

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: DYNAMICS OF EXCLUSION THROUGH SYSTEMS THEORY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: <i>inclusive education, Exclusion systems theory, social constructivists, Education Policy</i></p>	<p>Inclusive education has gained global attention since the Salamanca Statement in 1994, which emphasized the need to accommodate all students within a system that values diversity. While inclusion remains a primary goal, exclusion continues to be a challenge for various student groups. This article integrates Niklas Luhmann's systems theory and Berger and Luckmann's social constructionist theory to understand the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Luhmann's theory indicates that the education system comprises sub-systems that operate based on social norms, while the social constructionist approach highlights the role of social interactions in shaping educational institutions. Understanding these norms is crucial for effectively implementing inclusive education. Further research is needed to develop policies that are responsive to cultural and social contexts, as well as to train educators in understanding communication dynamics.</p>

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan inklusif menarik perhatian global sejak Salamanca Statement 1994, yang menekankan perlunya mengakomodasi semua siswa dalam satu sistem yang menghargai keragaman. Meskipun inklusi menjadi tujuan utama, eksklusi tetap menjadi tantangan bagi berbagai kelompok siswa. Artikel ini menggabungkan teori sistem Niklas Luhmann dan teori konstruksionis sosial Berger dan Luckmann untuk memahami dinamika inklusi dan eksklusi. Teori Luhmann menunjukkan bahwa sistem pendidikan terdiri dari sub-sistem yang beroperasi berdasarkan norma sosial, sementara pendekatan konstruksionis sosial menyoroti peran interaksi sosial dalam membentuk institusi pendidikan. Memahami norma-norma ini penting untuk mengimplementasikan pendidikan inklusif secara efektif. Penelitian lebih lanjut diperlukan untuk mengembangkan kebijakan yang responsif terhadap konteks budaya dan sosial, serta melatih pendidik dalam memahami dinamika komunikasi

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has been gaining attention since the emergence of the Salamanca Statement and the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). The statement emphasizes the importance of inclusion in education, where all students, regardless of differences, must be accommodated in a single education system that supports diversity. The goal of inclusive education is to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students by respecting their diversity (UNESCO 1994, 2020). Salamanca's statement has influenced many countries to focus more attention on inclusive education, although the definition and practice of inclusiveness often differ from country to country (Hernández-Torrano, Somerton, & Helmer, 2020).

The concept of inclusion varies depending on the perspective. Some researchers argue that inclusion only focuses on certain groups such as students with disabilities, while others assume that inclusion applies to all students without exception (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017). Many inclusive education researchers refer to the Salamanca principles to emphasize the importance of social justice and democracy and the need to eliminate all forms of exclusion (Hernández-Torrano, Somerton, & Helmer, 2020). Inclusive education is a major challenge due to the different contexts and needs of individuals in each educational situation (Caspersen et al., 2020; Halinen & Järvinen, 2008).

Several researchers have tried to understand inclusion through social theory, including Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems that includes processes of inclusion and exclusion (Baraldi & Corsi, 2017; Hilt, 2017; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018). Inclusion and exclusion is understood as an ongoing process, in which communication at different levels of society forms a structure of inclusion and exclusion. This theory is used to understand how students can experience inclusion or exclusion in the communication process during school activities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

In inclusive education, social-constructivist theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) plays an important role in explaining how social interaction shapes systems of inclusion and exclusion. In schools, communication between teachers, students, and institutions affects how inclusion is implemented. This communication plays a role in integrating or excluding students from the learning process. Therefore, it is important to develop a more in-depth systems theory to understand how inclusion and exclusion occur in schools, as well as how inclusion policies are implemented in everyday practice.

Inclusive education involves diverse approaches, including views on curriculum, teaching, and educational leadership (Florian, Young, & Rouse, 2010; Randel et al., 2018). Inclusion is not only related to disability, but also to other diversity such as gender and cultural background (Sturm, 2019). Inclusive education is a long-term project that aims to provide equitable education for all students as well as reduce all forms of exclusion (Nevøy & Ohna, 2014).

Studies on inclusive education show that the main challenge in achieving inclusion is the mismatch between policy and practice. Sometimes, inclusion policies conflict with other policies in schools, for example when the policy requires all students to be in one class, but the curriculum is not in accordance with the abilities of all students (Shawer, 2017). In cases like this, students can be socially included but academically excluded (Hymel & Katz, 2019). Research also shows that

just because students are physically in the same class, it doesn't mean they've been completely included in the social process of the class (Sokal & Katz, 2017).

Inclusive education emphasizes the importance of social integration and the participation of all students in the learning process. To realize a more effective inclusive education, there needs to be a further understanding of how policies can be translated into practice and how exclusion can be overcome in various educational contexts.

Based on the description above, research on inclusive education is very important because inclusive education is not only about integrating all students into one education system, but also about creating an environment that truly respects diversity and meets the needs of each student equitably. The complexity of understanding and implementing inclusive education, especially in relation to how policies are translated into practice in schools, demonstrates the need for a more in-depth study. Research can help understand the different forms of exclusion that still occur, despite inclusion policies that have been implemented, as well as find solutions to create educational models that are not only physically inclusive but also socially and academically. A better understanding of the concepts of inclusion and exclusion, as well as how these two are intertwined in communication in schools, can lead to more effective strategies for achieving a truly equitable and democratic education for all students.

2. METHODOLOGY

The proposed theoretical framework for studying inclusive education is based on two perspectives: systems theory from sociology and social constructivist theory. In the social sciences, the concept of exclusion is always related to inclusion. Both originated from the ideas of integration and solidarity, which developed in the French political era of the 1970s (Silver, 1994). According to Aasland and Fløtten (2010), as well as Qvortrup and Qvortrup (2018), exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon involving a variety of life variables, including the right to education, civil rights, the labor market, and participation in society. Exclusion in one field, such as education, often has an impact on other areas, such as difficulty accessing the labor market (Vanderstraeten, 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand the mechanisms that lead to such exclusion and why some people can participate, while others do not (Amin, 2019; Rawal, 2008; Syahra, 2010).

The importance of the concept of binary exclusion in learning inclusion in schools is to understand how the process of exclusion and inclusion occurs simultaneously in different contexts. To understand inclusive education, one needs to look at how exclusion and inclusion are affected by social mechanisms in schools. Because inclusion is often a difficult concept to clearly identify, educational organizations often struggle to effectively manage student inclusion levels. Using this approach, we can study the criteria that determine inclusion and exclusion in schools.

In addition to the systems theory and social constructivist approaches, this study will use the literature review method to review previous research on inclusive education. Literature reviews will allow researchers to identify important concepts, models, and mechanisms that have been developed in the literature to support inclusion in schools. It will also help identify gaps in previous research and provide a basis for further analysis of how best to achieve inclusion in the context of education.

With this combined approach, the research will be able to shed light on how inclusion and

exclusion occur in schools and provide insights into how to improve educational policies and practices to support better inclusion.

3. RESULT

3.1. Systems Theory by Niklas Luhmann in Inclusive Education

Systems theory is often used in research on inclusive education because of its ability to understand the relationships between individuals and larger social structures. For example, Qvortrup and Qvortrup (2018) state that the operational definition of inclusion must be differentiated according to three dimensions involving all students. They propose that the level of inclusion needs to be defined in the different types of social communities where inclusion and exclusion can occur, and the different levels of inclusion and exclusion within each of those communities.

Within the framework of this theory, we can understand inclusion and exclusion through the concept **of functional differentiation** of society presented by Niklas Luhmann (1995). Society is seen as a conglomerate of various social sub-systems that are integrated based on certain functions, such as politics, economics, religion, and education. These systems respond to environmental complexity through communication that connects individuals to the needs of society, such as adaptive education in the context of a school. Thus, inclusion in schools is closely related to how communication in the education system works (Luhmann & Rasch, 2002; Luhmann, 1995).

According to Luhmann (1995), each sub-system operates on its own logic and automatically determines what is included or excluded from the system. For example, in education, when students are unable to meet the needs of regular teaching, they need an adaptive education system or special education. However, this differentiation can also create exclusion, such as social or academic exclusion, depending on how the education system responds to those needs. In the education system, communication that supports inclusion may require adaptive teaching, but at the same time, it is possible that students placed in special education are excluded from social activities in regular classrooms.

Different systems in society also base their communication on **contingencies**—that is, things can go differently. These contingencies are closely related to inclusion and exclusion, because when the system chooses a specific type of communication to include, they must also choose the type of communication to be issued. In this case, the decision to include or exclude always risks not fully supporting the social system. Therefore, according to Luhmann (1995), inclusion and exclusion are part of a dynamic process in social system communication.

Civil rights and human rights are normative principles designed to ensure that every individual is integrated in a social system. However, as Luhmann and Rasch (2002) explain, in a functionally differentiated society, these rights are often interpreted differently by each individual. Although there is legal equality, the functional system still determines who can be included and who is excluded. For example, education is accessible to all, but its rigid implementation can result in exclusion for those who are not in accordance with applicable educational norms.

3.2. Systems Theory in Inclusive and Exclusive Education

In inclusive education, Luhmann's theory helps explain how social systems such as education manage exclusion and inclusion. For example, an education sub-system can consist of different communities where inclusion and exclusion occur. For example, classroom activities can be part of several different social sub-systems, such as student interaction in academic and social activities. The education system must adapt to the complex needs of the environment, and in this case, the

adaptive needs of students that require specialized instruction must be communicated and understood by the system.

However, Luhmann's theory also states that although inclusion is an end, exclusion is always an inevitable reality. Each social system creates certain boundaries that determine who is included and who is excluded. Therefore, inclusive education cannot be separated from the exclusion process, but can try to reduce discriminatory exclusion.

3.3. Inclusion as a Form of Communication in the Education System

According to Luhmann (1995), communication is a core element in the social system. Communication consists of three main components: information, messaging, and understanding. These elements are formed through linguistic and physical actions. Once a social system is formed, communication serves as the primary means of creating meaning and determining what operations to put into the system. For example, in a classroom environment, different forms of communication can be managed through different sub-systems. Academic activities, social interaction, and physical activities become sub-systems that determine who is included in the communication process.

Luhmann (1995) also explains that when social systems face environmental pressures, they often respond by creating new sub-systems to manage more specific communication. This aligns with the concept of functional differentiation, where the education system tries to adapt to the diverse needs of students through adaptive teaching. However, this process of differentiation often results in exclusion, both academically and socially, especially for students placed in special education systems (Luhmann & Rasch, 2002).

3.4. Social Constructivist Theory in Inclusive Education

To complement the systems theory perspective, the social constructivist approach of Berger and Luckmann (1966) is also important in understanding inclusive education. In this theory, social institutions are considered social constructions that are formed through daily communication. Education, in this context, is seen as one of the institutions created by social interaction and constructed through societal norms. According to Berger and Luckmann, the social reality resulting from these interactions becomes the norm that guides how the education system functions.

Social constructivists help us understand that schools as social institutions not only create norms to manage inclusion and exclusion, but are also influenced by broader norms in society. For example, the decision to adapt a curriculum for students with special needs is a form of communication that reflects social norms about equality in education. However, this institutionalization process can also create exclusion if policies and practices do not run in accordance with inclusion expectations.

In this case, social constructivist theory helps us see that inclusive education is not only a matter of policy, but also a matter of how social norms and values are constructed and translated into practice. This social process involves important decisions about who is included in the education system and who is excluded.

3.5. Theoretical Concepts and Models

The systems theory developed by Niklas Luhmann and the social constructivist theory of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann offer a comprehensive perspective in understanding inclusive and exclusive education. Although inclusion is a major goal in the education system, exclusion remains an inevitable part. The complexity of managing exclusion and inclusion reflects how the education system must adapt to the needs of the various social environments and balance between policies,

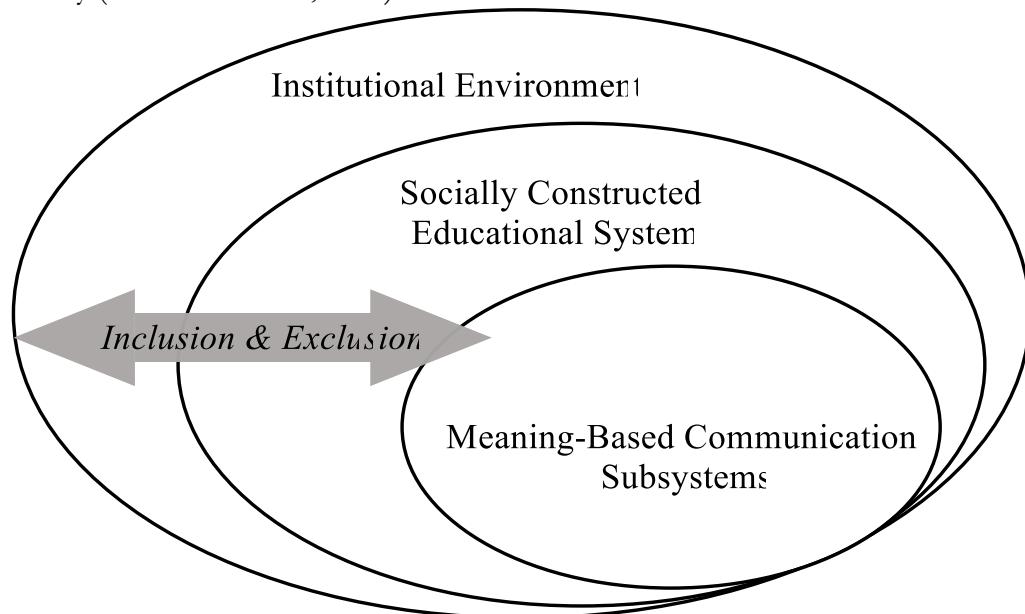
practices, and social realities (Luhmann, 1995). By understanding how social communication shapes and maintains education systems, we can better design policies and strategies to reduce exclusion and support broader inclusion (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Luhmann's theory suggests that social systems are formed through the process of social communication, which involves the transmission of information, messages, and understanding through linguistic and physical actions. Once the social system is formed, it begins to communicate meanings that serve as internal nodes through which communication in the system is centralized. This meaning defines the types of communication that are allowed in the system and also identifies the ideas that are included or excluded. In the context of education, interactions within the classroom can result in different social sub-systems, for example, through the various academic and social activities that make up the sub-community (Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018).

The environment around the social system also puts pressure on the system to include various meanings. However, because the social system is built on a specific meaning, it cannot absorb the conflicting meaning. Therefore, the system may react by ignoring pressure or creating new sub-systems to handle variations in existing meanings. This strengthens the argument that the education system is made up of various social sub-systems, each of which has its own functions and meanings (Luhmann & Rasch, 2002).

The social constructivist theory of Berger and Luckmann (1966) emphasizes that social interactions between individuals create norms and institutions that ultimately become part of the construction of a broader social reality. This social interaction shapes the reality of education, in which social values and norms are transmitted and implemented. Educational institutions as social institutions are shaped by the norms determined by these interactions. These norms are then institutionalized through policies and practices in education. However, this process does not always run smoothly, as there are often inconsistencies between formal policies and their implementation on the ground (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

In the context of inclusion, the institutionalization of norms and policies can create exclusion if not implemented correctly. For example, even if an inclusion policy is in place, students with special needs may still experience social exclusion if the social interactions and environment in the school do not support their full integration. This process suggests that the institutionalization of norms is not only the result of individual interaction but also depends on broader social dynamics within society (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008).



From the theoretical framework that has been presented, an important empirical question arises: what types of social systems (and sub-systems) create inclusion and exclusion in the context of education? This question is relevant because each sub-system also depends on society, context, culture, school, and child group. For example, a student who has an injury that limits his or her participation in physical activity will be marginalized from communication related to sports. However, the student will still be included in the communication about the injury. This type of exclusion sometimes leads to social exclusion, as expressed by Rapp (2006).

4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The theoretical model outlined shows that the social system in the context of education is formed through social interaction and communication that contains a certain meaning. Inclusion and exclusion in education are influenced by the norms, values, and structures that exist in the institutional environment. The communication process not only regulates how individuals interact but also determines what meanings are allowed or excluded from the system. By understanding these dynamics, we can delve deeper into how the education system can be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all students.

Recommendation: Further research focused on the development of inclusive education policies that consider diverse social sub-systems is needed. The policy must take into account the cultural, social, and environmental context in which students are located. In addition, training for educators and policymakers is needed to improve their understanding of the dynamics of communication and meaning in social interactions. This is important so that education can create a more inclusive environment, where all students can participate fully, regardless of their background or condition.

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