

# **Disability, Stigma, and Public Trust: Understanding Community Perspectives on Inclusive Education in Indonesia**

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## **Abstract**

This study addresses the issue of public trust in inclusive education. Despite numerous studies on the subject, efforts to effectively measure the inclusivity index, raise public awareness about the needs and benefits of inclusive education for families, and promote equal opportunities for children with special needs remain insufficient. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study explores public trust and the roles of community and government participation in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Data were collected through surveys, pre-tests and post-tests, in-depth interviews, and FGD involving a broad range of stakeholders. The findings show that community trust alone does not significantly influence the success of inclusive education because residual scepticism and stigma within communities remain the major issue. However, statistically the women demonstrate higher empathy and support for inclusive education. These findings underscore the limited predictive power of trust alone and suggest that multi-dimensional approach is needed to foster a more inclusive educational environment.

## **Keywords**

Inclusive education, Trust, Community, Children with Disability, Parents.

## **Biographies**

**Henny Suharyati** is a professor in Strategic Educational Management at Universitas Pakuan, Indonesia. She earned her B.A. in English Literature from Universitas Pakuan (1986), her M.Si in American Studies from Universitas Indonesia (1994), and her doctoral degree in Educational Management in 2015, supported by a grant from the Directorate of Higher Education, from Universitas Pakuan. She has received multiple research grants, including a Doctoral Grant and a Catalyst Grant from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbudristek). Her international academic engagements include programs in India (AMINEF, 1990), Australia (English training, 1996), and the UK (University Management program, 2004, funded by the British Council). She was awarded 3rd Place in Universitas Pakuan's Outstanding Lecturer Award in 2014. Beyond academia, she is active in community service as a language instructor for foreign learners, an educational assessor, and chair of an early childhood education

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**Padel Muhamad Rallie Rivaldy** is a lecturer in the English Literature Program at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FISIB), Universitas Pakuan. He also serves as an editor at FootnotePress and a researcher at Yayasan METRUM. In 2021, he worked for the book project “Dari Ngak-Ngik-Ngok ke Dheg-Dheg-Plas: Perjalanan Musik Pop Indonesia 1960–1969,” in collaboration with Irama Nusantara and supported by BEKRAF-RI (currently dismissed). He won the Sayembara Kritik Sastra Dewan Kesenian Jakarta 2022 with his essay “Kelana bersama Ahasvéros,” and was selected for the national project “Menulis Bersama: 100 Tahun A.A. Navis,” organized by the Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa (Kemendikbudristek) and the Himpunan Sarjana Kesusastraan Indonesia (HISKI).