Challenges and Implementation of Inclusive Education in Selected Asian Countries: A Meta-Synthesis

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Article Info	Abstract
	This systematic review, specifically a Meta-synthesis, aimed to synthesize the challenges and implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) in selected Asian countries. Fifteen (15) out of 792 studies were selected and screened through a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Academic databases such as Google Scholar, Cross Ref, Open Alex, and Scopus using Publish or Perish, and repositories such as The National University of Malaysia Journal Article Repository and Seoul National University Open Repository were used to gather relevant articles. The articles selected were organized using the PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram. The synthesized data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis, which emerged with eight sub-themes: insufficient resources, lack of purposeful training and professional development, contrasting IE laws and policies, weak government support, appropriate curriculum and proper classroom organization, assessment practices, awareness of IE, and constant collaboration among different stakeholders. The challenges and implementation of IE in selected Asian countries emerged as the meta-theme of the study. This study recommends that the respective governments and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) provide adequate fund allocation and revisit and strengthen existing laws and policies, professional development programs, and administrative support.

Introduction

IE allows every child to learn regardless of their additional needs and be provided with resources and support catered to their needs, emphasizing children's rights to education (Pingle & Garg, 2015). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stated that additional need is one of the most severe barriers to education around the globe. In turn, a child's access to education, being part of their community, and workplace are being affected. In IE, differences between students are not considered as barriers to learning but rather as possibilities that could enrich and improve the education of all students, according to UNESCO's 2017 "A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education." Additionally, it strongly emphasizes the importance of all students' participation and the notion that they all matter.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education was formed to reaffirm every

child's right to education, including students with additional needs (SWANs). It endorsed IE as the new norm and set guiding principles that governments and international communities must adopt. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) mentioned that SWANs could not be denied access to the mainstream education system due to their disability. The IE system will include these demands that students with and without additional needs. All Asian countries, except for Timor-Leste, have signed and ratified the UNCRPD, emphasizing that IE is a right (Faragher et al., 2020).

Each respective country implemented IE in response to the call. Children with mild to moderate disabilities attend mainstream schools in Bangladesh, while those with severe disabilities attend segregated schools (Grimes et al., 2021). Cambodia offers segregated or special schools, integrated classrooms, and inclusive classes (Cambodia Technical Assistance for Coordination and Collaboration in Early Grade Reading Cambodia Situational Analysis of the Education of Children with Disabilities in Cambodia Report, 2018). SWANs in China attended mainstream schools 52% and special education (SpEd) 48%. Resource rooms, shadow teachers, and assistance from the school district are available as support (Faragher et al., 2020). SWANs in India have the right to free education in a neighborhood school or a special school of their choice (Singal, 2019). In Indonesia, there are two types of education for SWANs: segregated or special schools and regular or inclusive schools (Faragher et al., 2020). Malaysia's IE school system was founded on the following foundations: The School for the Blind in 1929, the School for the Deaf in 1954, a central system of IE, and active private companies (Linh & Azar, 2019). Myanmar's special schools satisfy the SWANs' needs by providing life-skills classes, more study time, and a secure environment (Allam & Martin, 2021).

Singapore offers public primary, special schools, and home-schooling where most SWANs attend a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) - run special school (Faragher et al., 2020). In the Philippines, SWANs may be full inclusion in a regular class, partial inclusion with resource room services, and self-contained class (DepEd Order no.44, s. 2021). Thai SWANs can attend inclusive, special schools or special centers. Inclusive schools are mainstream classes, special schools for SWANs, and special centers for staff and parent meetings, research, and curriculum development (Faragher et al., 2020). The system of IE schools in Vietnam consists of the following: a center for supporting IE development, a center for children with disabilities, SpEd institutions, and special schools for children with disabilities (Linh & Azar, 2019).

Implementing IE in selected eleven (11) countries encountered numerous challenges, issues, or barriers. There is no official IE policy in existence in Bangladesh (Grimes et al., 2021). Cambodia's inclusion challenges include structural, attitudinal, and environmental limitations (Ravet & Mtika, 2021). Issues such as China's massive population, the absence of a SpEd law, and the unequal distribution of education resources across urban and rural areas pose significant hurdles in implementing IE for SWANs (Faragher et al., 2020). Challenges in India include a need for more resources, infrastructure, teaching styles, and curricular and co-curricular activities that, if implemented, would result in inclusive practices helpful to SWANs (Sawhney, 2015). In Indonesia, the implementation of IE continues to confront problems such as a need for more resources and suitably prepared teachers (ASEAN Secretariat, 2014, as cited by Faragher et al., 2020). In Malaysia, barriers to IE include policy implementation issues that contribute to discriminatory policies (Lim & Thaver, 2014, as cited by Faragher et al.,

2020). There needs to be more communication between special and ordinary schools in Myanmar (Tonegawa, 2022).

In the Philippines, IE research has identified crucial elements for effective inclusion, including leadership support and teachers' positive attitudes about mainstreaming SWANs (Andaya et al., 2015, as cited by Faragher et al., 2020). When it comes to IE, the most significant concerns and obstacles in Singapore are (a) cultural and institutional hurdles, (b) a curricular and pedagogical concentration on standardized assessment results, and (c) a teacher training program (Walker et al., 2016). Thailand confronts implementation issues in areas such as people's perceptions of disability, regulations and rules, training, funding, screening, and assessment processes (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). In Vietnam, the continuing barriers to IE are continued discrimination, lack of equitable educational opportunities, and unequal teacher professional development (Hai et al., 2020) .

In this Meta-synthesis, eleven (11) out of forty-eight (48) countries in Asia were selected since they have publications related to the challenges and implementation of IE. These are Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Some countries have published studies on IE. However, they have not mentioned the challenges and implementation altogether, and some countries also have no published studies written in the English language. These are some of the reasons why not all countries were part of this Meta-synthesis.

Several studies have been conducted on IE. However, there were no Meta-synthesis conducted on IE in Asia. Hence, this study aims to meta-synthesize research studies that identify the challenges and implementation of IE in selected countries in Asia. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following: (1) What are the common challenges of IE faced by Asian countries? (2) How do selected Asian countries implement IE? (3) What recommendations can be proposed?

Method

Research Design

To synthesize all of the data acquired about the challenges and implementation of IE in selected Asian countries, Meta-synthesis was utilized. Meta-synthesis combines the findings of multiple carefully selected qualitative research with a thorough analysis and interpretation (Erwin, 2019). The Meta-synthesis approach allowed researchers to combine qualitative studies on a certain issue, analyzing the data to provide a more profound and comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Search Strategy

A scholarly electronic database was used to identify academic papers published in English and related to the challenges and implementation of IE. All published research between 2012 to 2022 that was relevant to the challenges and implementation of IE were downloaded and reviewed. Since this study was conducted in 2022, research studies published between the years 2012 to 2022 were suitable references, as the general norm was to

utilize resources for at most ten (10) years. The keywords utilized in the Publish or Perish software through Google Scholar, CrossRef, OpenAlex, Scopus, Seoul National University Open Repository, and The National University of Malaysia Journal Article Repository were challenges, implementation, practices, IE, and Asia. The gathered data was then organized using a PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram, as indicated in Figure 1.
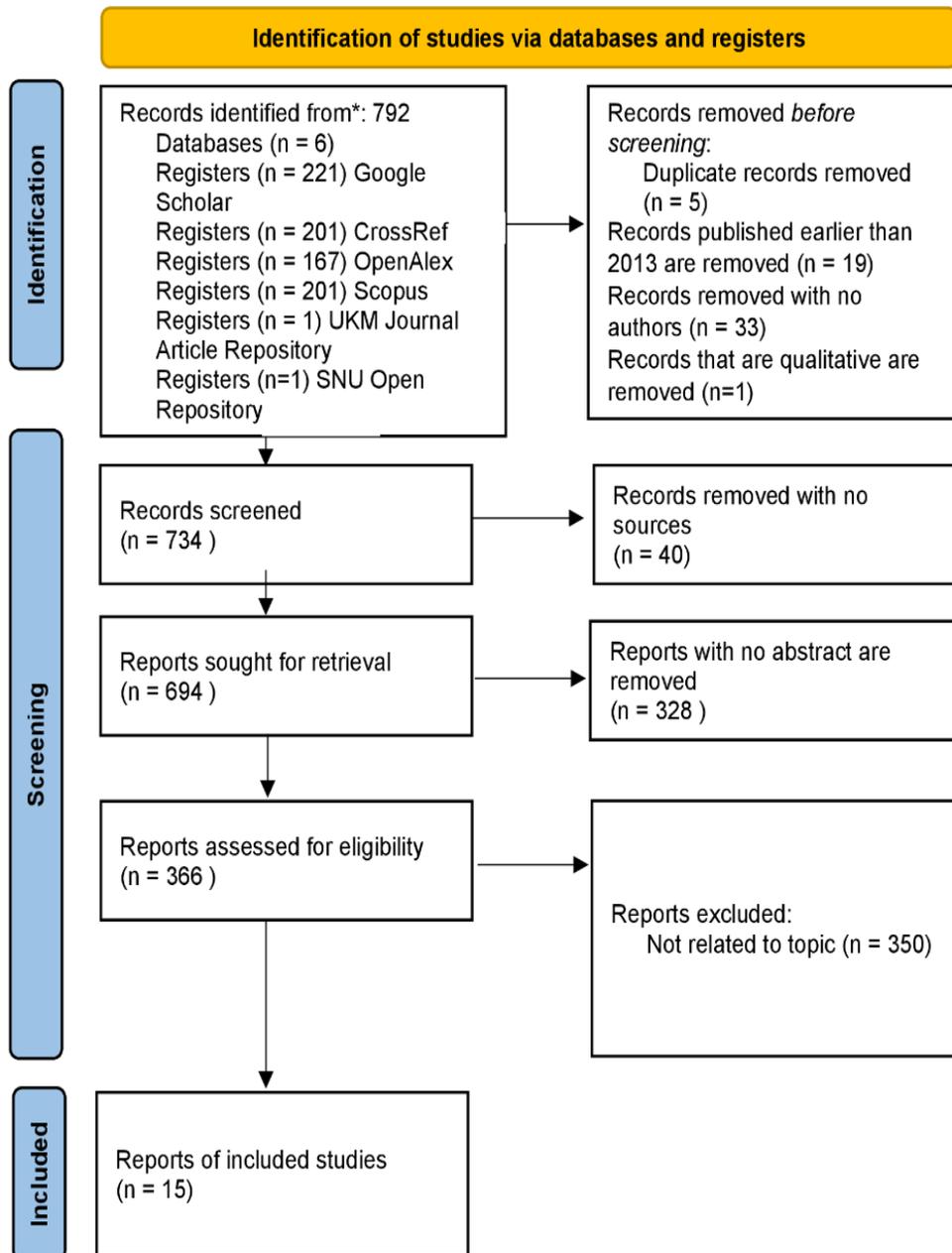

Figure 1. Identification of Studies using PRISMA, Databases and Registries

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The articles in this study were selected based on the following criteria: they must be peer-reviewed, written in English, published between 2012 and 2022, and focus on the challenges and implementation of IE in selected Asian countries.

Study Procedure

The Publish or Perish Software was utilized to gather the final fifteen (15) Meta-synthesized studies. Microsoft Excel was utilized in recording the files being searched, which documented the following: number of cites, authors, title, year of publication, source, publisher, article URL, DOI, and abstract. Initially, seven hundred ninety-two (792) studies were identified using the keywords challenges, implementation, practices, IE, and Asia. Seven hundred seventy-seven (777) studies were eliminated since they did not meet the following criteria: they must be peer-reviewed, written in the English language, published between 2012 and 2022, and they must focus on the challenges and implementation of IE in selected Asian countries. The studies were also selected and organized using the PRISMA Flow Diagram as presented in Figure 1 (*see Figure. 1 Identification of studies using PRISMA, databases, and registries.* All fifteen (15) studies were read and examined in order to identify the challenges and implementation of IE in the chosen Asian countries. A descriptive table *(see Table 1. Challenges and Implementation of IE in Selected Asian Countries)* was made to identify and classify the different challenges and how IE was implemented in the selected Asian countries. Findings were clustered and classified in a thematic table, resulting in 1 meta-theme and eight (8) sub-themes.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to identify key or recurrent themes. Thematic analysis is a method for detecting, evaluating, and interpreting themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is broken down into six steps: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and labeling themes, and (6) producing the report.

Results

The final collection of fifteen (15) studies was Meta-synthesized and organized using the PRISMA Flow Diagram. The studies were compiled in the descriptive table presented in Table 1, and the findings were clustered to come up with themes and meta-themes. The identification of studies using PRISMA is shown in Figure 1 below using databases and registries.

The three (3) stages of the research paper selection were obtained by the researchers using the PRISMA Flow Diagram. Identification, screening, and inclusion are the three (3) stages. During the identification stage, a total of seven hundred ninety-two studies (792) were obtained from 6 databases using the Publish or Perish software. Two hundred twenty-one (221) were registered from Google scholar, two hundred one (201) were registered from CrossRef, One Hundred sixty-seven were registered from Open Alex, two hundred one (201) were registered from Scopus, one (1) were registered from The National University of Malaysia Journal Articles Repository, and one (1) was registered from Seoul National University (SNU) Open Repository. Five (5) studies were removed because there were duplicates in Google Scholar, CrossRef, OpenAlex, and Scopus; nineteen (19) studies were removed because they were published earlier than 2013; thirty-three (33) studies were removed because there were no authors provided in the software mentioned above, and removed one study because it was quantitative

resulting in seven hundred thirty-four (734) studies in the identification stage. During the screening stage, there were three (3) substages. Forty (40) studies were excluded on the first substage because no sources were provided, resulting in six hundred ninety-four (694) studies. Due to the lack of abstracts, three hundred twenty-eight (328) studies were excluded from the second substage, leaving three hundred sixty-six (366) studies. Three hundred fifty (350) studies were excluded in the third substage because they needed a connection to the research conducted, leaving only fifteen (15) studies. After screening the studies, the researchers included fifteen (15) studies which were the bases of the Meta-synthesis as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Challenges and Implementation of IE in selected Asian Countries

No.	Authors and Year	Setting	Challenges of IE in Asia	Implementation of IE in Asia
1	S Vorapanya, D Dunlap (2014)	Thailand	● Lack of staff and facilities	● The Thai educational system must accommodate all students.
			● Insufficient funds	● Schools in Thailand vary in admission guidelines since there are still no written national policies on placement limitations.
			● Varied screening protocols	
			● Difficulty in collaborating during Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) development	● The National Office of Educational Standards evaluated Thai educational institutions every four years.
			● Demanding workload	● Initial screening is a must.
			● No resource centers.	● IEP were not used as they should be.
				● The majority focuses on child-centered pedagogy.
2	PHT Linh, AS Azar (2019)	Vietnam Malaysia	● All do not recognize IE.	● SWANs must participate in education.
				● IE is powered by laws.
3	N Singal (2019)	India	● SWANs are neglected.	● IE in India is adopted from western countries.
			● Lack of individualized attention for children and difficulties in social	● Zero rejection policy

No.	Authors and Year	Setting	Challenges of IE in Asia	Implementation of IE in Asia
			interaction	● Children with Autism and Cerebral palsy were least likely to be enrolled.
4	Siti Rubiyani Omar & Abd Aziz Sulaiman (2018)	Malaysia	● The main factors preventing the IEP from being effective are teachers, parents, infrastructure, and equipment.	● All Malaysian schools may embrace the IE Program, which can be either fully or partially inclusive.
			● The teacher effect might be a substantial obstacle to putting an educational program into action	● SWANs must pass the instrument evaluation test set by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in order to enter the IEP class.
			● Issues concerning teachers, such as training, which IEP teachers do not undertake	● The age of SWANs is determined by their age bracket in the mainstream or by students who have been in the mainstream for more than two years (IEP, MOE 2013).
			● Inadequate guidelines or an unclear IEP system	● The total number of SWANs in an EP class should not exceed five.
			● IEP and SpEd teachers' knowledge of workload, collaboration, and teachers	● When a SWANs is enrolled in SpEd class, his or her parents must give written consent or authorization (Siti Fatimah 2018).
			● The number of students that were overcrowded reached 40.	● Assessments are required for SpEd students who take part in the entire IEP.
			● A lower level of parental support	
			● Teachers teaching IEP	

No.	Authors and Year	Setting	Challenges of IE in Asia	Implementation of IE in Asia
			face a lack of administrative support	
5	Zachary Walker & Shobana Musti-Rao (2016)	Singapore	● Cultural and institutional difficulties ● Students in inclusive schools face curricular and supportive barriers ● Teacher Training	● Moving from confined learning environments for SWANs to a more flexible and conscientious mainstream structure. ● The MOE works on topics like increasing the number of experts working in schools and raising teacher knowledge of SpEd needs. ● Enabling Masterplan 2007-2011 is being released. This master plan assures that more human and financial resources are directed toward interventions such as early intervention, caregiver assistance, and transition planning. ● As a result of the inclusion movement, there is now more assistance for SWANs in regular classrooms.
6	Nguyen Xuan Hai, Richard A. Villa, Le Van Tac, Jacqueline S. Thousand, & Pham Minh Muc (2020)	Vietnam	● Discrimination persists ● Inadequate educational opportunities ● Uneven professional development for teachers ● Autism youngsters face a lack of educational opportunities and	● Four goals were established by Ministry of Education & Training (MOET) in 2000 to improve IE. ● Together with age-appropriate students, both children in rural and urban areas will be taught in general education classes. ● The role of SpEd staff would change, and students from special schools would be moved

No.	Authors and Year	Setting	Challenges of IE in Asia	Implementation of IE in Asia
			assistance.	to schools in a community. As a result, they work as consultants, program evaluators, technical support specialists, and trainers.
				● At the national, district, and school levels, groups of teacher educators would be developed to provide ongoing training and help local school employees with their technical requirements.
				● To ensure that teachers are taught how to instruct a diverse student population, the teacher education curriculum will be modified.
				● All significant pedagogic teachers and national pedagogical leaders received training in IE for preschool and primary-age learners.
7	Faragher, R., Chen, M., Miranda, L., Poon, K., Rumiati, Chang, F., & Chen, H. (2020)	Singapore, Indonesia, China, Philippines	● Segregation of SWANs ● There is a lack of resources.	● Some SWANs are mainstreamed, while some are in special schools.
8	Domingo, Yuko Lisette (2020)	Philippines	● The variables that have been found to affect IE in the Philippines are resources, community support, policy, attitudes, beliefs and implementation structure.	● Using a rights-based approach, IE is implemented. The programs are put in place so that children can access high-quality instruction, especially for additional needs, indigenous people, Muslim Filipinos who attend Madrasahs, multi-grade

No.	Authors and Year	Setting	Challenges of IE in Asia	Implementation of IE in Asia
				instruction, alternative delivery modalities (ADMs), and alternative learning systems (ALS).
9	Nasir, M., & Nur, A. (2016)	Malaysia	● The challenges faced in Malaysia's SpEd are Facilities, Readiness, Resources, Lack of appropriate teaching materials, Early Intervention Programs, and Equitable accredited examination.	● For both general and SpEd teachers, a separate program for teacher preparation has been created. The special school, the integrated program, and the inclusive program were the three SpEd programs.
10	Raguindin, P. Z. J., Ping, L.Y., Duereh, F., & Losing, R. L. S. (2020)	Philippines, Thailand	● Positive attitudes, efficacy, and intention in IE are higher among Filipino teachers than among Thai teachers. ● Training for teachers, funding, a curriculum guide for teachers, even school infrastructure, are all lacking.	● They developed a comprehensive consultation with specialized materials and equipment for SWANs. Also, provides the best possible classroom environment.
11	Masud Ahmed & Jahirul Mullick (2014)	Bangladesh	● There's an inadequate practice of teachers in the IE reform. ● There's only limited assistance.	● A third Primary Education Development Programme is available to encompass IE for kids in grades one (1) through five (5) as well as one year of pre-primary education.
12	Allam, F. C., & Martin, M. M (2021)	Myanmar	● There's insufficient collaboration between SpEd teachers and regular teachers. ● A few people in Myanmar have only recognized the educational	● IE is practiced and reserved only for visually impaired children in both primary and secondary education.

No.	Authors and Year	Setting	Challenges of IE in Asia	Implementation of IE in Asia
			opportunities for SWAN's.	
13	Sonia Sawhney (2015)	India	● There are no changes to the exam system, curriculum, marking scale, or infrastructure. ● Lack of SpEd teachers and counselors.	● The idea of inclusion in private schools was limited to pupils with supposedly "simple" disabilities.
14	Y Siron, R Mulyono (2017)	Indonesia	● Teachers experience difficulty in making IEP. ● Difficulty in letting the parents get involved with their children's academic progress. ● Lack of facilities and support from the government.	● Teachers tend to use inappropriate learning methods in teaching SWANs.
15	J Ravet, P Mtika (2021)	Cambodia	● In higher education levels, there is a lack of training in inclusion. It confirmed that teachers in isolated locations were unable to receive outreach assistance or continued professional development due to the expenses and travel time involved.	● SWANs were unable to receive the teachers' full attention.

The authors were affiliated with countries located in Asia, specifically Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The findings followed the study's objective, based on a Meta-synthesis of the fifteen (15) selected studies. The implementation and challenges observed in the fifteen countries were analyzed using thematic analysis, which yielded eight (8) themes. Clustering the eight (8) themes yielded one (1) meta-theme, as indicated in Table 2. S represents for study, and its number is based on Table 1.

Table 2. Thematic Table

Themes	Examples	Extracted codes	Meta-Theme
Theme 1. Insufficient Resources	Redistribution of resources (S3) Lack of better facilities, assistive devices and teaching-learning materials (S8) Absence of allied health professionals (S8) Funding for schools to implement IE (S8) Improvement of Facilities (S9) Appropriate teaching materials (S9)	Lack of resources to implement IE	Challenges and Implementation of IE in Selected countries in Asia
			Various policies and human rights highlighted the call for IE. It was adopted by nations worldwide, particularly selected countries in Asia, for this study. However, each respective country has its ways of implementation, and the challenges faced.
Theme 2. Lack of purposeful training and professional development	Lack of training (S1) No improvement in the quality of training for teachers to serve IE for children with disabilities (S2). No training for teachers in developing IEPs (S4) Lack of teacher training (S5) Lack of equitable educational opportunities and professional development (S6) Costly training for professional development (S8) Lack of training for regular teachers in handling SWANs (S8) Teachers does not receive enough training about	Limited training and professional development for teachers	

Themes	Examples	Extracted codes	Meta-Theme
	inclusive practice (S15)		
Theme 3. Unclear IE laws and policies	There is the problem in the Educational policies and provisions for inclusion (S1) Continued discrimination (S6) There is no clear policy, guidelines, roles (S7) Discrepancies between policies and practices with regards to IE (S13)	Laws and policies pertaining to IE are not properly implemented	
Theme 4. Weak Government Support	The government was not able to prove adequate resources to maintain IEP (S4) No proper implementation structure support from the officials (S8) No safe infrastructure for SWANs (S13)	Government was not able to provide support for IE	
Theme 5. Lack of appropriate curriculum and proper classroom organization	Appropriate curriculum and activities for SWANs (S7) No proper guidelines for modifications that leads students to not always be able to understand the lessons (S13) SWANs have low chance to participate in classroom activities especially in peer groupings (S13)	No clear curriculum and classroom organization	

Themes	Examples	Extracted codes	Meta-Theme
Theme 6. Inappropriate assessment practices	There are no proper screening and assessment practices (S1) There are no proper classroom placement and resources (S1) No equitable accredited examination for SWANs (S9) No equitable examination for SWANs (S9)	Assessment practices do not meet the needs of the SWANs	
Theme 7. Awareness of IE	All do not recognize IE. (S2) Discrimination persists (S6) A few people in Myanmar have only recognized the educational opportunities for SWAN's (S12)	IE is not fully adapted	
Theme 8. Inadequate collaboration among different stakeholders	Difficulty in collaborating during IEP development (S1) A lower level of parental support (S4) There's insufficient collaboration between SpEd teachers and regular teachers. (S12) Difficulty in letting the parents get involved with their children's academic progress. (S14)	Lack of Collaboration among stakeholders	

The challenges and implementation of IE in selected countries in Asia were identified as the meta-theme. Consequently, eight sub-themes emerged from the meta-theme: insufficient resources, lack of purposeful training and professional development, contrasting IE laws and policies, weak government support, appropriate curriculum

and proper classroom organization, assessment practices, awareness of IE, and constant collaboration among different stakeholders. Of the fifteen (15) publications, it resulted in one meta-theme and eight sub-themes.

Discussion

Theme 1. Insufficient Resources

Providing adequate resources supported the success of IE; however, it has been the most common challenge among selected Asian countries. Issues in insufficient resources were identified as: (1) financial constraints, (2) lack of skilled and trained teachers, (3) allied services, and classroom resources. Ensuring financial resources dedicated to early intervention programs, transition programs, and IEP planning could have helped create an inclusive society. Moreover, it could have given the children with disabilities a brighter future, and teachers would have been more effective in teaching these learners (Walker et al., 2016; Singal, 2019; Faragher et al., 2020; Domingo, 2020).

Teachers doubted their capacity and readiness to successfully implement IE (Singal, 2019). The instructional strategies used by the teachers were quite limited and did not take into account the demands of the SWANs. Due to these challenges, it was more likely that SWANs would leave school, be disinterested in classwork, and display poorer levels of learning (Singal, 2019; Raguindin et al., 2020).

Allied support services should be made available to the teachers, learners, and their parents to succeed in special and IE. School leaders and teachers worked together to include all SWANs and address their specific needs (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). SWANs were being sent out of school to receive special services since the school could not provide some of the services. Most outsourced agencies are private; therefore, these services were very costly. The school and the parents typically split the expense of these services.

Due to financial constraints and weak government support, school leaders needed help constructing resource centers and staffing allied professionals. School administrators needed help building resource centers and hiring allied specialists due to limited funding and inadequate government assistance. Competent human capital development and management were required to effectively address the problems mentioned earlier and provide sufficient resources to achieve inclusion (Nasir et al., 2016; Siron & Mulyono, 2017; Siti Rubiyani Omar & Abd Aziz Sulaiman, 2018).

Theme 2. Lack of Purposeful Training and Professional Development

The concept of "lifelong learning" has increased in significance for both students and teachers. In-service teacher training is a practical means of transmitting information, abilities, and motivation to teachers. It provides continuing education to teachers who have already achieved any teaching certification and have chosen to make teaching their career. A series of initiatives aimed at encouraging the provision of suitable resources contributes to the achievement of IE. It has, nonetheless, been the most common difficulty among selected Asian countries. Inadequate resources, such as a lack of experienced and trained teachers (Nguyen et al, 2020; Faragher et al.,

2020; Raguindin et al., 2020; Ravet, 2021).

Through in-service teacher training, teachers can increase their knowledge, develop their abilities, and widen their professional perspectives (Koellner & Greenblatt, 2018). The teacher's competence is primarily based on professional knowledge. Enhancing teachers' knowledge is essential for their professional growth as well as for the development of the teaching force (Zhao & Fan, 2022). Teacher motivation and professional development are essential factors in effective teaching (Ahmed et al., 2021). However, to ensure the professional development of the teachers, the school must also take part in providing training. Since the responsibility for professional development rests with the teachers, the institution as a whole must be learning-centered and is able to provide all resources for the teachers (Sodiya & Hajiyeva, 2022).

Theme 3. Unclear IE Laws and Policies

Positive results were obtained in schools when inclusive practices and policies were implemented (Abraham et al., 2004, as cited by Singal, 2019). The principles underlying IE support the idea that everyone deserves access to high-quality education. Recent studies show that not all of the goals have been met. Inclusion benefits for students attending these schools can only be realized when inclusive practices were applied carefully, and it also negatively affects the social interactions in all-inclusive schools (Ray, 1986, as cited by Singal, 2019). Hence, State governments must be primarily responsible for executing local and regional responsibilities and deciding what school laws should apply (Oplatka, 2010). No one must be left behind; thus, working on averages would not suffice (IIEP-UNESCO, 2018).

Theme 4. Weak Government Support

Teachers, the government, parents, and students are among the difficulties in implementing the IE Program (Supiah, 2013; Hanafi et al., 2014; Lee Keok Cheong, 2018, as cited by Omar & Sulaiman, 2018). In recent studies, government elements are unable to give the necessary resources to support IEP (Hanafi, 2013 & Nurul, 2017). The government still needs to prioritize IE, particularly in terms of the quality of teachers and the infrastructure that supports their progress. In order to become more inclusive, nations must actively contribute to the development of institutional frameworks, economic strategies, and cultural mindsets (Slee, 2008). One of the difficulties in establishing IE in Indonesia is the need for more necessary infrastructure and support from the government (Siron & Mulyono, 2017).

Theme 5. Lack of Appropriate Curriculum and Proper Classroom Organization

It is structured to realize the students' educational goals. The curriculum serves as a guideline for putting learning activities into practice in order to meet specified educational objectives. It is designed to help students achieve their educational goals (Sukadari, 2019; Faragher et al., 2020). The traditional curriculum is rigorous intellectually and might only be appropriate for some students (Prajalani et al., 2021). An inclusive classroom must have an appropriate curriculum where the different students' diversity, needs, and abilities are considered (Bubpha et al.,

2012)**.** The main goal of IE curricula is to give students a framework that would enable them to choose a path that would be most useful to them rather than one that "tracks" them (Opertti et al., 2013, as cited by Walker et al., 2016). In IE, modifications and adjustments are made to the curriculum, learning systems, infrastructure, education staff, and teachers.

Theme 6. Inappropriate Assessment Practices

Assessment is essential for teaching and learning and serves many purposes (Areekkuzhiyil, 2021). Although, SWANS have a challenging time with assessments, especially standardized ones. This led teachers to become very critical in their efforts to develop meaningful methods to collaborate and ensure that all SWANs demonstrate academic achievement as evaluated by standardized assessment procedures (Reese, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial that teachers must be familiar with various assessment practices, acquire adequate knowledge of them, and remain receptive to new information and developments in this field (Acar-Erdol & Yilhizh, 2018). Moreover, it is worth noting that modifications and accommodations must be provided not only in standardized assessments but also in traditional assessments conducted within the classroom.

Theme 7. Awareness of IE

"Inclusion is a right, not a privilege, to the selected few" ("Inclusive Education | CEEDAR," 2014). However, one of the main barriers to the implementation of IE has been a need for more public awareness (Ravet & Mtika, 2021). Teachers were aware of their obligations to SWANs. The type and severity of the disabilities that some of the children in their classrooms had, however, were not fully understood by the teachers, and they were unaware of widely profound disabilities. As a result, the teacher's proficiency in instructing and assisting the students' needs to be improved by his or her understanding of the limitations of the SWANs. A lack of awareness placed the SWANs in a situation wherein they had to fight for what was right because societal stereotypes were continuously emerging (Singal, 2019).

Theme 8. Inadequate Collaboration Among Different Stakeholders

Collaboration and cooperation among teachers, parents, specialists and the community are crucial elements (Hayes et al., 2017, as cited by Domingo, 2020). Principals, general and SpEd teachers, nurses and psychologists in school, social workers, and paraprofessionals are among the professionals who participate in the collaborative process (Stone et al., 2018). Teachers and staff who work well together can promote an inclusive learning environment and develop teaching strategies. Teachers in SpEd can work with teachers in general education to create comprehensive programs, given their expertise (Kozleski et al., 2015, as cited by Domingo, 2020). As interprofessional collaboration plays an important role, it must be emphasized in educational policy documents (Hesjedal et al., 2015).

Parental involvement in IE has long been a crucial issue (Braley, 2012). The practice of IE may be disrupted if there is no clarity between the roles of the parents and teachers (Van Hover et al., 2012). Teachers and parents must not work as separate units as it is challenging to promote and maintain teacher-parent collaboration (Braley,

2012; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). Open communication between two parties would allow for collaboration and sharing of information (Lee et al., 2013). Parental involvement is highly valued in the inclusive school transformation process (Kozleski et al., 2015, as cited by Domingo, 2020; Allam & Martin, 2021).

There must be a participatory approach coming from the community for full inclusion to succeed (Mariga et al., 2014). The country must also promote awareness and create campaigns about different disabilities. Full community involvement results from increased awareness (Drame et al., 2014). The schools also have a duty, and that is to link to different groups of people in the community. It gives students, especially those with special needs, a better education (Mariga et al., 2014).

Meta-Theme

SWANs are given an equitable opportunity to access effective and high-quality education through IE. It delivers education without discrimination and appreciation for diversity (Siron et al., 2017). However, it is difficult compared to current educational systems since it calls for a change in pedagogy, practice, values, and attitudes (Ravet et al., 2021). In developed and developing nations, IE has historically been the least priority. Today, many countries are committed to implementing IE. However, it is not easy as most selected countries in Asia experienced several challenges.

Conclusion, Limitation and Recommendations

The findings of this study show the different progressing rates of IE in the selected Asian countries and how it is being implemented. The challenges found in this study will help respective governments and TEIs not just in Asia but all countries worldwide to share insights on how to improve the implementation and address the challenges of IE. Additionally, recommendations in this study are also useful and applicable not just in the Asian context.

This study poses limitations, including that it only covered selected countries in Asia; a) The selected Asian countries above were chosen as they have high English proficiency or speak English as their second language. b) Another limitation is that the included studies were limited as they needed to be written in English, and only fifteen (15) studies were utilized. c) There need to be more previous research studies that tackled IE and its implementation and challenges in Asia. d) This study did not specify whether the setting is in a primary or secondary school; a more thorough systematic review is needed.

Based on the study's findings, a call for action is needed from each respective government of the selected Asian countries, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), and the community. The government must provide adequate fund allocations for the following: facilities such as classrooms and resource rooms, assistive technologies such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text, audiobooks and braille readers, and learning materials such as textbooks and software. An adequate fund allocation for IE is crucial to meet the needs of the SWANs successfully. More so, the government must also revisit existing laws and strengthen the implementation of IE.

It is also recommended that policies in each country must be carried out accordingly. The TEIs are recommended to conduct professional development programs for school leaders, teachers, and non-teaching employees to different training through seminars, workshops, webinars, and other professional activities. There must be a regular training session for regular and SpEd teachers to improve their abilities and adopt IE methods.

Administrative support must also be provided following professional development programs, such as a wide range of opportunities to enhance their expertise. Government and TEIs must work together to support the betterment of IE, which will directly impact and raise awareness in the communities. The recommendations mentioned above will create better opportunities for SWANs and strengthen the implementation of IE across countries.

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