

## TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA\*

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### Abstract

The Southeast Asia countries have implemented inclusive education for two decades. During this period, the governments regularly support the improvement of inclusive practice's quality. However, the implementation of inclusive education in the Southeast Asia is still ineffective. The practice shows slow development. The majority of studies considered the teachers as a main barrier of this condition. This finding is interesting since the teachers have important role in establishment and success of inclusive education. Therefore, the information regarding the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in Southeast Asia and the influential factors of the attitude are important to understand this phenomenon. If the teachers display more positive attitude towards inclusive education, then the more success of inclusive education practice. Nine studies from six countries in Southeast Asia have been reviewed in this study. The result identified the teachers in Southeast Asia have positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, there is a decreasing trend of their attitude during 11 years. The teachers have positive attitude in ten years ago, while their attitude becomes weakly positive or neutral in the last six years. The influential factors of the teachers' attitude are divided into three groups, students-related, teachers-related, and educational-environment related. Teaching experience and the number of training are considered as main factors related to the teachers attitude.

**Keywords:** Teachers, Attitude, Southeast Asia, Inclusive, Education

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Inclusive education

'Education for all' is a primary education's goal, which was first initiated in the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca (UNESCO, 1994). Since that conference, this goal has been stated in the international and national education legislations around the world. To achieve education for all and assist individuals' right to pursue education, the laws mandate the governments and schools to provide an opportunity for all children to access the general education and curriculum (UNESCO, 1994; United Nations, 2006). This condition means the schools have been challenged and encouraged to facilitate various students' needs by engaging in inclusive education.

The Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2016) describes inclusive education as a process to accommodate individuals' right to pursuing education, a principle to respect individual difference, and a result of sustainable processes to dealing with barriers to access education. Ryndak, Moore, Orlando, and Delano as cited in Timberlake (2014) supported that definition by concluding that the inclusive education provides opportunities for students with special needs to participate in the general classroom's activities and environments then interact with their peers and teachers. Eventually, it can be concluded that the aim of inclusive education is to assist varieties students' needs in the learning process at school without discrimination.

The governments and schools should meet the key features of inclusive education to achieve the success of this practice. The Salamanca Statement stated four features of inclusive education, such as the school system should develop flexible teaching methods, learning approach, and content, collaborate with parents and general communities and investigate students' needs, strengths, and risk of failure (UNESCO, 1994). The main features in the acts could be used as a guideline for the government to encourage the increasing number of schools, which implements inclusive education.

Beside the increasing trend of inclusive schools' number, the numbers of studies around inclusive education topic have also increased. For instance, Downing, Hardin, and Kathrin (2007) discussed the positive impacts of inclusive education for students with special needs and typical students. Students with special needs show improvement in cognitive, social, and academic skills by studying in inclusive education, while the typical students have opportunities to expand their empathy, acceptance and awareness of differences (Downing et al., 2007). The studies around inclusive education could improve the every support system's awareness about the importance of inclusive education and encourage the development of equity and quality inclusive education.

## **1.2. Inclusive education in Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia consists of 11 countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Singapore, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Timor-Leste. These countries have been incorporated in The Association of Southeast Asia Nation (ASEAN), which was built in 1967. The countries have various demographic, cultures, populations, politics and economic conditions. However, nowadays, all of these countries are experiencing an increase in the standard of living because of the improvement in the education sector (Lee, 2016).

One of the things that represent Southeast Asia development in the education field is the action from the countries to take part in the inclusive education's phenomenon since the 1990s (Holdsworth & Thepphavongsa, 1998; Sunardi, Yusuf, Pryono, & Yeager, 2011). The countries have been raising several common goals to support the inclusive practice, such as 'access and equity, unity and identity, quality and relevance, and efficiency and effectiveness' (Lee, 2016, p. 12). These goals are also written in the Southeast Asian Minister of Education Organization (SEAMEO, 2015) priority area during 2015-2035, which emphasizes opportunities for all learners, includes disadvantaged children and children with disabilities, by providing access to the general and universal education and reducing barriers in inclusion practice.

During the two decades of implementing inclusive education, the Southeast Asia countries have displayed their commitments and actions to support the equity and quality of this practice. For instance, the government in these countries continually evaluates and revises the education amendments regarding inclusive education. Moreover, currently, the numbers of inclusive schools in Southeast Asia countries are gradually growing. In Indonesia, the number inclusive schools double between 2014 and 2017 (Musfah, 2016). The growing amount of inclusive schools and the legal supports seemed promising in providing an improvement regarding inclusive education practice in Southeast Asia. However, many investigations have concluded that the inclusive practice in Southeast Asia is still ineffective, problematic, and far from achieving those goals of facilitating education for all (Grimes, Sayarath & Outhaithany, 2011; Jelas & Ali, 2014; Kurniawati, Minnaert, Mangunsong & Ahmed, 2012).

Several studies have explored several barriers, which are contributing to the slow development of inclusive education in Southeast Asia. The majority of the studies identified the teachers and the factors, which are related to the teachers as main barriers in inclusive education practice in this area (Kalyanpur, 2011; Leong & Kooi, 2004; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). The teachers in Southeast Asia are still uncertain about their roles in inclusive schools, doubtful due to the lack of skills and knowledge, and sometimes they also seem lacking motivation and interest to interact with students with disabilities (Grimes et al., 2011; Villa et al., 2003). These findings are startling because the teachers play a major role in the education setting. Therefore, the barriers must be solved to achieve the success of inclusive education practice.

### **1.3. The teachers in inclusive education**

The teachers are considered as the main feature in inclusive education because they have a key role in the establishment and sustainability of inclusive education (United Nation, 2006). The importance of the teachers' role is clear since they are the ones who interact directly with the students in a school setting. Therefore, the teachers are usually expected to be competent in teaching and assisting diverse students' needs in the learning process.

#### *1.3.1 The teachers' attitude and influential factors of their attitude*

Several studies have identified the correlation between the teachers' attitude, the teachers' capabilities in teaching and assisting students in inclusive schools, and the success of inclusive education. For instance, Varcoe and Boyle (2014) identified that the teachers' attitude would bring impacts on their behaviour while teaching in the class, their acceptance to students with special needs, and their commitment to providing the education for students. Therefore, Poon, Wong, and Kaur (2014) encouraged the teachers to develop the positive attitude towards inclusive education to achieve the successful implementation of inclusive education. The teachers with the positive attitude towards inclusive education are more likely to adjust their teaching methods to support students' needs (Varcoe & Boyle, 2014). They are also able to develop the empathy feeling of typical students and encourage these students to accept and be more open towards the diversity in the environment (Poon et al., 2016). In contrast, the teachers with negative attitude tend to be more frustrated because they have lacking confidence and motivation to undertake inclusive teaching (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2015). Through the explanations above, the slow development of inclusive education and the teachers' condition in Southeast Asia could be related to the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

Furthermore, it is also important to identify the factors that influence teachers' attitude, so the other support systems understand how to support the teachers to be more positive. Avramidis as cited in Pham (2008) classified the factors into three groups, such as student-related, teacher-related, and educational environment-related variables. The student-related variable could be the type of disability (Bailey, Nomanbhoy, & Tubpun, 2015). Haq and Mundia (2012) stated that the teachers would be more positive towards inclusive education if the students only have one type of disability. The factors related to the teacher could be teachers' training, resources, and experience. Kurniawati et al., (2012) identified that the teachers' attitude would be more positive if they receive sufficient training and gain more experience. The training and experience will improve teachers' confidence and competence to teach students with special needs (Grimes et al., 2011). Through those explanations, the teachers ideally receive on-going support like training and education. The last factor is related to the educational-environment, such as the collaboration between support systems, policy, salary, teaching aids, and curriculum. The teachers who collaborate with their colleagues and parents show more positive attitudes than the teachers who are not involved other support systems in the students' education (Pham, 2008).

### **1.4. The teachers in inclusive education in Southeast Asia**

The teachers who have an important role in the successful inclusive education, apparently considered as the main factor of the slow improvement of inclusive education in Southeast Asia. This phenomenon brings out the question about, "how is the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education and what are the factors that influence their attitude?". The knowledge regarding teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in Southeast Asia and the influential factors of their attitude is essential to understand how to support the teachers in implementing inclusive education. The supports will encourage the teachers to have more positive attitude towards inclusive education and eventually improve the quality of inclusive education practice in Southeast Asia. Therefore, this literature review will explore the teachers' attitudes and the influential factors of their attitude towards inclusive education in Southeast Asia. This literature review will focus more on teachers' attitude in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Brunei Darussalam countries.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Search procedure**

Several strategies are used to find the relevant sources related to teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in Southeast Asia, such as ERIC, EBSCO-host, and Informit databases, reference lists, and government reports. The author uses keywords, such as inclusive education, Southeast Asian, teachers' attitude, students with special needs, to collect the sources. The author also reviews the reference list of relevant pieces of literature and the government report. However, these two strategies have not given the significant contribution in providing additional literature to support this study.

## 2.2 Selection procedure

The study that will be included should meet the following criteria:

- Published in between 1990 and 2017 since the implementation of inclusive education in Southeast Asia started in 1990s.
- Conducted in Southeast Asia; Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Philippine, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Timor Leste, and Thailand.
- Involved primary data collection and interpretation.
- Discussed about teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

There were 117 literature regarding the education policies and inclusive practice in Southeast Asia. From those numbers, the author reviewed two studies of each Southeast Asia countries and summarized the information to provide an introduction to this study. After that, the author filtered those literature with the keyword "*teachers' attitude toward inclusive education in Indonesia*" or other countries in Southeast Asia and found twenty-seven literature. Furthermore, the authors reviewed those pieces of literature and rejected 17 of them that do not meet the criteria in this study. Eventually, there are nine resources that specifically investigate teachers' attitude toward inclusive education in Southeast Asia, especially in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, and Singapore, and Vietnam.

## 2.3 Analysis procedure

The author categorizes and analyzes the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education based on the results from the author of each literature that has been used in this study. Those studies usually come with a conclusion like the teachers with positive, neutral, or negative attitudes. The primary data collection will be used to support the analysis.

Regarding the factors that influence the teachers' attitude, the author lists all of the factors from each study. Then, the author classifies those factors into children-related, teachers-related, or educational environment-related. Those procedures will help the author to discuss the consensus and contradictive of each factor.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussions will be presented in three sections. The first section provides general information about each study (see Table 1). The second section presents the review regarding teachers' attitude toward inclusive education in Southeast Asia. The last section provides factors that correlate with the teachers' attitude (see Table 2).

### 3.1 The summary of the studies

Through the summary on the table, the majority of the studies used the quantitative method, such as questionnaire, to measure teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. Several studies developed a new questionnaire, while others adapted the previous questionnaires. Since the researchers used questionnaire or survey in their study, almost all of the study has more than 100 participants. This big sample size might able to represent the overall teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. Twenty-two percent of the studies combined quantitative and qualitative methods, such as questionnaire and interview. This combination provides deeper information about the teachers' attitude, such as the reasons behind teachers' statement about their attitude and lack of supports in inclusive education. Two studies suggested the future research observe teachers' behaviour in the classroom to ensure that survey's results are aligned with their behaviour while teaching.

Moreover, nine studies were held between 2006 and 2016 in six countries of Southeast Asia. On average, each country has one or two literature around this study's topic. This condition might indicate that the societies are still less awareness of the inclusive education practice in Southeast Asia. Mitchel and Desai as cited in Mudzakir (2011) concluded that this condition could be a sign that education system in Southeast Asia is not seriously committed to supporting the practice of inclusive education. However, these countries also show a positive movement, where the number of study around the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education increases twice times since 2010s period.

### 3.2 Teachers' attitude toward inclusive education in Southeast Asia

Through the analysis of the first table data, the majority of the studies in this literature review identified the teachers in Southeast Asia display positive attitudes toward inclusive education. This result means the teachers in Southeast Asia will be more likely to apply tailored teaching methods for the students in the

classroom and to accept and respect the attendance of the students with special needs (Hall et al., 2015; Varcoe & Boyle, 2014). Eventually, the teachers with positive and supportive attitudes will increase the possibility of achieving the success of inclusive education practice (Kim, 2011).

Amid of the insights about positive teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in Southeast Asia, this result seems to contradict with other previous studies. Several pieces of literature identified the teachers tend to display a negative attitude towards inclusive education because of several factors, such as teaching experience, the number of training, and the disability categories (Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). The numbers and the characteristics of participants, then the period and the research design of the studies might cause these contradictive findings. For instance, all study in this review only investigated maximum 550 teachers in each Southeast Asia country and used questionnaires to collect the data. It is clear the number of participants might not represent attitudes of the whole teachers in the Southeast Asia. Besides that, the use of a questionnaire is unable to ascertain whether the teachers also display the positive attitudes through their behavior while teaching in the classroom.

Moreover, there is also a gap between this study's result and the real situation of inclusive practice. Although the teachers in Southeast Asia display a positive attitude towards inclusive education, Jelas and Ali (2014) and Kurniawati et al., (2012) identified the inclusive education practice in Southeast Asia is still ineffective and showing slow development. There are two possibilities behind this phenomenon. The first possibility relates to the consistency of the result regarding the teachers' positive attitude. Most of the studies determined the teachers' attitude in Southeast Asia based on the analysis of the teachers' response to the questionnaire. There is a chance that the teachers display different attitudes and behaviour while teaching the students in the class. If this inconsistency happens, it will be reasonable that the teachers' positive attitude in this study has not contributed to the development of inclusive practice in the Southeast Asia. Therefore, the studies need to consider the use of observation to ensure the teachers' attitude (Koay et al., 2006).

Table 1. The summary of literature

Citation	Country	Methodology	Participants	Findings	Limitation / critique
Abdullah & Abosi (2014)	Brunei Darussalam	Questionnaire with 4 sections and 3 semi-interview questions.	n = 113 regular teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education.</li> <li>The teachers think that they are not well prepared to teach students with disabilities.</li> <li>Inadequate materials and teaching aids are considered as barriers for the teachers.</li> </ul>	The instrument only has 5 items to measure teachers' attitude, which means those items are insufficient to conclude teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.
Ali, Mustafa, & Jelas (2006)	Malaysia	Self-rated questionnaire with three scales.	n = 235 regular and special teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education.</li> <li>Collaboration between general and special education teachers is important.</li> <li>The clear guidelines on inclusive education practice are necessary.</li> </ul>	The use of "attitude" term in this study seems inconsistent. Sometimes the authors swapped 'attitude' into 'perception', whereas the meaning is different.
Bailey, Nomanbhoy, & Tubpun (2015)	Malaysia	Adaptation survey of Yates' Attitude Toward Inclusion Instrument.	n = 284 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers' attitude is weakly positive towards inclusive education.</li> <li>Teachers are lacking skill in the inclusive education area.</li> <li>The teachers believe that the students with special needs would obtain benefit from studying in a special classroom.</li> <li>Most of the participants have negative views about the children with disabilities and their families.</li> </ul>	The study seems to lack of information or review regarding the inclusive education practice in Malaysia, such as the supports from government and public society, the environments, and the barriers around it.
Dapudong (2014)	Thailand	Modified Opinions Relative to the Integration of Children with Disabilities (MORID)	n = 52 general and special teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teachers have neutral attitude towards inclusive education in terms of their belief, feeling, and action.</li> </ul>	The demography's data of participants could be connected to the discussion section.
Koay, Lim, Sim, & Elkins (2006)	Brunei Darussalam	Perception of Inclusive Education Scale (PIES).	n = 138 learning assistant teachers and 453 regular teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning assistant teachers have more positive attitudes than regular teachers.</li> <li>The teachers will be more positive towards inclusive education as their gain more experience and knowledge about students with special needs.</li> </ul>	The survey's result shows that the teachers have positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, their behaviours while teaching in classroom might be different. Therefore, the administration of observation could be considered to ensure the

					teachers' attitude.
Kurniawati, Minnaert, Mangunsong, Ahmed (2012)	Indonesia	Questionnaire which assessed three component of attitudes; behaviour, affect, and cognition.	n = 208 teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teachers generally have positive attitude towards inclusive education.</li> <li>• The length of experience with students with special needs is correlated with the teachers' attitude.</li> </ul>	Failure to identify the distinction of three attitude's components. The absence of literature review and less informative of methodology parts might cause readers' narrow understanding of inclusive education in Indonesia.
Pham (2008)	Vietnam	Adaptation of Attitude Towards Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS).	n = 561 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teachers have positive attitude towards inclusive education.</li> <li>• Majority of the teachers understand the philosophy and support the implementation of inclusive education.</li> <li>• The teachers lack of knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• The inclusion of students with disability did not bring much difference in the classroom instruction or procedures.</li> <li>• There were no difference of teachers' attitude by gender and age.</li> </ul>	The author detects a gap between the overall result and the answers on survey. The results show that the teachers have positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, the responses on survey show that the teachers still implement the traditional method of teaching.
Poon, Ng, Wong, & Kaur (2016)	Singapore	The Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Revised scale (SACIE-R)	n = 131 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, teachers have neutral attitude towards inclusive education.</li> <li>• Level of confidence, training, and experience have important role to the teachers' attitude.</li> </ul>	The participants were only the staff from two schools in Singapore, hence the results could not be representing all teachers in Singapore.
Sukbunpant, Arthur-Kelly, & Dempsey (2013)	Thailand	Questionnaire for all participants and interview for 20 teachers.	n = 528 preschool teachers responded to the questionnaire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teachers have negative and positive attitudes toward inclusive education.</li> <li>• The teachers lack of training and knowledge regarding inclusive education and children with disabilities.</li> <li>• The Thai culture influences the teachers' attitude.</li> <li>• Collaboration between special teachers, general teachers, and parents would be beneficial to the teachers' attitude.</li> <li>• Teachers perceived lack of skill in teaching children with special needs and supports from principal and public society as the barriers.</li> </ul>	The results are only based on the interview. Direct class observation will support the information about teachers' attitude.

The second possibility is regarding other factors that might influence the teachers' capability to provide an inclusive environment for the students, such as the rigid curriculum and the lack of available resources. Leong and Kooi (2004); Rydstrom, (2010) identified the schools in Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, and Cambodia provides limited teaching aids. Besides, the teachers in several countries of Southeast Asia still teach the students with the rigid curriculum (Holdsworth & Thepphavongsa, 1998; Sunardi et al., 2011). For instance, in Indonesia, the teachers in several schools, especially public schools, teach the students with the same program, teaching materials, and instructional strategy on the same day. This condition is opposite to a mandate regarding the adaptability feature in the inclusive education, where schools are expected to adjust the curriculum and teaching materials to meet varieties students' needs (United Nation, 2006). Eventually, although the teachers have a positive attitude towards inclusive education, they still unable to assist various students' needs, establish the inclusive setting in the classroom, and improve the inclusive practice because of those factors.

In addition, further analysis indicated the trend of the teachers' attitude has changed during 11 years. In the first six years, between 2006-2012, all the studies' results showed that the teachers tended to have positive attitudes' toward inclusive education. The teachers seem more understand about the philosophy of inclusive education and more ready to support the inclusive practice (Pham, 2008). However, in the next five years, the teachers' attitude seemed to decrease and more diverse. The teachers tend to have weakly positive and neutral attitudes toward inclusive education in Southeast Asia.

The teachers' frustrated and depressed feeling because of the imbalance between demands and supports from the government might have contributed to the weakening of the teachers' attitude over the past five years in the Southeast Asia. Currently, the government in Southeast Asia is more aware and concerned about the implementation of inclusive education, so they required the teachers to be more qualified to teach in inclusive education (Howes, Grimes, & Shohel, 2011). This requirement also stated in the legislations, such as the education acts in Indonesia stated that the teachers should obtain certification in their professional development to be more competent in achieving the education goals (DPR & Presiden, 2003). However, this improvement of awareness and demands are not accompanied by the sufficient supports and clear rules or legislations. The teachers in the Southeast Asia confess that they receive limited supports, such as the number of training and the salary (Grimes et al., 2011; Varopanya & Dunlap, 2014). Furthermore, the governments in some Southeast Asia countries have not created the legislations about the inclusive education, so the teachers feel confused about the rules, expectation, and their responsibilities (Wong, Poon, Kaur, & Ng, 2015). Through the explanations above, it is clear that the government should provide clear legislation about inclusive education and on-going supports to guide the teachers in providing an inclusive situation for the students and encourage them to have more positive attitude towards inclusive education in Southeast Asia.

Several countries in this study have more than one study, which complements to each other. For instance, Sukbunpant, Arthur-Kelly, and Dempsey (2013) investigated the teachers' attitude in Thailand and concluded the positive teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. One year later, Dapudong (2014) conducted the similar topic and brought new insight into teachers' attitude in Thailand based on cognition, affection, and behaviour. Meanwhile, In Malaysia, two studies identified the attitude of different teachers' groups. Ali et al., (2006) concluded the Malaysian general and special teachers have a positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, Bailey et al., (2015) identified the weakly positive of Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (LINUS) specialist teachers' attitude. A continuation of study in the same field might indicate the improvement of awareness about the importance of teachers' attitude to the development of inclusive education in the Southeast Asia.

### **3.3 Factors that correlate with the teachers' attitude**

Six out of nine literature in this study investigated the factors that influence teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. Kurniawati et al., (2012) and Pham (2008) identified all influential factors of the teachers' attitude; students-related, teachers-related, and educational-environment related. The majority of the studies examined the teachers-related and educational-environment-related variables. Several studies also investigated similar factors, such as Dapudong (2014), Kurniawati, et al., (2012), Pham (2008), and Poon et al., (2016) explored the correlation between training and teachers' attitude. However, sometimes the studies provided contradictory results about the similar influential factors. For instance, Kurniawati et al., (2012) and Pham (2008) agreed that the experience in teaching students with special needs correlates with the teachers' attitude, while Poon et al., (2016) identified



those variables are not correlated. Those three factors will be discussed further in the different sections.

### *3.3.1 Student-related variables*

This study identified two factors of the students-related variables, which are related to the teachers' attitude. Those factors are the attendance of students with special needs in the classroom and the level of their disabilities. The teachers will display more positive attitudes' toward inclusive education if they have students with special needs in their class and those students have less number of disabilities (Kurniawati et al., 2012; Pham, 2008).

The result about the correlation between the attendance of the students with special needs and the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education seems to have limited support from other studies. This condition might happen because the teachers refused to have the students with special needs in their classroom (Jamieson as cited in Haq & Mundia, 2012). Also, sometimes the teachers think that the students with special needs will make the teaching process becomes less effective (Haq & Mundia, 2012). Those things might inhibit the study to explore the correlation between the two variables. Ideally, the teachers or schools provide the equal opportunity for students with special needs to study in their class. The participation of the students with special needs will contribute to the high frequency of contact between the students and the teachers and eventually lead to more positive teachers' attitude (Thaver & Lim, 2014).

Pham (2008) stated that the teachers would be more positive if the students have fewer numbers of disabilities. The less number of disabilities means the milder the disability itself. Moreover, it could be concluded that the teachers are more welcome and positive to the students with a mild disability than to the severe one. Hunt and Goetz as cited in Haq and Mundia (2012) support this result by concluding the teachers will be less positive if the students have severe disabilities because the teachers are afraid that these students will detract and impede other students' achievement in the learning process. Eventually, the teachers' perception of the students with severe disabilities could contribute to their acceptance' and attitude' toward these students' attendance in the classroom.

### *3.3.2 Teacher-related variables*

Five studies in this literature review identified five factors relate to the teachers. Those factors are general teaching and teaching the students with special needs' experiences, gender, age, and teachers' education background (degree and subjects). Several previous studies have investigated the similar factors.

Regarding the gender, age, degree and course, there is a consensus that those factors are not correlated to the general teachers' attitude (Dapudong, 2014; Pham, 2008; Poon et al., 2016). The cultural factor might contribute to the similarity attitude between female and male teachers. For instance, the majority of Thai citizens are Buddhist, who believe that taking care the people with special needs will bring happiness and spiritual benefits; hence they are very keen on helping those people, including the students with special needs (Dapudong, 2014). However, there is a difference in the attitude of a male from female teachers if it is analyzed based on three components of attitude; belief, affective, and behaviour. Male teachers are more positive on behavioural component and less positive on affective component than the female teachers (Dapudong, 2014; Pham, 2008). This condition indicates that the male teachers are more tolerant and empathetic than female teachers in learning practice (Ellins & Porter as cited in Dapudong, 2014).

The controversial opinions regarding the teachers' experience, such as the general teaching experience and the experience in teaching students with special needs. Bailey et al., (2015) and Pham (2008) agreed the longer teachers gain general teaching experience, the more positive their attitude towards inclusive education. However, Dapudong (2014) and Poon et al., (2016) stated that there is no attitude difference between teachers with longer and shorter experience in teaching. A similar condition is also found in the results of teachers' experience in teaching students with special needs. In contrast, Kurniawati et al., (2012) and Pham (2008) identified that there is a correlation between experiences in teaching students with special needs, whereas Poon et al., (2016) stated that there is no correlation between those variables.

The different variable of the teaching experience might cause the controversies above. For instance, Pham (2008) identified the correlation between the teachers' experience in teaching the students with special needs and the teachers' attitude based on the length of the experience, which is from one to more than 20 years. Meanwhile, Poon et al., (2016) indicated the correlation based on how many

days the teachers teach the students with special needs within a month. Future studies need to explore similar variable of teaching experience; hence a consensus will be achieved regarding the correlation between teaching experience and teachers' attitude.

### *3.3.3 Educational environment-related variables*

Amid the importance of supports for teachers' attitude towards inclusive education, there is a disagreement result about supporting training for teachers. Kurniawati et al., (2012) described that the teachers with a sufficient training have more positive attitude towards inclusive education than those of lack of training. This finding is supported by Draft General Comment no. 4 article 24, in which the teachers should receive on-going supports, such as education, training, and knowledge, about the core competencies and values of inclusive education (United Nations, 2006). The training in inclusive education topic will increase teachers' knowledge and skill while teaching in such environment and eventually these teachers will have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Varcoe & Boyle, 2014). However, Dapudong (2014); Pham (2008); Poon et al., (2016) identified no difference in teachers' attitude concerning training. Howes, Grimes, and Shohel (2011) supported this view by identifying that teachers' conversations about the teaching and learning process are more important to increase their knowledge than following training.

Through the analysis, the disagreement about the role of training in the teachers' attitude has happened since the previous studies in the other countries outside Southeast Asia. The different content of the training might contribute to this opposite view. Training with the explicit and detail contents regarding inclusive education and students with special needs might display the difference in teachers' attitude towards inclusive education (Poon et al., 2016).

The studies in this literature review also indicated that the teachers lack of training because of the limited availability of training and lack of motivation to attend such training (Pham, 2008; Tashandra, 2016). The availability of training about inclusive education in the Southeast Asia tends to be uneven between regions. For instance, Indonesian teachers in the rural areas have less available training than those of in the urban areas (Tashandra, 2016). In the Philippines, the public schools' teachers have limited access to the training since the training is not held in the public schools (Muega, 2016). These conditions not only cause the teachers have limited training, but they also inequality in the teachers' quality and eventually it bring impact on the difference in the teachers' attitude in the rural and urban areas in Southeast Asia. For instance, in this study, Pham (2008) stated that the teachers in the suburb areas have less positive attitudes than the teachers in the urban areas.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

This literature review has revealed that the teachers have shown positive attitude towards inclusive education practice in Southeast Asia in two decades of inclusive education practice. However, the teachers' attitude in this area decreases since the last six years because of the imbalance between the supports and demands. This study results also indicated several consensus and controversies regarding the influential factors of the teachers' attitude. The studies found that the attendance of the students with special needs and the numbers of disability are the factors that related to the students. Also, the teaching experience and training are identified as the main influential factors related to the teachers and educational environment variables. Through the results above, it is recommended that the government provide continuing supports for the teachers, such as training. This action will encourage the teachers to be more positive towards inclusive education and eventually improve the development of inclusive education in the Southeast Asia.

This study has several limitations, such as the criteria to determine the teachers' attitude from each study. The studies in this study conducted different research designs; hence the same results about the teachers' attitude between studies might have different analysis and criteria. Therefore, further studies are required to determine the criteria regarding the teachers' attitude. For instance, the study by Boer et al., (2011) determined criteria, in which the teachers' attitude will be identified as positive if the analyze shows more than 70% of the positive score or above 3.5 of the mean scores. Furthermore, the absence of criteria regarding which group of the teachers is another limitation of this study. This study identified the general, special, and assistant teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. Consequently, the result of this study becomes too general for all teachers.

Therefore, the future study needs to consider the importance of such criteria. It will help the researcher to determine the consensus about the teachers' attitude from different studies. The criterion is also crucial to provide specific and detail results regarding the attitude of different teacher group towards inclusive education in Southeast Asia.

Table 2. Summary of influential factors of teachers' attitude

Factors	Study	Variable	Outcomes
Students-related	Kurniawati et al., (2012) Pham (2008)	- Students with special needs' attendance in class. - Number of the disability.	- Teachers, who have students with special needs in classroom, have more positive attitudes. - Teachers display more positive attitudes if the students have less number of disabilities.
Teachers – related	Balley, Nomanbhoy, & Tubpun (2015); Pham (2008)  Dapudong (2014); Pham (2008); Poon et al., (2016)  Kurniawati et al., (2012); Pham (2008)  Poon et al., (2016)	- Teaching experience.  - Gender, age, experience, degree, and course.  - Teaching experience in special education area.  - Experience in teaching students with special needs.	- More experienced teachers, the more positive their attitude towards inclusive education.  - Male teachers have more positive attitude than females teachers based on the actions component. - There is no different teachers' attitude in terms of age, experience, degree levels, and courses.  - Teachers with longer teaching experience in special education have more positive attitudes towards inclusive education.  - There is no correlation between experiences in teaching students with disabilities and the teachers' attitude.
Educational environment - related	Ali, Mustafa, & Jelas (2006);  Dapudong (2014); Pham (2008); Poon et al., (2016)  Kurniawati et al., (2012)  Pham (2008)	- Mainstream and special teachers' collaboration.  - Training  - Training  - School setting. - Support - Parental participation	- Collaboration between teachers correlates with the teachers' attitude.  - No different teachers' attitude in terms of training.  - Teachers with sufficient training have more positive attitudes towards inclusive education.  - The urban teachers have more positive attitudes rather than teachers in suburb areas. - Teachers who receive more supports display more positive attitude than teachers with lack of supports. - Parents' participation correlates with teachers' attitude.

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