researcher also analyzed the collaboration network between authors, institutions, and

countries to see patterns of cooperation in inclusive education research.

- d. Research theme analysis: Co-occurrence analysis is used to identify key themes developed in inclusive education research over the past five years.

4. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher took several steps, namely 1) Re-checking the data was carried out to ensure that all articles taken were by the inclusion criteria, and 2) Cross-checking using the Scopus database to minimize bias and ensure data completeness.

5. Implementation Stages

This research was carried out in several stages, namely 1) Data collection stage, namely taking articles from the database using specified keywords and year ranges; 2) Data processing stage, i.e. the data obtained is entered into the Biblioshiny software for analysis; 3) Data analysis stage, namely conducting descriptive analysis, keywords, collaboration, and research themes to identify trends and problems in inclusive education research; and 4) Reporting

stage, where the results of the analysis are compiled in the form of a report describing the trends and problems faced in inclusive education research from 2018 to 2023.

With this method, it is hoped that the research can provide a comprehensive overview of the development of inclusive education research over the past five years and contribute to future research development.

Result and Discussion

Results

1. Inclusive Education Research Trends (2018-2023)

Based on the results of the bibliometric analysis, there was an increase in the number of publications related to inclusive education from 2018 to 2023. The number of articles published yearly has increased significantly, with the highest spikes occurring in 2019 and 2020 at 46 articles each (see Figure 2 and Table 1). This trend reflects the growing academic attention to inclusive education, which aligns with global efforts to promote equality in access to education.

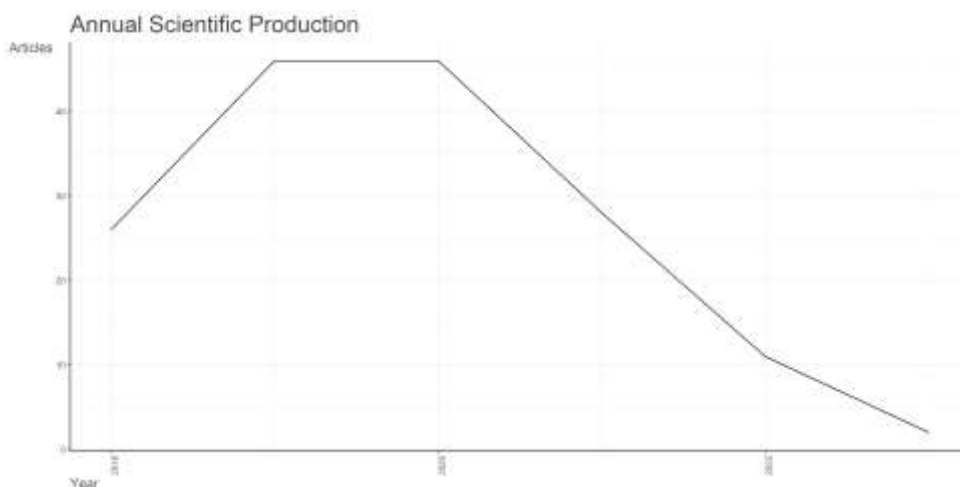


Figure 2. Inclusive Education Research Trends

Table 1. Inclusive Education Research Trends

No.	Year of Publication	Number of Articles
1	2018	26
2	2019	46
3	2020	46
4	2021	28
5	2022	11
6	2023	2
Total		159

From the analysis results, some keywords that most often appear in the analyzed articles are inclusive education, special needs, disability, inclusive pedagogy, and equity. These keywords indicate that issues related to special needs and inclusive pedagogy are the main focus of inclusive education research during this period. In addition, the co-word analysis shows a grouping of key themes such as inclusion in higher education, inclusive learning strategies, and government policies related to inclusive education.

These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of inclusive pedagogy and challenges in accommodating students with special needs [22]–[24]. However, the results of this analysis add a new perspective on the growing interest in inclusive education at the higher education level. This area has been less discussed in the previous literature.

2. Geographic Distribution of Research

Research on inclusive education shows a varied geographical distribution. The countries with the most publications include the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. These countries have long been at the centre of policy development and research related to inclusive education. In the Asian region, India and China emerged as countries with considerable research contributions, although they are still below Western countries.

This geographical distribution shows that although inclusive education is a global issue, developed countries still dominate research. This indicates the need to expand research in developing countries, especially Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where inclusive education policies and practices still face significant challenges.

3. Researcher Collaboration Network

The results of the analysis show that collaboration between researchers, especially researchers from developed countries, is powerful. Some of the most published author groups come from institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom, with a significant collaboration pattern. However, international cooperation between developed and developing countries is still limited. This indicates a gap in cross-border research cooperation, which can affect the diversity of perspectives in inclusive education research.

These findings support previous research that shows that collaboration between researchers from developed countries is more frequent than cross-country collaboration with developing countries [25]–[27]. To address this, more initiatives are needed to foster more inclusive global collaboration, which includes researchers from different countries with diverse educational conditions.

4. Problems in Inclusive Education

This study identifies several main problems that arise in the inclusive education literature through thematic analysis. The most frequently discussed issues in the articles are

a. Lack of teacher training

Many researchers highlight that teachers in various countries still lack adequate training to face the challenges of inclusive education. This hampers the effectiveness of implementing inclusive education policies in schools [28]–[31]

b. Resource limitations

Limited infrastructure and funding are often a barrier for schools to provide the facilities needed by students with special needs [32]–[36].

c. Cultural resistance

Culture and social norms are still the main barriers to receiving inclusive education in some countries. Communities and educational institutions often have not entirely accepted the diversity of student needs [37]–[41].

These findings corroborate previous research that shows that although inclusive education policies continue to evolve, implementation challenges on the ground are still very real [42]–[44], [46]. The study also found that many studies emphasize a more holistic approach to addressing these issues, such as integrating teacher training programs with actual field practice.

5. Research Gap

Although the literature on inclusive education continues to grow, this analysis identifies gaps that need to be answered in future research. One of the main gaps is the lack of research that addresses inclusive education at the higher education level. Most current research focuses on primary and secondary education, while inclusive education in higher education is still less explored.

In addition, although many studies highlight problems in inclusive education, very few studies offer concrete solutions to address these problems. Future studies need to focus

more on developing practical models that can be applied widely to improve the quality of inclusive education.

Discussion

The results of this study provide important insights into the trends and problems faced in inclusive education over the past five years. The increased number of publications shows that this issue is increasingly becoming a global concern. However, challenges like lack of teacher training, limited resources, and cultural resistance are still significant obstacles.

Collaborations between researchers from different countries show the potential to produce more diverse and inclusive research, but gaps in cross-country collaboration need to be addressed. In addition, findings related to the geographical distribution and focus of research on primary and secondary education indicate the need to expand the scope of research to the context of higher education and developing countries.

Overall, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the development of inclusive education research over the past five years and identifies areas that still need further attention.

Conclusion

This study reveals that inclusive education has become one of the main topics in the academic literature from 2018 to 2023, with an increasing trend in the number of publications in 2019-2020. Bibliometric analysis shows that issues related to special needs, inclusive pedagogy, and equality in access to education are the main focus of the research. However, the study also found several significant challenges in inclusive education, such as lack of teacher training, limited resources, and cultural resistance, which are still obstacles to the effective implementation of inclusive education policies.

The study also identified significant gaps in the literature, including a lack of research focused on inclusive education at the higher education level and a lack of practical solutions to address existing problems. In addition, collaboration between researchers from developing and developed countries is still limited, which indicates the need for more international cooperation to enrich the global perspective in this research.

Overall, this study makes an essential contribution to understanding trends and issues in inclusive education research and providing direction for future research. More studies are needed that focus on developing practical models to support the implementation of inclusive education and expanding research to developing countries and higher education contexts so that inclusive education can be applied more widely and effectively.

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