



## GLOBAL RESEARCH MAP OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS INDEXED IN SCOPUS

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| Keywords:                   | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <i>Bibliometrik;</i>        | <p>This study aims to explore and analyze the development of publications in the field of inclusive education, especially in elementary schools based on the scopus database with the keywords Inclusive Education, Disability and Primary School Student from 2014-2025.</p> <p>This study uses bibliometric methods with the help of VOSviewer software to map publication trends, as well as co-word maps that illustrate the relationships between research topics. The results show that publications on inclusive education in primary schools are dominated by developed countries such as Australia, Spain, and South Africa, with significant contributions from higher education institutions such as Monash University and the University of Thessaly. The dominant fields of study are social sciences, psychology, and health, reflecting a multidisciplinary approach in understanding inclusion issues. The co-word analysis revealed that keywords such as inclusive education, primary school, disability, and teachers dominated the research discourse, while other themes such as autism spectrum disorder, emotional disorder, and professional development were still relatively rarely researched. These findings confirm that although inclusive education research has grown rapidly, there is still room for exploration on less touched issues, so this research can be an important foothold in enriching future science development research.</p> |
| <i>Inclusive Education;</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Elementary School;</i>   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Inclusive education has been on the global agenda since the ratification of UNESCO through *the Salamanca Statement* in 1994 which affirmed the right of every child, including children with special needs, to receive education in regular schools (Ainscow et al., 2019; Hadjidakou et al., 2025; Kisjes et al., 2025; Sakellariopoulou et al., 2025). This commitment is strengthened through the United Nations with the existence of *the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* which emphasizes the importance of a non-discriminatory education system (Watson et al., 2022). In line with that, the United Nations goals within the framework of *the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* also place inclusive education as part of efforts to realize quality, equitable, and equitable education for all people (Merino-Andrés et al., 2025).

Inclusive education has fundamental value because it affirms that every child has the right to receive educational services according to their needs and potential (Kan et al., 2025; López-Zamora et al., 2025). This approach views diversity as a force that enriches the learning process, not as a barrier. At the elementary school

level, the implementation of inclusion is an important foundation in building confidence, social skills, empathy, and mutual respect from an early age. An adaptive and difference-responsive learning environment will help prevent academic and social marginalization (Amor et al., 2025; Veerman et al., 2025).

In practice, the implementation of inclusive education shows variations between countries. Countries such as Finland, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and China have developed relatively integrated systems through policy support, teacher training, and adequate facilities (Olateju Temitope Akintayo et al., 2024; Qorib, 2024; Shutaleva et al., 2023; Tohara et al., 2021; Yada et al., 2018). On the other hand, a number of developing countries, including Indonesia, still face challenges in the form of limited resources, the readiness of educators, and socio-cultural resistance (Walton & Engelbrecht, 2024). This variation shows the importance of a comprehensive study to understand the development and direction of inclusive education research globally, especially at the elementary school level.

### Problem of The Study

Although inclusive education has become a global commitment, research developments in this area, especially at the primary school level, have not been fully mapped systematically. Previous studies have focused more on the practical implementation, policy, or trend study in a certain period of time without providing a comprehensive picture of the direction of scientific development globally (Irawan & Putri, 2024).

In addition, there have not been many studies that specifically map the pattern of collaboration between researchers, the distribution of publications in reputable journals, the tendency of dominant themes, and the development of methodologies used in inclusive education research in elementary schools. The absence of comprehensive mapping makes it difficult for researchers and policymakers to identify priority areas, the strength of research that has developed, and the gaps in research that are still open.

### Research's State of the Art

Based on the study of the topic of publication development based on literature review that has been carried out by various previous researchers such as (Saputra et al., 2025) examining publication trends in high school (SMA). Furthermore (Nurjanah et al., 2024) researched with publication trends of the last 5 years. This research was also carried out in various researchers in various countries such as in Russia, Ecuador, Turkey, Austria, as well as the collaboration of authors in various countries including, Iran, Malaysia, Colombia, and Ukraine (Amor et al., 2019; Bjelica et al., 2024; Jadán-Guerrero et al., 2023; Methlagl, 2022).

However, research that specifically uses a bibliometric analysis approach to map the development of inclusive education research at the elementary school level globally is still relatively limited. In fact, the bibliometric approach has advantages in identifying dominant themes, publication growth trends, scientific collaboration networks, and the influence of a work in certain scientific fields (Chhabra et al., 2023; Han et al., 2021; O. S. Albahri & A. H. AlAmoodi, 2023; Raman et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2023).

### Gap Study & Objective

Based on the existing literature review, there is a research gap in the form of the lack of a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of the development of inclusive education research in elementary schools on a global scale. These gaps include a lack of integrated analysis related to publication distribution, collaboration between countries, trends in research topics, and the dynamics of methodologies used in a given period.

Therefore, this study aims to map the development of inclusive education research in elementary schools through bibliometric analysis. In particular, this study aims to: (1) identify the growth trend of publications, (2) map the dominant themes that are the focus of the research, (3) find research gaps that can be the basis for the development of advanced studies and the formulation of more effective inclusive education policies.

## METHOD

### Type and Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a bibliometric design to analyze the development of inclusive education research in elementary schools in the period 2014–2025 (Zyoud et al., 2022). The bibliometric design was chosen because it was able to provide a systematic picture of publication growth, author and country productivity, and the dynamics of research themes based on measurable bibliographic data (Abouzid et al., 2023). This approach also allows the identification of patterns of collaboration and scientific influence through citation analysis.

### Data and Data Sources

The research data is sourced from the Scopus database which was chosen because it has a wide international scope and strict journal selection standards. The unit of analysis is in the form of Scopus indexed journal articles published in the period 2014–2025. The articles analyzed focused on inclusive education in the context of primary schools and were available in full-text form to ensure the completeness of the bibliographic information.

### Data collection technique

Data collection was carried out through a systematic search using a combination of the keywords "inclusive education", "primary school", and "disability". The article selection process follows the stages of PRISMA 2020, namely identification, screening, feasibility, and inclusion. The inclusion criteria include Scopus-indexed journal articles, relevant to the focus of the research, and do not include duplication of documents. This process aims to ensure the validity and relevance of the analyzed data.

### Data analysis

The analysis is carried out in two main stages. First, descriptive analysis to map publication trends based on the year of publication, journal, author, country, affiliation, and document distribution. Second, bibliometric analysis to explore the intellectual structure of the field of study through citation analysis, *co-authorship*, and *co-word analysis*. The visualization of the research network was carried out using the VOSviewer software so that a map of the theme cluster, collaborative relationships between researchers, and the identification of research trends and gaps in the field of inclusive education in elementary schools were obtained.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Development of research publications in the field of inclusive education in elementary schools

The trend of research development in the field of inclusive education, especially in elementary schools based on the Scopus database, which has been in place since 2014-2025, has increased every year. The total number of publications identified is 370 publication documents from 2014-2025. For more clarity, you can see the following table 1:

**Table 1.** Year of Publication in the Field of Inclusive Education at scopus.

| Tahun Publikasi | Jumlah Dokumen     | Persentase (%) |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 2025            | <a href="#">50</a> | 13,51          |
| 2024            | <a href="#">66</a> | 17,84          |
| 2023            | <a href="#">47</a> | 12,70          |
| 2022            | <a href="#">47</a> | 12,70          |
| 2021            | <a href="#">31</a> | 8,38           |
| 2020            | <a href="#">30</a> | 8,11           |
| 2019            | <a href="#">17</a> | 4,59           |
| 2018            | <a href="#">14</a> | 3,78           |
| 2017            | <a href="#">18</a> | 4,86           |
| 2016            | <a href="#">18</a> | 4,86           |
| 2015            | <a href="#">20</a> | 5,41           |
| 2014            | <a href="#">12</a> | 3,24           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>370</b>         | <b>100</b>     |

Based on the results of table 1 above, it shows an increase in the number of publications every year. In this case, referring to scopus indexed publication data, it shows that in 2014-2025 there will be the highest increase in 2024, namely 66 publications (17.84%). While the previous 2 years were 47 publications (12.70%).

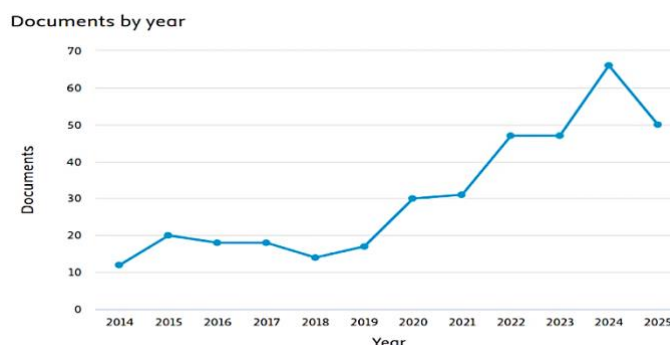


Figure 1. Year of Publication in the Field of Inclusive Education at scopus.

### Core Journal of Publications in the field of Inclusive education

Based on the search results with the keywords "inclusive education", "Disability" and "Primary School student" on the scopus website, 10 (ten) publications with the highest number of article documents were obtained. Of these, it is known that international publications in the field of inclusive education, especially in elementary schools, are published by the core journal [of the International Journal of Inclusive Education](#) (28 Publications). The following top 10 (ten) results of the researcher's search for the core journal of inclusive education publications in elementary schools can be seen in table 2 below:

Table 2. This journal is the field of inclusive education in elementary schools

| Jurnal                                                                        | Dokumen |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <a href="#">International Journal of Inclusive Education</a>                  | 28      |
| <a href="#">European Journal of Special Needs Education</a>                   | 18      |
| <a href="#">Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs</a>              | 9       |
| <a href="#">International Journal of Disability Development and Education</a> | 8       |
| <a href="#">African Journal of Disability</a>                                 | 7       |
| <a href="#">Education Sciences</a>                                            | 7       |
| <a href="#">International Journal of Developmental Disabilities</a>           | 7       |
| <a href="#">International Journal of Special Education</a>                    | 7       |
| <a href="#">Sustainable Development Goals Series</a>                          | 6       |
| <a href="#">Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education</a>       | 5       |

Documents per year by source

Compare the document counts for up to 10 sources.

Compare sources and view CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data

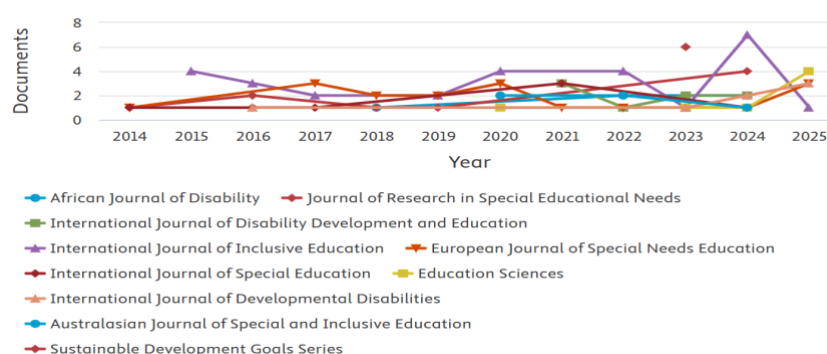


Figure 2. This journal is the field of inclusive education in elementary schools

### Researcher productivity in publications in the field of inclusion education in elementary schools

Productivity of researchers in publishing articles in the field of inclusive education in elementary schools. Based on the results of the scopus search, it shows that the productivity of the top 10 researchers from 2014-2025 is indexed by scopus. Their productivity differs based on the number of publications and citations, namely 3-6 publications with different citations. For more clarity, it can be seen in the following table 3:

Table 3. Productivity of researchers in the field of inclusive education in elementary schools.

| Author                 | Documents | Citations |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Sharma, Umesh          | 6         | 289       |
| Opoku, Maxwell Pephrah | 4         | 89        |
| Boyle, Christopher     | 3         | 70        |
| Pedersen, Scott        | 3         | 68        |
| Bouillet, Dejana       | 4         | 60        |
| Elder, Brent C.        | 4         | 56        |

|                  |   |    |
|------------------|---|----|
| Singal, Nidhi    | 3 | 49 |
| Parey, Bephyer   | 3 | 46 |
| Bagley, Kerry    | 4 | 30 |
| Iacono, Teresa   | 4 | 30 |
| Mckinstry, Carol | 4 | 30 |

Based on the results of table 3 and figure 3, it can be seen that the highest productivity of authors is Sharma, U. With the number of publications and citations (6/289), followed by *Opoku, M.P., Bouillet, D. Elder, B.C. Bagley, K. Iacono, T. McKinstry, C.* with the number of documents and citations (4/89, 60, 56, and 30). Dan *Boyle, C. Pedersen, S. Singal, N. Parey, B.* Each has the same number of publications and different citations (3/70, 68, 49, 46).

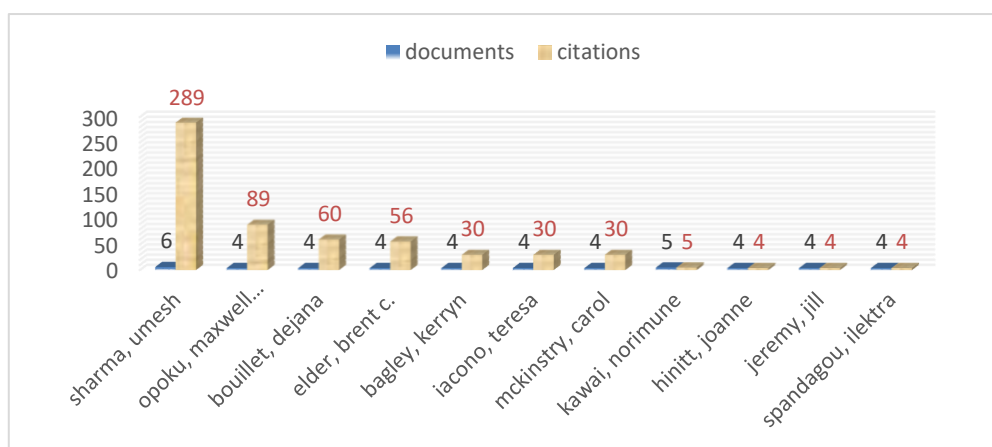


Figure 3. Productivity of researchers in the field of inclusive education in elementary schools.

### Number of Researcher Publications Based on Institutional Collaboration in the Field of Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools

#### 1. Publisher of publications in the field of inclusive education

There are the top 10 university affiliations that have published the most research in the field of inclusive education, especially in elementary schools from 2014-2025. Based on the search results, it can be seen that [Monash University](#) is the institution that publishes the most research in the field of inclusive education, especially in elementary schools, namely 15 documents. Then followed by [the University of Tasmania](#), [Universidad de Extremadura](#), as many as 7 publication documents each. Followed by [The University of Newcastle, Australia](#), [The University of Sydney](#), [Hiroshima University](#), 6 publications each. Meanwhile, [La Trobe University](#), [University of Zagreb](#), [Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University](#) each have 5 publications. in the following 4 figures:

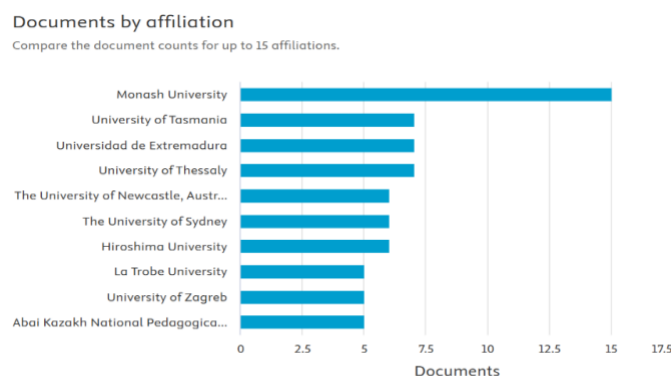


Figure 4. Publisher of publications in the field of inclusive education in Scopus

Table 5. Publishers with high citations in the field of inclusive education in elementary schools

| Organization                                                                                                                     | Documents | Citations |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| monash university, melbourne, australia                                                                                          | 3         | 149       |
| faculty of education, monash university, australia                                                                               | 2         | 128       |
| department of special education, university of thessaly, volos, greece                                                           | 5         | 97        |
| university of new england, armidale, australia                                                                                   | 2         | 66        |
| university of tasmania, australia                                                                                                | 3         | 50        |
| faculty of education, monash university, clayton, australia                                                                      | 2         | 49        |
| sir arthur lewis institute of social and economic studies, the university of the west indies, st. augustine, trinidad and tobago | 3         | 46        |
| school of education, university of tasmania, launceston, australia                                                               | 2         | 38        |
| department of interdisciplinary and inclusive education, rowan university, glassboro, nj, united states                          | 2         | 35        |
| children and families research centre, institute of early childhood, macquarie university, sydney, australia                     | 2         | 34        |

Table 5. The above shows the active publishers in publications about inclusive education in elementary schools. Monash University, Australia stands out with the highest number of publications and citations (3 papers/149 citations and 2 papers/128 citations), signifying a great influence in this field. The University of Thessaly, Greece is also significant with 5 documents and 97 citations and so on.

### 1. Contributing countries to publications in the field of inclusive education in primary schools

The results of the researchers' findings on the results of publication research on scopus on 10 countries that have the highest number of publications specifically exploring inclusive education in elementary schools, including Australia being the country with the most publications with a total of 56 documents and 1032 citations. More clearly see table 6. Following:

Table 6. Contributing Countries to publications in the field of inclusive education in elementary school

| Country            | Documents | Citations |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Australia          | 56        | 1032      |
| Spain              | 25        | 193       |
| South Africa       | 18        | 424       |
| China              | 18        | 95        |
| Russian Federation | 18        | 49        |
| Germany            | 16        | 137       |
| Greece             | 15        | 197       |
| Japan              | 13        | 199       |
| India              | 13        | 52        |
| Indonesia          | 12        | 107       |

Based on the results of Table 6 and figure 6, the State's contribution to the publication of inclusive education in primary schools is shown. Australia dominated with 56 documents and 1032 citations, signifying high productivity and influence. Spain (25/193) and South Africa (18/424) are also quite prominent. Meanwhile, China and Russia both have 18 documents but the citations are low (95 and 49). Other countries such as Germany,

Greece, Japan, India, and Indonesia contributed with fewer publications, but still showed significant participation, with Indonesia recording 12 documents and 107 citations.

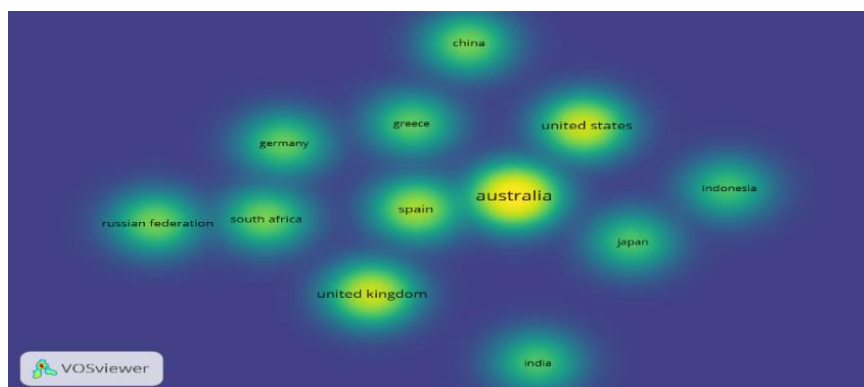


Figure 6. Contributing Countries to publications in the field of inclusive education in elementary school

### Bibliometric Analysis on *Visualization of Inclusive Education Co-word Map in Elementary School*

#### a. *Network Visualization peta co-word*

In bibliometric analysis, *network visualization of co-word maps* is used to see the relationships between keywords that often appear in scientific publications. This visualization helps map interconnected research themes and identify the main focus and direction of study development in a field. Through this analysis, it can be seen how the main themes such as *inclusive education*, *disability*, and *primary school students* are interconnected and form a specific research cluster. Based on the findings, there are 5 clusters that are related to the study of inclusive education, especially in elementary schools. More clearly note the following table 9:

**Table 9.** Cluster of *inclusive education co-word map* in elementary schools

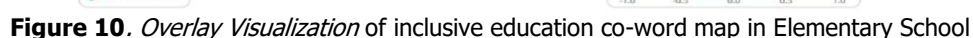
| Cluster                | Search results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cluster 1.<br>(red)    | Attitudes, children with disabilities, disability, education policy, gender, human experiment, inclusion, inclusive education, parents, perception, physical education, primary education, primary schools, secondary education, special educational needs, special needs, student, students with disabilities, teacher training, teachers, teaching.                      |
| Cluster 2.<br>(green)  | Attitude, autism spectrum disorder, behavior disorder, controlled study, cross-sectional study, emotional disorder, learning disabilities, learning disorder, major clinical study, physical disability, primary school, priority journal, professional development, questionnaire, school teacher, self-efficacy, special education, student attitude, visual impairment, |
| Cluster 3.<br>(Blue)   | academic achievement, Adult, autism, disabled children, educational status, female, handicapped child, human, mainstreaming education, male, personal experience, qualitative research, semi structured interview, teacher, tematic analysis, young adult                                                                                                                  |
| Cluster 4.<br>(yellow) | Adolescent, child, developmental disabilities, developmental disorder, intellectual impairment, physical activity, psychology, school child, schools, self concept, student,                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Cluster 5.<br>(purple) | disabled person, education, interpersonal communication, knowledge, preschool child, school, social inclusion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

Based on table 9 and figure 9, it shows that *the co-word map* on inclusive education in primary schools shows that the main focus of the research is still focused on the issues of *inclusive education*, *disability*, *primary school*, and the role of *teachers*. This shows that academic discourse so far has placed more emphasis on the implementation of inclusion in elementary schools by highlighting teachers' challenges, attitudes towards students with special needs, and supportive learning strategies. However, there are research gaps that still receive less attention. Namely, the role of parents in supporting the success of inclusive education is still rarely studied, even though school and family collaboration is an important factor. Likewise, inclusive education at the early childhood level only appears as a small cluster, although this stage is crucial in instilling the value of inclusion from an early age.

In addition, the technological aspect is almost invisible in the keyword network, so research opportunities related to the use of assistive technology or digital learning for students with special needs are still very open. The



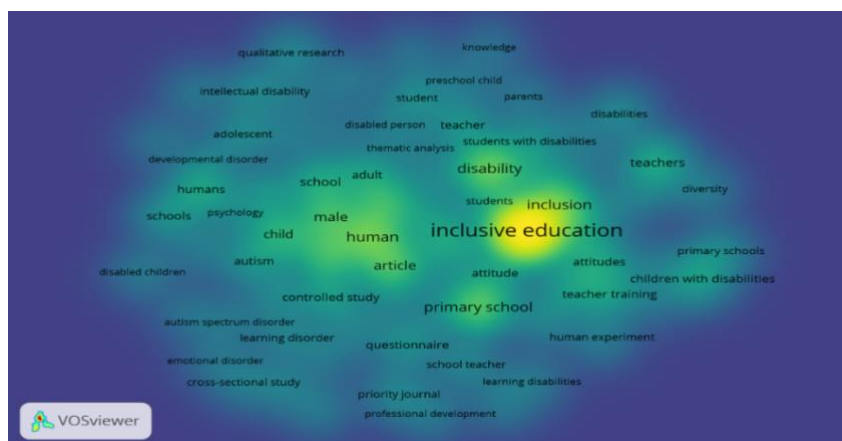
The overlay visualization of the co-word map shows the dynamics of the development of inclusive education research in elementary schools over time, the cluster is getting brighter, showing that the topic is still often studied and developed by pararesearchers. The dark color on the map depicts the dominant keywords in the early 2014 period, such as *autism spectrum disorder*, *intellectual disability*, and *emotional disorder*, indicating that the focus of research at that time still tended to focus on medical and diagnostic aspects. Over time, green appears in keywords such as *inclusive education*, *primary school*, *teachers*, and *attitude*, indicating a shift in attention towards the implementation of inclusive education in schools, especially on the role of teachers and attitudes in supporting the learning process. Then, the bright yellow color that represents the latest research (2022-2025) shows the dominance of *the keyword parents*, *preschool child*, *learning disabilities*, *teacher training*, *children with disabilities*, and *diversity*. This shows a trend of research that emphasizes more on parental involvement, inclusive education at an early age, strengthening teacher capacity through training, and attention to social diversity in the school environment. The trend of the research shows the direction of integrating collaborative aspects between schools, parents, and the community in supporting inclusive education. In addition, strategic issues that have not emerged many times such as the application of digital technology in inclusive learning.



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The *Density Visualization image of the Co-Word map* shows the most researched keyword density in the field of inclusive education. The brighter the colors seen, the higher the intensity of the research conducted on the topic. Keywords with bright yellow colors such as *inclusive education*, *primary school*, *disability*, *inclusion*, *teachers*, and *attitudes* have been the center of attention of research so far. This shows that the main focus of inclusive education studies still revolves around implementation in elementary schools, the role of teachers, attitudes towards students with special needs, and disability issues in general.

Meanwhile, areas with green to blue (darker) colors show topics that are relatively rarely researched, such as *qualitative research*, *professional development*, *cross-sectional studies*, to specific issues such as *developmental disorders*, *autism spectrum disorders*, or *emotional disorders*. This gap opens up important opportunities for further research.



**Figure 11.** *Density Visualization* co-word map of inclusive education in elementary schools

## CONCLUSION

The results of bibliometric analysis from the Scopus database show that international publications are more dominated by developed countries such as Australia and Greece, with the support of higher education institutions that consistently produce scientific publications. In terms of document type, articles are the main form of publication, while the dominant fields of study are social sciences, psychology, and health, showing a multidisciplinary nature in understanding inclusive education. The *analysis of co-word* through *network visualization*, *overlay*, and *density* confirmed that the themes of *inclusive education*, *primary school*, *disability*, and *teachers* were the focus of the research, while specific issues such as *autism spectrum disorder*, *emotional disorder*, *developmental disorder*, and *Teacher Professional Development* is still underexplored.

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