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The Auditory Gaze: The Role of Knowledge Inclusivity in Hearing Audience Reception of Sign Language Interpreters at Indonesia Music Festivals

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of knowledge regarding inclusivity on the perception of hearing audiences toward the use of Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) at Indonesia Music Festival.The increasing use of Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) in global music events highlights the growing movement toward inclusivity. However, empirical studies in Indonesia especially regarding how hearing audiences perceive SLIs—remain limited. This study examines how knowledge about inclusivity influences hearing audiences' acceptance of SLIs at Indonesian music festivals. A quantitative survey was conducted involving 100 hearing respondents who had attended Indonesian music festivals. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using Spearman Rank correlation. Findings indicate a significant and positive association ($\rho = 0.590$, $p < 0.05$) between inclusivity knowledge and SLI acceptance, suggesting that higher awareness is associated with higher acceptance. Conclusion: Inclusivity knowledge plays an important role in shaping hearing audiences' openness toward SLIs. The study contributes to discourse on inclusive festival practices and provides practical implications for festival organizers, musicians, and policymakers to promote accessible entertainment experiences.

***Keywords**: Music Festival, Inclusivity, Sign Language Interpreter, Knowledge, Perception*

A. INTRODUCTION

Music is a universal language, which has long served as a medium to express the depth of human emotion, thought and imagination. For centuries, music has accompanied the journey of mankind, entering into our daily lives, work and emotional landscapes, evolving along with the development of society and the unique historical context of each nation (Liu et al., 2024) . Kosilova (2023) in her journal stated that to understand music, it is necessary to recognize the intrinsic meaning contained in it, interpret the message it wants to convey, and appreciate the personal impact felt by the listener.

Globally, inclusivity in public events—including festivals—has become a central agenda supported by UN SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and the disability rights movement. Music festivals in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia have incorporated SLIs as part of accessibility standards. In Indonesia, despite increasing public interest in music festivals, empirical research on SLI acceptance remains scarce. Most local studies focus on SLIs in religious events, news broadcasts, or health communication, leaving a gap in the entertainment sector.

According to the Populix survey in 2024 regarding Indonesian Concert-Goers' Behavior, there is high enthusiasm for music concerts in Indonesia, with 80% of 1,056 respondents stating that they enjoyed the experience, indicating a substantial market. Preference for domestic concerts dominates (49%), followed by interest in attending concerts both at home and abroad (19%). While interest in overseas concerts was lower (9%), only 23% said they were not interested. Further data from Populix in 2023 revealed that over 40% of respondents had attended a concert in the past year, with the majority of concerts held in Indonesia, indicating active engagement in the local music scene. Of the 448 respondents who had attended concerts, the majority (68%) had attended 1-3 times, and 32% of them had also attended concerts overseas, confirming the strong demand for live music events.

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This high level of interest indicates significant growth potential for the music entertainment sector in Indonesia, making it an increasingly important element in the entertainment industry landscape. Amidst the huge enthusiasm for music concerts in Indonesia, an important question arises: how do we ensure that these immersive music experiences can be enjoyed by all, including those who are deaf. Although music is considered a universal language, access to these rich music experiences is not always evenly distributed, especially for the deaf community. We think of music as something we can hear, but the feelings and meanings in music should not be limited to hearing people. This statement is supported by Pederiva (2017) which states:

> *"When it comes to practice, we see these underlying issues in our society. Only the individual who is tuned is invited to join the choir; a good musician is the one who can read the musical score, or can play "by ear"; all capabilities are very focused on hearing conditions of those involved in the musical process and so the music concept vanishes without noticing the many other ways to listen to music around us and to understand that beyond the ear there are other possibilities of hearing it."*

In the present context, awareness of music accessibility for the deaf through sign language interpretation in songs and instrumental music is increasing, encouraging more inclusive music practices. In recent decades, various vocalists, ensembles, and music groups have emerged who have sought to improve music accessibility for listeners with and without hearing impairments (Cripps et al, 2017) Research by Cripps et al (2017) revealed that the interpretation of music in sign language was first recorded in the film 'Star Spangled Banner' in the United States, which shows the beginning of this phenomenon.

Sign music is a musical expression developed by the Deaf community, which is different from the way music is generally heard. Sign music has its own melodic and rhythmic structure, like hearing music by involving the use of American Sign Language (ASL) and combining hands, gestures, and facial expressions to convey musical ideas and emotions (Maler, 2013) to create a musical performance that is interesting to Deaf and Hearing audiences. This perspective then shifts the understanding of music from being only auditory to a visual-gestural form.

The use of sign language interpreters at music festivals allows deaf audiences to engage with music in a meaningful way. The interpreters translate the lyrics and emotions of the song into sign language, creating a unique performance that combines music, lyrics, and visual expressions (Untari & Sanjaya, 2011). The presence of sign language interpreters at music festivals highlights the intersection of music, Deaf culture, and identity. This statement is supported by Reddy, K (2020) in his research on Intersectionality in American Sign Language Hip Hop Interpretation, stating that the dynamic interaction between ASL hip hop interpreters and musicians goes beyond existing musical ideas and cultural expressions, because the addition of layers of meaning through sign language significantly enriches the cultural experience for all those present, including the Deaf and hearing communities. In Indonesia, there have been no empirical studies on the practice of using sign language interpreters in the Music Industry.

However, at present several singers and musicians have begun to perform live in collaboration with sign language interpreters. The collaboration between the band *Vierratale* and Rezki Achyana is an important first step in introducing the use of sign language interpreters at Indonesian music concerts. According to Rezki, quoted from the CNN news page ("Rahasia" Juru Bahasa Isyarat Berbagi Lirik Lagu Kala Konser, 2022) the Vierratale concert was his second experience as a sign language interpreter at a music concert, after previously appearing at Jokowi's campaign in Batam in 2019.

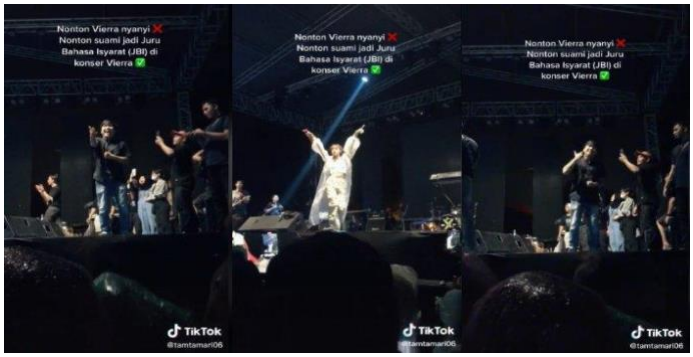

Figure 1
Rezki Achayana's Appearance at the Vierratale Concert

In recent years, awareness of the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in various areas of social life has continued to increase, including in the entertainment industry such as music festivals. One form of implementation of this inclusivity is by presenting sign language interpreters on stage to ensure that deaf audiences or deaf friends can access the show equally. However, the acceptance of hearing audiences towards the presence of sign language interpreters is still an issue that has not been fully mapped scientifically, especially in the context of popular music culture in Indonesia.

This phenomenon shows variations in acceptance, ranging from full support to the emergence of resistance or indifference to the function of the interpreter. In the socio-psychological realm, this can be analyzed using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). TPB states that a person's intention to carry out a behavior is influenced by three main components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of acceptance of sign language interpreters, audience knowledge about inclusivity has a strong potential to shape positive attitudes, create supportive social norms, and strengthen perceptions of control in accepting differences in the viewing experience.

However, the extent to which this knowledge influences acceptance intentions has not been widely studied quantitatively, especially in the hearing audience population at live music events. This gap is important to study, considering that inclusivity is not only related to the provision of facilities, but also to social acceptance from the majority, in this case the hearing audience. Understanding the psychological factors that influence this acceptance is crucial in designing inclusive, educational, and equitable festival policies. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the effect of knowledge about inclusivity on hearing audience acceptance of sign language interpreters, using the Theory of Planned Behavior approach as a theoretical framework. The quantitative approach was chosen to measure the extent to which each TPB construct influences audience intentions and attitudes towards the presence of interpreters, as well as to obtain data that can be generalized as material for policy recommendations and public education (Munassir, 2024).

Inclusion awareness is the awareness of diversity and the need to create environments that value and support differences — including race, gender, disability, religion, cultural background, and more. Descriptive Inclusion Awareness Model: Key Components. While not always standardized in one format, the model generally describes the following stages or dimensions: Cognitive Awareness - Understanding what inclusion and diversity are. Recognizing the existence of systemic and social barriers that prevent the participation of certain groups, Affective Awareness - Empathy and sensitivity to those who experience exclusion. Formation of an open attitude toward differences, Behavioral Awareness - Recognizing how everyday actions and language can be inclusive or exclusive. Reflecting on one’s own behavior toward minority or vulnerable groups, Contextual Awareness - Assessing whether a system, organization, or environment supports inclusion. Recognizing the role of structures and policies in shaping inclusive or exclusive experiences (Vanath, 2020). While international literature explores Deaf-centered performance

and signed music aesthetics, little is known about how hearing audiences interpret and accept SLIs, which is essential for creating socially inclusive festivals. This gap motivates the present study.

Table 1.
State of the Art with the latest literature (2022-2025)

Author	Finding
Ramadhany Rahmi (2022)	The Sign Language Interpreter Program for sermons at the UIN Sunan Kalijaga Mosque, if seen from the indicators of program achievement, it can be said that in terms of accessibility fulfillment, it has been achieved.
Muhammad Syaiful Anwar (2022)	The use of sign language interpreter videos on the Lampung Health Office Instagram is effective in providing and disseminating information about Covid-19 for the deaf community in Lampung.
Indy Syuhida Ilah (2025)	The use of sign language on television broadcasts has a positive impact on the understanding of news broadcasts and supports social inclusion by ensuring that deaf people can receive information equally.

Based on the background explanation above, this study aims to examine the role of knowledge about inclusivity in the acceptance of hearing audiences towards sign language interpreters at music festivals. Public understanding of inclusivity is expected to be the foundation for appreciation of efforts to translate music visually, which will ultimately enrich the cultural experience for all audiences, both Deaf and hearing. By identifying the extent to which knowledge about inclusivity influences the acceptance of hearing audiences towards sign language interpreters at music festivals, this study seeks to make a significant contribution to encouraging more inclusive music concert practices in Indonesia, ensuring that the "universal language" of music is truly accessible and enjoyable for all levels of society. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for event organizers, musicians, and other stakeholders in their efforts to create a fair and diversity-embracing music ecosystem.

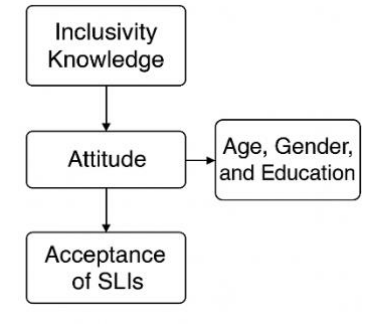

Figure 2
Literature Review

While international literature explores Deaf-centered performance and signed music aesthetics, little is known about how hearing audiences interpret and accept SLIs, which is essential for creating socially inclusive festivals. This gap motivates the present study. Theoretically, this study contributes to expanding the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) within the context of inclusive entertainment. The findings provide empirical evidence that inclusivity knowledge can shape positive attitudes and acceptance behaviors among hearing audiences an area rarely explored in Southeast Asian scholarship.

Practically, the study offers actionable insights for festival organizers, stage designers, and cultural policymakers. Higher acceptance from hearing audiences indicates strong potential for integrating SLIs as a permanent accessibility feature in Indonesian music festivals. Organizers may implement educational campaigns, promotional exposure of SLIs, and inclusive branding strategies. This study has several limitations. First, the sampling technique (purposive and snowball) limits

the generalizability of findings. Second, the study relies on self-reported perceptions rather than direct behavioral measures at live events. Third, cultural context and festival type were not controlled. Future studies could employ experiments, mixed methods, or cross-festival comparisons. Future research should examine how festival policies and media exposure influence SLI acceptance. Comparative studies between festivals with established accessibility programs and those without would provide deeper insights. In addition, qualitative research on Deaf audience experiences could enrich understanding of music accessibility practices.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative design with an online survey method. The main data source in this study is hearing audiences who have attended music festivals in Indonesia. Respondents will be selected based on predetermined criteria, namely being 18 years of age and above, having attended music festivals in Indonesia in the last 2 years, and being able to hear well (not having hearing impairment). The planned sample size is a minimum of 100 respondents, to ensure sufficient representation of the target population.

Sampling will be carried out using purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques to reach respondents who meet the criteria. The combination of these two methods allows researchers to target individuals with specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research topic and utilize recommendations from initial respondents, which is very useful for reaching populations that may be difficult to access or hidden so as to obtain a more representative sample (Rocks, 2019).

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is used to describe or explain the characteristics of data collected from a population or sample without making generalizations or predictions through tables. Descriptive analysis is the first step before conducting a correlation test.

Descriptive Analysis Based on Age

The age frequency is used to understand how respondents' knowledge of their perceptions of the use of Sign Language Interpreters (SELs) at music festivals.

Table 2
Analyst Descriptive on Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
Teenagers	35	35.0
Adults	63	63.0
Elderly	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Based on table 2, it shows that the characteristics based on the age of respondents from 100 respondents were obtained as many as 35 respondents (35%) with the category of teenagers (12-25 years), then as many as 63 respondents (63%) with the category of adults (26-45 years) and as many as 2 respondents (2%) with the category of elderly (> 45 years).

Descriptive Analysis Based on Gender

Gender frequency is used to understand how respondents' knowledge of their perceptions of the use of Sign Language Interpreters (JBI) at music festivals.

Table 3
Descriptive Analysis Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	34	34.0
Female	66	66.0

Total	100	100.0

Based on table 3, it shows that the characteristics based on the gender of the respondents from 100 respondents were 34 respondents (34%) male, and 66 respondents (66%) female.

Table 4
Descriptive Analysis Education

Education	Frequency	Percent
SMA/SMK	25	25.0
S1	71	71.0
S2	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Based on table 4, it shows that the characteristics based on the education of respondents from 100 respondents were obtained as many as 25 respondents (25%) with the category of High School/Vocational High School Education, then as many as 71 respondents (71%) with the category of S1 Education and as many as 4 respondents (4%) with the category of S2 education.

Spearman Rank Correlation Test

The correlation coefficient used in this study is knowledge of inclusivity (X) has a relationship or not to the acceptance of the audience in the use of sign language interpreters (Y) then see the level of strength of the relationship of a variable and see the direction of the relationship of the variables.

The basis for making decisions in the Spearman rank correlation test is:

1. If the significance value <0.05 then it is correlated
2. If the significance value> 0.05 then it is not correlated

Table 5
Spearman rank correlation

Variabel	Sig Value	Correlation Coefficient
Audience knowledge of inclusivity	0,000	0,590

Based on the table above, The Spearman Rank correlation test is used to measure the degree of relationship between inclusiveness knowledge (X) and audience acceptance of the use of Sign Language Interpreters (Y). This test does not measure causal influence, but rather looks at the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables.

Table 6
Correlation Coefficient Interpretation

Coefficient Interval	Strength of relationship
0,00-0,25	Very Low
0,26-0,50	enough
0,51-0,75	strong
0,76-0,99	Very strong
1,00	perfect

(Sugiyono, 2006)

Based on table 6 above, it is known that the level of strength of the relationship between the role of knowledge of inclusivity and the acceptance of the use of sign language interpreters (JBI) in the context of music festivals is included in a strong relationship because the correlation coefficient value is in the interval of 0.51-0.75.

Based on the results of the study, it is known that there is a significant relationship between the variable role of knowledge of inclusivity and the acceptance of the use of sign language interpreters (JBI) in the context of music festivals with a strong relationship level. The higher a person's knowledge of the principles of inclusivity, the higher their level of acceptance of the use of Sign Language Interpreters (SELs) in music festivals.

Education Factor

Based on the analysis of Education data, it is known that respondents with the highest Education category are at Bachelor's level (S1) with 71 respondents, indicating that the respondents' Education Level is quite high. People with higher levels of education tend to have broader exposure to social issues, such as equality and the rights of people with disabilities. In addition, higher education can understand the importance of accessibility in various contexts, including in entertainment such as music festivals.

Education often forms a critical and open mindset. This has an impact on a more inclusive attitude towards diversity, including communication styles and greater appreciation for new approaches that support audience diversity. For example, when seeing JBI performing next to the festival stage, they are more likely to see it as a form of appreciation for all groups, not a disturbance or something foreign. People with higher education backgrounds can generally connect JBI's presence with the principles of social justice and see it as a real form of implementing inclusion values, not just a formality. They realize that music can not only be enjoyed auditorily, but also through vibrations, expressions, and sign language. The higher a person's education level, the higher their ability to accept and support the use of JBI in music festivals. This is because education facilitates a deeper understanding of inclusion, accessibility, and social justice values.

In addition, age factors can also influence acceptance of inclusivity, including in terms of the use of Sign Language Interpreters (JBI) in music festivals, but do not directly determine it. According to Notoatmodjo's theory (2010), someone who is old enough provides a better thought process because they have more rational thoughts and behavior from experience and maturity of their soul so that someone is easy to receive good information and function in remembering something well (GÜRKAN, 2019).

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis that the highest category of respondents at the adult level (26-45 years), this indicates that the average age of music festival audiences is at an adult age who already has a more stable mindset and is accustomed to conventional standards, including how music is consumed (auditively). They have experience working in the social/educational field, have attended training or seminars on accessibility. In this case, adulthood can be an agent of social change, because they have influence in the community, family, and organization. Adult age can influence the ability to accept the use of JBI in music festivals, but not absolutely. Acceptance will be high if accompanied by an understanding of inclusivity, social experience, and openness to cultural innovation (Cheyroux, 2025).

The difference in age between adults and adolescents in their ability to accept the use of Sign Language Interpreters (JBI) in music festivals reflects differences in mindset, social experience, and openness to inclusive values. Adolescents tend to be more receptive to JBI because they grew up in an era that encourages inclusivity, often see JBI representations in interesting forms in the media (TikTok, YouTube, festivals), and tend to see JBI as part of modern artistic expression. Meanwhile, adults tend to question the existence of JBI in music festivals because of the old perception that music is only enjoyed auditorily and a more educational approach is needed to realize that JBI is a form of accessibility, not a visual disturbance. Adolescents generally have a higher level of acceptance of the use of JBI in music festivals than adults. This is due to a more open mindset, exposure to inclusion trends, and flexibility in understanding alternative forms of communication (Little, 2020).

The influence of age on the ability to accept the use of Sign Language Interpreters (IELs) in music festivals can vary greatly depending on life experiences, values, and exposure to inclusivity issues. Younger generations/teenagers tend to be more open and supportive of the use of IELs because they grew up in a digital era that is more aware of diversity and inclusion, are more often exposed to content on social media that features IELs, and are more receptive to the idea that music

can be enjoyed in non-auditory forms. Younger ages are more adaptive to social change, so they are quicker to accept innovations such as the presence of IELs at festivals, while older ages tend to question change more, but this does not mean rejecting it, it just requires the right communication approach (educational, persuasive, and empathetic). In general, younger ages tend to have a higher level of acceptance of the use of IELs in music festivals. However, age is not the only factor—personal experiences, social values, and exposure to inclusion are also very important.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the role of knowledge of inclusivity and the acceptance of the use of sign language interpreters (JBI) in the context of music festivals with a correlation value of 0.590. This indicates that the relationship between knowledge of inclusivity and the acceptance of the use of sign language interpreters (JBI) in the context of music festivals is in a strong relationship, because the correlation coefficient value is in the interval of 0.51-0.75. This indicates that the role of knowledge of inclusivity influences the acceptance of the use of sign language interpreters (JBI). Knowledge of inclusivity helps individuals understand that everyone, including people with disabilities, has the same rights to access information, education, and services. This triggers empathy and opens awareness of the importance of the role of JBI as a communication link.

Current research efforts in this area are likely focused on qualitative studies that delve deeper into the "why" behind the correlation. These studies often involve interviews and focus groups with both hearing and deaf music festival attendees to understand their perceptions, experiences, and barriers to acceptance. Some research may also be underway to create and test educational interventions aimed at increasing inclusivity knowledge among festival organizers and attendees. Therefore, Future research should investigate the impact of festival policies and organizer initiatives on the acceptance and use of JBI. A study could compare festivals with specific policies for accessibility and those without. This would involve examining whether official communication channels, such as social media and websites, effectively promote the availability of JBI and whether this influences attendee perceptions. This research could also explore the financial and logistical challenges faced by organizers in providing JBI services and how these can be overcome.

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